



**Commerce Secretary Designee promises
to “quickly fill all essential positions at the National Weather Service.”**

(January 23, 2017) Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL), the Ranking Member of the Senate Commerce Committee, which is reviewing the nomination of Wilbur Ross, sent Mr. Ross follow up questions after last week’s confirmation hearing, asking his views of the vacancies at the National Weather Service. Here are Senator Nelson’s questions and the responses he received from Mr. Ross:

Senator Nelson:

“Last Congress, this committee hosted two weather-related hearings: one on the communication of weather information and the other on hurricanes. Since you live on one of Florida’s beautiful barrier islands, I know you personally understand these issues. To save lives and property, we simply must have accurate, timely, and consistent forecasts delivered in a way that is meaningful so that people take action to protect themselves. This is the essential function of the National Weather Service.

“Would you agree with me, then, that the dedicated employees of the National Weather Service—like trained meteorologists—are essential public safety personnel? There are vacancies at the National Weather Service that threaten public safety, and I can tell you that rehiring those positions takes months on end. NOAA has been working to improve the efficiency of the hiring process.”

Mr. Ross:

“I agree that the National Weather Service serves an essential function. Timely and accurate weather information is crucial to protect both lives and property, and is also essential to the smooth functioning of numerous areas of commerce, including aviation, shipping, fishing and farming, to name just a few. Proper staffing the NWS is therefore important and, if confirmed, I intend to review the current efforts and see how they can be improved.”

Senator Nelson:

“Will you commit to addressing the employment vacancies and exempting National Weather Service public safety employees from any hiring delay or freeze?”

Mr. Ross:

“If confirmed, I will do my best to quickly fill all essential positions at the National Weather Service.”

-NWSEO-

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National Weather Service employees.
No one works harder for National Weather Service employees than
National Weather Service employees.
We are NWSEO.**