



House Science Committee Members Write Ross: Demand Answers on NWS Evolve

(June 29, 2017) Four members the House Science Committee wrote Commerce Secretary Ross, on June 28, stating that they are “especially concerned that any reorganization or reduction in hours” at NWS forecast offices “could result in a degradation of service,” and demanded the “materials justifying such proposed actions.” According to the letter, NOAA had failed to provide the Committee with information concerning NWS Evolve that it was promised following a May 2 briefing. [The letter](#) noted that the Committee staff have “asked repeatedly for this information and it has not yet been provided.”

The letter asked whether there are any plans to reduce the hours of operations at forecast offices and, if so, “which sites are being considered for reductions” as well as “the basis for this decision.” The letter also noted that the NWS “may adjust responsibilities of forecasters, increasing their reliance on computer modeled forecasts,” and asked Secretary Ross to “provide the statistical analysis that has been conducted or commissioned indicating that computer models are as reliable as the experienced human forecaster with local knowledge.”

The letter asked the NWS for an explanation of “the apparent sudden end to the analysis” of the NWS workforce that was being conducted by McKinsey and Company, as well as a list of McKinsey’s final recommendations, which the Committee was told would be available during the week of May 8, but were never provided.

The letter was initiated by Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY), who represents the district that contains the Albany Forecast Office. NWSEO President Sobien and General Counsel Hirn met with him in May to discuss NWSEO’s opposition to key aspects of NWS Evolve. The letter was also signed by three other NWSEO supporters – the Ranking Member of the House Science Committee, Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX); the Ranking Member of the Environment Subcommittee, Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), and Rep. Charlie Crist (D-FL) who will be the keynote speaker at this year’s NWSEO convention in St. Petersburg. NWSEO has met personally with Reps. Bonamici and Crist about NWS Evolve, and has had detailed and lengthy meetings with Science Committee staff on this subject.

The June 28 letter concluded by noting that the 2006 Appropriations Act prohibited the NWS from “consolidating, regionalizing or reducing hours at Weather Service forecast offices,” and that unless the NWS “demonstrate[s] that service degradation will not occur” as a result of NWS Evolve,” Congress would likely reach “the same conclusion articulated in the past.”

-NWSEO-

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No one works harder for National Weather Service employees than
National Weather Service employees.
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