



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

House Appropriations Committee approved significant funding increases for NOAA and the NWS, and rejected all proposed personnel cuts affecting NWSEO represented employees.

(July 16, 2020) The President had proposed to eliminate 365 positions in the National Weather Service, and \$39.1 million in associated funding, for FY 2021. This included 248 forecasters, 84 Information Technology Officers, 8 employees at the National Centers for Environmental Prediction's Climate Prediction Center, and 25 physical scientists and other staff at the two tsunami warning centers, which the President had proposed to consolidate. In addition, the President also proposed to eliminate 20 researchers at the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research's (OAR's) Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (AOML) in Key Biscayne, FL who are also represented by NWSEO, as well as \$5.1 million in associated funding.

All the above-mentioned personnel and funding cuts were rejected as a result of NWSEO's lobbying efforts - 385 positions and \$44.1 million in associated funding in total.

The House Appropriations Committee approved a funding increase of \$102 million overall for NOAA for total funding of nearly \$5.5 billion. Total appropriations for NWS operations are proposed to be increased by 4.4% or \$43 million over FY 2020 to \$1,112,073 under the House bill. Analyze, Forecast and Support (AFS) has been increased by \$24.4 million or 4.8%. The Committee also approved a \$1 million increase for the line item that funds in part the attorneys in the NOAA Office of General Counsel, who are also represented by NWSEO.

The Senate Appropriations Committee has not yet taken formal action on the FY 21 Commerce Department budget. There may be change to these overall numbers once they do which will have to be reconciled in a conference between House and Senate negotiators before the final passage of the bill.

Highlights of the House Appropriations Committee Report on FY21 NOAA Budget (quoted verbatim):

The Committee recommends a total of \$5,454,068,000 in discretionary funds for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which is \$101,890,000 above fiscal year 2020 and \$827,661,000 above the President's request. In addition, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) (Public Law 116-136) included \$20,000,000 for NOAA to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.

Climate Research.—The Committee provides \$190,000,000 for Climate Research and **rejects** the reductions to Climate Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes and **the termination of climate research at the Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory** and directs NOAA to continue this work at no less than the level of funding provided in fiscal year in 2020.

National Weather Service—The Committee recommends **\$1,112,073,000 for National Weather Service (NWS) Operations, Research, and Facilities, which is \$46,372,000 above the President’s Budget request.** The Committee reaffirms its commitment to the weather enterprise and the necessity of maintaining the mission of protecting life and property within the Federal Government. While the Committee does not oppose the continued growth of the private weather industry, the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters epitomize the need for the public provision of this critical information.

NWS Staffing—The Committee remains concerned about continuing reports of staffing and management challenges within NWS. **NOAA and the Department of Commerce are directed to ensure that NWS fulfills its critical mission to protect the lives and property of our Nation’s citizens, including by filling all vacancies as expeditiously as possible.**

Central Processing—The recommendation includes \$102,538,000 for Central Processing while **rejecting** the proposed reduction to the Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Services System and **the proposal to terminate 84 Information Technology Officers who are critical to delivery of timely and actionable forecasts.**

Analyze, Forecast, and Support—The recommendation includes \$538,000,000 for Analyze, Forecast, and Support activities, but **does not adopt the proposed NWS workforce savings that would only serve to exacerbate the staffing problems noted above.** The Committee further **rejects the proposed consolidation of the functions of the Climate Prediction Center and the Weather Prediction Center at the National Centers for Environmental Prediction,** as well as the termination of Aviation Science Research to Operations, and provides no less than the fiscal year 2020 amount for each of these activities.

Tsunami Warning Program—The Committee **rejects the proposed reduction to the Tsunami Warning Program** and instead provides no less than the fiscal year 2020 level for this critical program.

-NWSEO-

No one cares more for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) employees than NOAA employees.

No one works harder for NOAA employees than NOAA employees.

We are NOAA employees. We are NWSEO.

NWSEO proudly represents more NOAA employees than any other Union. NWSEO serves bargaining unit employees of the National Weather Service, NESDIS Office of Satellite and Product Operations, Office of General Counsel, Aircraft Operations Center, and Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory.