



NWSEO Lobbyist on Hill Protecting NOAA Jobs and Funding But Government Shutdown, Furloughs may be Unavoidable

(February 25, 2011) NWSEO General Counsel and Legislative Director Richard Hirn, today, met with senior Democratic and Republican staff members of the Senate Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Subcommittee to discuss the impact of HR 1 on NOAA and NWS funding as well as the possibility of a government-wide shutdown on March 4. Hirn was part of a delegation from the "Friends of NOAA," a coalition of groups that are reliant on NOAA funding.

During the meeting, NWSEO was praised for its efforts to publicize through the media the impact that the reduced funding levels would have on NWS operations. NWSEO was told that this is having an impact on Members of Congress who had supported the drastic NOAA funding reductions. As NWSEO has reported, we have been informed that there will be rolling closures of forecast offices nationwide, and all employees will be subject to a minimum of a 27-day furlough.

Although there have been public assurances that all parties are seeking to avoid a government shutdown on March 4, NWSEO has learned from reliable sources in Congress that they are pessimistic that a deal will be reached in time to avoid a shutdown. NWSEO is working to engage agency management to identify as many employees as possible who would be designated as emergency and would be able to work during a shut-down, but agency management has rebuffed our attempts. It appears that many NWS and other NOAA employees should be prepared to be out of work for several days or longer.

NWSEO will continue its lobbying efforts to reverse the drastic \$454 million cuts to NOAA contained in the HR 1 which will fund the government until October 1. If enacted as passed by the House, this will result in a 28% reduction in operating revenues for the remainder of the fiscal year, making significant furloughs for all NOAA employees inevitable.

-NWSEO-