



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

Senator Thune Withdraws Consolidation Bill – Introduces Substitute Legislation Focusing on Severe Weather Communications

(June 22, 2015) South Dakota Senator John Thune withdrew the original version of bill S. 1573 this morning. Sen. Thune and Hawaii's Sen. Brian Schatz introduced a substitute version that focuses on severe weather alerts. The new version of the bill, titled "Weather Alerts for a Ready Nation Act of 2015" is expected to be voted on by the Senate Commerce Committee on Thursday, June 25.

"This is good news for the safety of the American public," said NWSEO President Dan Sobien. "The lifesaving work of National Weather Service employees and their collaboration with emergency managers will continue on a local level, which is where they are most effective."

"Weather Alerts for a Ready Nation Act of 2015" has three components:

1. It clarifies and expands the responsibilities of the Warning Coordination Meteorologists,
2. It requires the NWS to conduct an assessment of the effectiveness of the warnings and watches system with a focus on communication improvements for severe weather events.
3. It requires the NWS to prepare and publicly post a report on the use of contractors in lieu of federal employees. As part of this requirement, the NWS must report on the number of contractors, the current number of federal employees, the number of vacancies, and a comparison of the salaries of contractors and federal employees. The NWS will be required to prepare such a report annually and post it on the Internet.

NWSEO Legislative Director Richard Hirn worked closely with members of the Senate and their staff to push for this revised legislation.

NWSEO launched a media campaign last week opposing the bill that would consolidate 122 NWS forecast offices across the country. Coordinated efforts with emergency managers reinforced the message of that local forecasters were critical to the NWS mission of protecting lives and property. Many NWSEO members contacted their local media and television meteorologists to discuss the effect the bill would have on them.

"My heartfelt thanks to NWSEO members for active role to communicate the risks of consolidation," said Sobien. "As always the backbone of our media efforts are the local stewards and their local contacts. This is one more example of the positive effects our membership has on the National Weather Service."

Here is an online copy of the substitute legislation, "[Weather Alerts for a Ready Nation Act of 2015](#)"

**No one cares more for National Weather Service employees than
National Weather Service employees.**

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