



## *National Weather Service Employees Organization*

### **House Fiscal 11 Budget Proposal Could Devastate the National Weather Service's Life-saving Warnings and Forecasts**

(February 15, 2011) As hurricane and tornado seasons approach, funding for the NWS will be nearly 30 percent less than the first half of 2011, if the Continuing Resolution proposed by the House majority is enacted. Congress's move will necessitate work furloughs and force rolling closures of Weather Warning Offices across the country. The effects will be felt in every aspect of daily life, including emergency management, television weather, and information used by our nation's citizens for transportation, commerce and agriculture.

The National Hurricane Center, the Storm Prediction Center, the Aviation Weather Center, the Tsunami Warning Centers, River Forecast Centers and local Weather Forecast Offices located in communities across the nation are all victims of Congress's budget cut.

"When the budget blade drops on the NWS, it will be felt around the country," said NWSEO President Dan Sobien. "In the next hurricane, flood, tornado or wildfire, lives will be lost and people will ask what went wrong. Congress's cuts and the devastation to the wellbeing of our nation's citizens are dangerously wrong."

Reduced funding will mean upper air observations currently made twice a day might be reduced to every other day. Buoy and surface weather observations, the backbone of most of the weather and warning systems, may be temporarily or permanently discontinued. Delays in replacement satellites run the risk of losing key weather data that can be obtained no other way. "This information is vital for weather modeling and essential for accurate tornado watches and warnings," said Sobien, "

The National Hurricane Center is not immune to these cuts as furloughs and staffing cuts will add strain to the program. The Hurricane Hunter Jet, which provides lifesaving data and helps determine a hurricane's path, could also be eliminated.

Recent advances in aviation weather forecasting have resulted in as much as a 50 percent reduction in weather related flight delays. Unfortunately, these improvements are also on the chopping block as the money to fund the programs will be discontinued.

"Decreased accuracy of forecasts is going to devastate every aspect of our daily lives. There will be a large scale economic impact on aviation, agriculture, and the cost shipping food and other products," warns Sobien. "Most importantly, Congress is going set back our ability to save lives by decades."

-NWSEO-

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