



*National Weather Service  
Employees Organization*

## **NWSEO Opposes Senator Thune's Bill to Consolidate 122 Local Weather Forecast Offices to Six Regional Centers**

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(June 18, 2015) NWSEO strongly opposes the consolidation of community weather forecast offices to create six regional weather offices proposed in Senator Thune's (R-SD) bill on Tuesday. The bill, S. 1573, discounts the impact of local forecasters who have knowledge of their area, the unique weather patterns that exist there, and the impact of severe weather. It is also in direct conflict to the National Weather Service's Weather Ready Nation initiative which calls for more interaction with local life-saving emergency managers and first responders.

"Regionalizing weather forecast offices will forever put to rest the idea of the life-saving plans in Weather Ready Nation," said NWSEO President Dan Sobien. "The expertise and collaboration of the local meteorologists and first responders is critical during severe weather events. As part of Weather Ready Nation, your NWS meteorologists work and train with local emergency managers to prepare for weather emergencies. You won't have that face-to-face collaboration with only six regional weather forecast offices nationally."

Existing science indicates that regionalized forecasting will result in a degradation of the accuracy and reliability of the forecasts. Repeated studies of the NWS structure conclude there's a direct correlation between the accuracy of weather forecasts and services to a community and the proximity from which they're provided. As recently as 2005, Congress rejected proposals to consolidate forecasting operations because the NWS lacked the metrics to ensure the forecasts and services would not be degraded.

NWSEO maintains that local forecasts centers are a more efficient use of taxpayer money. The union advocates that more weather offices would enhance forecasting and emergency response in cities like Charlotte, Baltimore, San Francisco, Ft Myers, Florida, Hilo Hawaii, and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

"The big question is, when an emergency strikes, who do you want helping you, a local team of experts who've prepared together and know how to respond to the unique challenges of your area - or a regional group who know your hometown as only a dot on the radar map?" Sobien added.

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