



Staffing Shortage in Burlington, VT and National Weather Service Forecast Offices Around the Country Fatiguing, Demoralizing Weather Forecasters and Degrading Services Trump Administration Cuts Positions

(Burlington, VT, October 10, 2017) - Direct operational impacts due to severe NWS staffing shortages have led to dire working conditions with no indication that efforts are being made to fill Weather Forecast Office (WFO) positions. WFO Burlington, VT (BTV) is taking a stand sending letters to Senators, members of Congress and to the Director of NWS Eastern Region Headquarters reinforcing the negative impacts of vacancies in their local office. By the end of October, WFO BTV will be down 46% of their operational staff, making protecting life and property, along with providing the best weather service possible to the citizens of the North Country impossible this upcoming winter season.

“Impacts of our staffing shortage have included forecasters working 8 to as many as 11 midnight shifts in a row, multiple forecasters pulling double shifts (and in some cases working back to back double shifts), and operating weekend day shifts with only two forecasters when Decision Support Service (DSS) activities are most frequent in our area of responsibility,” stated NWSEO BTV Steward Brooke Taber. The decline in staffing and associated impacts have created an unsafe and unhealthy working conditions due to excessive overtime and abnormal shift schedules.

While the Burlington office is particularly hard hit, National Weather Service Offices around the country are suffering from the agency not filling vacant positions. According to the National Academy of Sciences, “the quality of the NWS’s warning capability corresponds with its capacity to muster an ample, fully trained local staff at its Weather Forecast Offices as severe weather unfolds.” However, in May, the Government Accountability Office released a study that revealed that the vacancy rate in NWS operational units has reached a point where NWS employees are “unable at times to perform key tasks.” The GAO also found that NWS “staff experienced stress, fatigue and reduced morale resulting from their efforts to cover for vacancies” due to lack of time off and a loss of training.

Attachments:

[Vacancy Chart](#)

[GAO Report](#)

[WFO BTV Congressional Letter](#)

[WFO BTV ER Regional Letter](#)

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