

**Text of complete statement from John "Rusty" Russell, President of the U.S. Council of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM-USA), and Director of Emergency Management and Homeland Security of Huntsville/Madison County, Alabama**

(18 June 2015) As in the past, the U.S. Council of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM-USA) opposes any legislation that would cause degradation in service from the National Weather Service local Weather Forecast Offices. The lack of local coordination with the whole community of response organizations would most likely lead to loss of life and property. We depend on advance briefing when severe events are possible.

The regional configuration proposed in S. 1573 would not be able to provide answers to specific questions from school systems, hospitals, public works, fire departments, law enforcement, public officials as well as the emergency management community.

In April of 2011, hundreds of tornadoes swarmed across four states in a single day. The local Weather Forecast Offices were providing information starting five days prior and up to the April 27th outbreak. Our communities would not have been nearly as prepared without the interaction between the WFOs and the local response community.

We are urging Congress not to take any action that will degrade the local WFO capability and put the lives of our citizens at risk.

This statement was sent to the Washington Post on June 18, 2015. Here is a link to article:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/capital-weather-gang/wp/2015/06/18/senate-bill-to-centralize-weather-service-forecasting-draws-heated-reactions/>