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June 24, 2010

The Honorable Gary Locke
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230-0002

Dear Secretary Locke:

I am writing to express my deep concerns with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) decision to base the tracking station for the next generation of polar orbiting weather satellites overseas. I urge you to consider the impact of this decision on the local economy and that you reconsider outsourcing any jobs that can be done effectively here in the United States.

I am concerned by reports that NOAA is planning to export as many as 25 highly skilled technical jobs associated with the new command and telemetry ground station for the Joint Polar Satellite System (JPSS) to Spitzbergen Island, which is currently governed by Norway. It is my understanding that NOAA has decided to outsource this work, which is currently being performed at NOAA's Command and Data Acquisition Station on Wallops Island, Virginia. It is also my understanding that this decision could result in the loss of over \$2 million in annual payroll as well as related economic activity in the small community of Chincoteague, Virginia.

Our nation faces serious economic challenges, and I believe NOAA has a responsibility to ensure that its work is performed by Americans on American soil to the greatest extent practicable. Therefore, I ask that you keep me informed of any changes in the staffing level at the Wallops Command and Data Acquisition Station, positive or negative, moving forward.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your reply.

With warm regards,

David Wu
Member of Congress

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