



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

Administration Proposes Large Budget Cuts and Job Elimination

Eliminate 365 Total Positions at the National Weather Service Eliminate 20 Positions at Atlantic Oceanographic & Meteorological Laboratory

(March 4, 2020) The Administration has released its proposed NOAA budget for FY 2021, and it proposes a \$75 million reduction in funding for NWS programs and the elimination of 365 positions at the National Weather Service, as well as the jobs of 20 employees at OAR who are also represented by NWSEO. Among the impacts the Administration has identified includes: closing NWS Weather Forecast Offices at night, closing at least one of the nation's two tsunami warning centers, eliminating tsunami warnings for the Caribbean, and termination of global climate products that are used for pandemic health planning.

The President proposed many of the same personnel and budget cuts in his FY 20 budget, but they were defeated on Capitol Hill through NWSEO's Lobbying efforts. NWSEO's lobbyist has already begun personal meetings with appropriators as well as key congressional staffers in order to ensure continued funding for these positions and programs. Several members of Congress have already reached out to NWSEO offering their support in our fight against these excessive and unwise personnel cuts.

Here are the four proposals that include elimination of NWS employees. In each case, the risks cited are quoted verbatim from the NOAA Congressional Budget Justification, [Link: fy2021_noaa_congressional_budget_justification.pdf](#) and page references are provided:

1. Eliminate 248 forecaster positions at the nation's 122 Weather Forecast Offices (-\$15,000 million).

According to the NOAA Budget Justification, this will result in closing an unspecified number of forecast offices at night and offloading the responsibility for issuing forecasts and warnings to forecast offices in other states and communities:

“[O]ffices will collaborate with other NWS offices for met watch and services during off hours, while sustaining situational awareness, allowing for certain offices to reduce operation times . . .”

At other forecast offices, a sole forecaster will be left on duty to work alone:

“Safety and security of NWS employees is paramount and must be ensured where an office would have only one person in the building on duty.”

“[T]hese operational reforms intended to increase staffing flexibility will be conducted in FY 2021. *Their testing and implementation could present some short-term risks* that will need to be managed effectively to minimize any impact to operations.”

(pages NWS 56-57).

2. Eliminate 25 Positions and Reduce Tsunami Warning Program (-\$11 million).

“This program change eliminates NOAA’s Tsunami Research and Operational Warning program as a national service program and merges the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center (PTWC) in Hawaii and the National Tsunami Warning Center (NTWC) in Alaska into one center.”

“This reduction also eliminates all NWS-sponsored R&D to improve tsunami warning models, and partner funding for education and awareness programs including National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program (NTHMP) grant funding to state and territory education, awareness, and inundation and evacuation map development, and the TsunamiReady® Program. This reduction also eliminates the International Tsunami Information Center and the Caribbean Tsunami Warning Program.”

It appears that this “consolidation” may result in closure of *both* the Alaska and Pacific Tsunami Warning Centers:

“NOAA will continue to explore options . . . to merge the two Tsunami Warning Centers or co-locate them with (1) academic or scientific institutions or (2) warning or mission-critical centers such as the National Centers for Environmental Prediction.”

(page NWS 60).

3. Eliminate 8 Positions and Consolidate Climate Prediction Center/Weather Prediction Center Functions (-\$1.2 million).

“NOAA will consolidate functions at the National Centers for Environmental Prediction (NCEP) Climate Prediction Center (CPC) and Weather Prediction Center (WPC). . . While some efficiency will be realized, *this consolidation will limit some of NOAA’s products and services such as climate prediction products with domains over hemispheres other than North America/Arctic. Some of these global climate predictions have supported national security planning and execution activities at the Department of Defense and the United States Agency for International Development including food security and disaster risk reduction, as well as pandemic health planning.*”

(page NWS 66).

4. Eliminate 84 Information Technology Officer (ITO’s) the 122 NWS Forecast Offices and establishment of Regional Enterprise Application Development and Integration Teams (-\$11.9 million).

“In FY 2021, NWS proposes to initiate a phased consolidation of its 122 Information Technology Officer (ITO) . . . *Specific performance measure impacts are not determined at this time.*”

(pages NWS 40-41).

5. Eliminate 20 Positions at the Atlantic Oceanographic & Meteorological Laboratory (-5.06 million).

“NOAA proposes a decrease of \$5,057,000 to terminate funding for climate-related research and observations at the Atlantic Oceanographic & Meteorological Laboratory (AOML).”

(page 25).

We are stronger when we stand together. Join the fraternity of members invested in their future by contacting membership@nwseo.org to become a member. The *March Madness Membership Drive* is underway through March 31, 2020.

-NWSEO-

No one cares more for National Weather Service employees than National Weather Service employees.

No one works harder for National Weather Service employees than National Weather Service employees.

We are NWSEO.

NWSEO is the largest NOAA Union representing the employees of the National Weather Service, NESDIS Office of Satellite and Product Operations, Office of General Counsel, Aircraft Operations Center, and Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory.