



National Weather Service Employees Organization

December 28, 2011

Dear Jane,

I read with keen interest your October 20, 2011 all hands memo to NOAA employees titled "Innovation is the key to our future." The NWSEO and the NOAA employees we represent feel the very same. In this fast moving world, the only way for NOAA and its lines offices to achieve our mission is to grow with changing technology, and because what we offer is a service to the American public, clearly we must be on the cutting edge of communication technology.

At your recent SES summit you charged the group to "Produce three significant innovative communications projects before the end of the calendar year." It appears that the National Weather Service is not a part of that expectation. I have pasted below an all hands message from NWS Deputy Assistant Administrator Laura Furgione instructing our members not to innovate new communication technology. This message was written just two months after you issued your memo. In fact, this email codifies what the NWSEO has been fighting the Republicans over for several years - the privatization of the dissemination of National Weather Service products and services. (You may recall a bill introduced by then Senator Santorum a few years ago.) It is very discouraging that after working so hard to prevent privatization, a Democratic administration is actually taking steps to implement it.

This all hands memo from Furgione has done more to demoralize the NWS workforce than anything since the Bush Administration proposed to close Weather Forecast Offices, another issue that gained strong support from Ms. Furgione. All our members want to do is save lives, enhance our nation's economy and do what we can to protect the environment. Tying our members' hands from doing so is counterproductive for them, the NWS and NOAA. Now, our members are in the difficult position of deciding whether to disobey your all hands memo of October 20 or Ms. Furgione's memo of December 21. The message and the direction of the memos are contradictory.

Please instruct the NWS to rescind this destructive December 21 memo and allow the employees of the NWS to be free to innovate and keep NOAA's relevance in this new and exciting century.

Sincerely,

Dan Sobien
President
National Weather Service Employees Organization

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **NWS Communications Office** <nws.communications.office@noaa.gov>
Date: Wed, Dec 21, 2011 at 9:29 AM
Subject: Hold on Development of Weather Applications for Wireless Devices
To:

Request for Posting:	Laura K. Furgione Deputy Director, National Weather Service
Subject Line	Hold on Development of Weather Applications for Wireless Devices
Distribution	NWS All Hands



Message from the Deputy Director

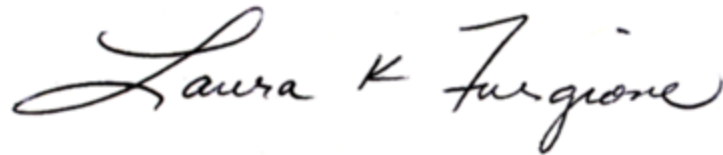
There are thousands of weather applications available for iPhone, Android, iPad, and similar wireless devices. Many of them are provided at little or no cost. Many of them use National Weather Service (NWS) warnings and other weather products and some explicitly identify NWS as the source of their information. Given this well-established and growing market for device-specific weather applications for

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wireless devices, NWS is declaring a hold on use of any NWS resources, including on-duty time of NWS employees, to develop such applications.

This will avoid using NWS resources to duplicate products readily available in the marketplace and give NWS time to carefully evaluate our appropriate role. For clarity, this hold does not apply to development of applications intended solely to support NWS employees in the performance of our mission. Request for exceptions should be sent to Ron Jones, NWS Office of the Chief Information Officer (Ronald.C.Jones@noaa.gov).

Finally, NWS employees who wish to develop weather “apps” on their own time are advised to contact the Department of Commerce Ethics Officer (ethicsdivision@doc.gov, 202-482-5384).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura K Furgione". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and 'F'.