



Senate Appropriations Subcommittee takes NOAA to the Woodshed- Saves ITO jobs

(April 17, 2012) Today, the Senate Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Subcommittee approved, by a vote of 17 to 1, a FY13 funding bill that rejects the NWS's request to eliminate ITOs at 122 WFOs. The bill also strips NOAA of all responsibility for acquisition and management of the nation's weather satellites, although NOAA will continue to have responsibility for operation of the satellites once in orbit. Subcommittee Chair Mikulski explained at today's subcommittee meeting that there was bi-partisan agreement to strip NOAA of its responsibility to manage satellite development and procurement because of NOAA leadership's mismanagement. Senator Mikulski praised the work of the NWS at today's hearing at the same time she criticized NOAA management.

The bill approved by the Subcommittee funds NOAA at \$3.4 billion for next year, a reduction of \$1.47 billion. According to a press release issued by the Subcommittee, "the bill does not support proposed cuts to NOAA's operations that would hurt local communities, such as eliminating local weather forecast staff and reducing the Tsunami Warning Network. Instead, the committee finds financial savings by consolidating management offices and reducing government overhead. The bill transfers funding needed for weather satellite acquisition from NOAA to NASA, realizing a savings of \$117 million in FY 13."

Further details on the bill will not be available until it is approved by the full Senate Appropriations Committee, which is expected to meet on Thursday. The bill must then be approved by the full Senate. The House Commerce Justice and Science Appropriations Subcommittee will "mark-up" or vote on its version of the funding bill on Thursday as well. Whatever version of the funding bill that is eventually enacted by the House will later have to be reconciled with the version approved by the Senate before it is submitted to the President.

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