



ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALLY PROPOSES TO ELIMINATE 20% OF FORECASTER POSITIONS AND REDUCE HOURS OF OPERATIONS AT WFOs

(February 20, 2018) The budget submitted to Congress last week will eliminate funding for 248 forecaster positions at the WFOs. According to the budget justification submitted to Congress by NOAA, this will “allow[] for certain offices to reduce operation times.”

Although NWS employees have repeatedly been assured that NWS Evolve was not aimed at reducing staff, NOAA has now told Congress that “[t]his workforce savings is the initial step of implementing OWA recommendations.” The agency also told Congress that it “**prefers** to reduce positions only through attrition,” but doesn’t promise to do so. (As of February 15, there were 120 forecaster vacancies, according to NWSEO’s count).

According to the Budget Justification, “operation times at various offices will be reduced,” and that this creates a “potential risk to the public and partners,” which they hope to “minimize” by “collaborating[ing] with other NWS offices for met watch and services during off hours.” They claim that this “operational change is similar to the backup practice used today when there is a system or communication failure of an office.”

NOAA also states that “safety and security of NWS employees is paramount and must be ensured **where an office would have only one person on duty**,” thus indicating its intent to impose single-person shift coverage in violation of a 2007 Decision and Order of a Labor Arbitrator James Lundberg.

The President’s budget also proposes a total of 355 job cuts at the NWS. In addition to WFO forecasters, the budget proposes to eliminate 25 employees at the tsunami warning centers (which would be consolidated into one center at NCEP or another unspecified location); 8 employees at the Climate Prediction Center; and 74 ITOs. Of the 355 positions to be eliminated, only three are supervisors or managers.

The NOAA Budget Justification can be found at:
http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/nbo/fy19_bluebook/FY19-NOAA-CJ.pdf The pages that discuss the WFO forecaster cuts can be found at pages NWS-48 and NWS-49.

-NWSEO-

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than National Weather Service Employees.
No one works harder for National Weather Service Employees
than National Weather Service Employees.*

We are NWSEO.