

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 5, 2025

Laura Grimm
Chief of Staff performing the duties of Under Secretary
of Acting Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and
NOAA Administrator
National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 5128
Washington, DC 20230

Chris Rocheleau
Acting Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Ms. Grimm and Acting Administrator Rocheleau,

We write to express our urgent concern regarding the public safety risks that persistent staffing issues at the National Weather Service Center Weather Service Units (CWSU) are creating at the 21 Air Route Traffic Control Centers (ARTCC) across the country.

CWSU meteorologists provide specialized, tailored forecasts and advisories specific to aviation weather to the ARTCCs. These meteorologists operate alongside air traffic controllers, providing in-person, timely, and necessary briefings to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) staff. These individuals are vital in helping FAA personnel safely and efficiently route air traffic through weather systems across the country. This partnership is critical as the Southeast region enters hurricane season.

Despite their importance to ensuring aviation safety, CWSUs face significant staffing shortages as essential staff have departed following the announcement of significant staffing reductions at the direction of President Trump and Elon Musk. Each CWSU office should have four staff members—three forecasters and one meteorologist in charge—to provide adequate information to the ARTCCs. Of the 21 CWSUs across the country, 13 are currently short-staffed. The CWSUs that support the ARTCCs in Anchorage, Cleveland, Albuquerque, Fort Worth, Los Angeles, Seattle, Indianapolis, and Miami currently have three employees. The CWSUs that support the ARTCCs in Boston, Washington D.C., Jacksonville, and Houston currently have two remaining employees. And the CWSU that supports the ARTCC in Oakland currently has just one remaining employee.

With a full staff, CWSUs are set to provide critical aviation specific weather forecasts from 5 AM to 9 PM, with one shift change between the forecasters. Because of significant staff reductions, the CWSU offices with only two staff members will be forced to reduce their coverage hours, providing forecasts from 5:30 AM to 3:30 PM, ending forecasting right as convective weather typically becomes more intense. Convective weather patterns can create significant airspace system issues by causing flight delays and reducing safety. Additionally, the National Weather Service (NWS) extended buyout offers to many of these departed employees that prevent the NWS from filling their roles until September 2025, leaving these critical roles vacant during the majority of hurricane, wildfire, and tornado season.

For us to understand the NWS's plan to ensure adequate staffing at the CWSUs across the country, please answer the following questions as soon as possible, but no later than June 6, 2025:

1. What is the timeline for permanently filling the vacant roles at CWSUs across the country?

2. Are the CWSUs exempted from the blanket federal hiring freeze due to the nature of its work and the importance of a fully staffed CWSU to aviation safety?
3. What is the public safety impact of the CWSU in Oakland operating with only one staff member? How are your agencies working to mitigate any consequences to the flying public?
4. With hurricane, wildfire, and tornado season quickly approaching, how do you plan to ensure adequate staffing capacity CWSUs across the country to advise FAA staff?
5. How many CWSU employees have departed from the agency since January 20, 2025? Of these employees, how many accepted voluntary separation benefits or early retirement offers related to staffing reductions directed by senior officials from NOAA, Department of Commerce, or the White House?
6. How many CWSU employees who departed from the agency since January 20, 2025, were terminated based on their probationary status? Were any of these employees reinstated as required by a recent order from the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland?
7. Did you create a plan to ensure continuity of operations at CWSU offices before implementing significant staffing reductions since January 20, 2025? If so, what is it? If not, why?
8. How has the reduction in staff at CWSUs impacted the increasing challenges faced by air traffic controllers?

The strain on our air traffic controllers remains high following these unprecedented federal workforce reductions and it is imperative that they have all the tools and resources they need to keep Americans safe in the skies.

Adequate staffing for the CWSUs is critical to the safe and efficient management of our national airspace system— that could cost lives if left unaddressed. We look forward to your prompt response.

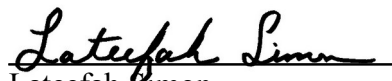
Sincerely,



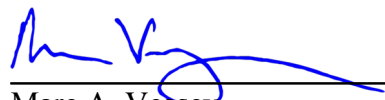
Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



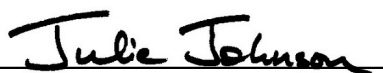
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



Julie Johnson
Member of Congress



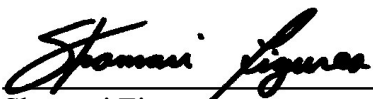
Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



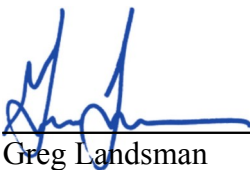
Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



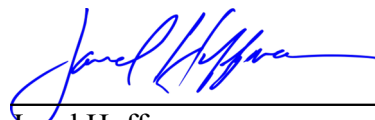
Shomari Figures
Member of Congress



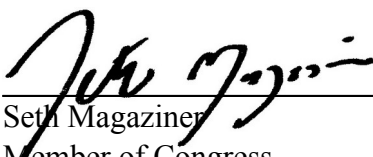
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



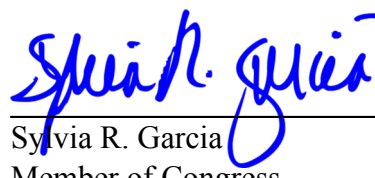
Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



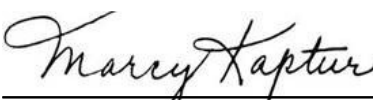
Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



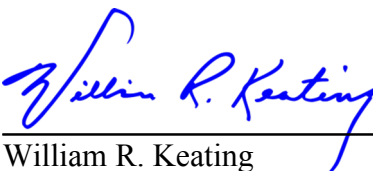
Sylvia R. Garcia
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Marcy Kaptur
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Greg Stanton
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William R. Keating
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