



# *The Four Winds*

*National Weather Service Employees Organization*

## **Dr. Lubchenco Responds to NWSEO Letter – Promises policy on weather warning apps**

(January 5, 2012) Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, will meet with NWSEO President Dan Sobien and Executive Vice President Bill Hopkins to discuss innovation and the development of mobile weather warning apps. The invitation came in response to a [letter Sobien sent to Dr. Lubchenco](#) late last month disapproving NWS leadership's decision to halt the use of resources to develop weather warning applications for wireless devices.

In the January 2, 2012 letter, posted below, Dr. Lubchenco explains that the hold on development of such apps will be temporary, until NOAA can establish policy guidelines. "Understanding your concern that development of this policy might temporarily delay innovative software applications, I have instructed NWS leadership to expeditiously complete this policy by no later than March 31, 2012, and to seek NWSEO's input prior to implementation," wrote Lubchenco.

"Dissemination of our weather warnings in the manner most people are likely to receive them is critical to our mission of saving lives," said Sobien. "Dr. Lubchenco's timely response is a good step forward and an example of our united voice being heard loud and clear. We do feel that the NWS should have been working with NWSEO to already have a policy in place. An emerging technology team for the NWS was working on a policy for these apps and had already recommended moving forward. I hope we can resolve this issue quickly. In the meantime, progress and a lot of life saving ideas are on hold while the NWS forms teams and goes through its typical bureaucratic process."

### **Dr. Jane Lubchenco's letter to NWSEO President Dan Sobien:**

Dear Dan,

I appreciate your support for NOAA and NWS, and for the importance of the innovation needed to support the delivery of our mission to protect life and property and enhance the economy. Following receipt of your note, I reviewed Laura Furgione's December 21 memo and conferred with NWS leadership. It is my understanding that the memo is not intended to halt innovation within NWS and NOAA. Instead, the memo merely places a temporary hold on the uncontrolled development of software applications until NOAA can establish clear policy guidance.

Understanding your concern that development of this policy might temporarily delay innovative software applications, I have instructed NWS leadership to expeditiously complete this policy by no later than March 31, 2012, and to seek NWSEO's input prior to implementation.

Furthermore, if possible, I would like to invite you and other NWSEO leaders to meet with me or Dr. Kathy Sullivan at the AMS meeting in New Orleans to discuss this matter and any other areas of mutual interest. Please work with Andy Winer to determine a mutually convenient time and place for this meeting.

Finally, I note that you circulated your email to me to the NWSEO group. I'd be grateful if you would similarly circulate this reply to you. I would not want the misinterpretation of Laura's memo to continue. Innovation is key to our future, as is good communication!

Thank you and your members for your vigilance and dedication in carrying out the NWS mission. Take care, and happy new year.

Jane Lubchenco

-NWSEO-

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