



**Evidence reveals National Weather Service had \$125 million Surplus:
Agency's Hiring Freeze of Hurricane and Tornado Forecasters is an Unnecessary Risk**

(January 17, 2014) The National Weather Service finished last Fiscal Year, which ended September 30, 2013, with \$125 million in unspent funding. The information was revealed at arbitration over unfilled vacancies in the National Weather Service – the longest and most crucial arbitration in NWSEO history – held January 13 – 16. Although the NWS spent 98.5 percent of the funds in Local Warnings and Forecast account (from which most employees' salaries are paid), money from the overfunded accounts could have been moved to LWF account after notifying the Appropriations Committees. This type of reprogramming routinely occurs every year. The NWS has 451 vacancies.

The arbitration focused on two issues: 1) whether the NWS violated several staffing agreements by failing to fill various Lead Forecaster, Journeyman Forecaster and HMT-Met Intern vacancies throughout all regions of the NWS prior to and after the 2013 hiring freeze; and 2) the Agency's unilateral implementation of the hiring freeze without first bargaining with NWSEO.

The Agency implemented the hiring freeze on March 27, 2013 claiming that it did not have funds to fill the vacancies. The attached spreadsheet outlines the \$125 million surplus in appropriated funds. Approximately half of that amount is money left over on the various line items that make up "Operations, Research and Facilities" and continues to be available for the NWS to spend this fiscal year in addition to the new funds appropriated by Congress this week. The other half of the \$125 million is in "Procurement, Acquisition and Construction" and remains available until the end of FY 15. (Not only has Congress fully funded the President's FY 2014 request for the NWS, but it added an additional \$11 million to the Local Warnings and Forecast account).

On the attached spreadsheet: "Operations, Research and Facilities" Row 1011 shows FY 2012 and Row 1015 shows FY 2013. "Procurement, Acquisition and Construction" Row 1012 shows FY 2012 and Row 1014 shows FY 2013.

At the hearing, NWSEO contended that the NWS has funds that could be reprogrammed to fill vacancies. Similarly, the NWS has needlessly terminated training, travel and conference attendance, and delayed maintenance when funds were available.

A decision is expected from Federal Labor Arbitrator Joseph Sharnoff in late spring or early summer. His decision is then subject to appeal to the Federal Labor Relations Authority and then to the United States Court of Appeals.