



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

NWS Hires Consultant to “reframe the relationship” with NWSEO; Neglects to Include or Inform NWSEO in the Decision Process

(August 4, 2014) After years of blatant refusals to work with NWSEO on pressing issues, the National Weather Service hires a consulting firm to forge a partnership with the union. In an August 1 All Hands Email, National Weather Service Director Louis Uccellini announced the procurement of Overland Resources Group as the solution to the NAPA report’s recommendation to include NWSEO in decisions regarding staffing for the “effective and efficient delivery of weather, water, and climate products and services.”

The Overland Resources Group does not simply advise the NWS, it conducts bilateral programs that require NWSEO participation. However, the decision whether to hire them was made with no input from the union, based on management's assumption that NWSEO would automatically go along with whatever management decided.

“The irony of it is that NWSEO was not included in any recent discussions or decisions to hire this group,” says NWSEO President Dan Sobien. “NWSEO has long maintained the desire to meet with NWS leadership to work through the issues together. That said, we believe that if agency leaders simply met with us in good faith, fostering direct communications, it would be more effective and efficient. It would also save taxpayers a whole lot of money.”

The National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) report came out in May 2013, during a year of unprecedented labor problems between NWS and NWSEO. The report is the result of a Congressional directive to the NWS to contract with an independent organization to evaluate efficiencies that can be made to NWS operations. A five-member panel of NAPA conducted the seven-month study of the NWS’s operations and structure, as well as the challenges the agency will face moving forward. Noted in the report:

Page 39 of the NAPA study:

While staffing levels have been relatively constant over the past decade, in the last three years, the NWS has realized personnel losses at a greater rate than it has been hiring. If this trend continues, the NWS is in danger of losing a significant segment of the workforce and will not be able to renew itself at a sustainable rate unless it revises staff functions and allocations across programs and offices.

Page 42 of the NAPA study:

The Panel finds that while change to the staffing model is warranted, the NWS has not completed

sufficient analysis of the alignment and function of staff across the organization for effective and efficient delivery of weather, water, and climate products and services. Such an analysis should be detailed and take into consideration the realities of operating in the current constrained fiscal environment, as well as how to meet current and future needs. It is important to include the National Weather Service Employees Organization in this analysis process as discussed further in the report.

“Like so many recent National Weather Service decisions, the choice to use the Overland Resources Group, without NWSEO input is counterintuitive to the desired outcome of forming a respectful working relationship,” said NWSEO President Dan Sobien.

**No one cares more for National Weather Service employees than
National Weather Service employees.**

**No one works harder for National Weather Service employees than
National Weather Service employees.
We are NWSEO.**