

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 27, 2025

The Honorable Roderick Anderson
Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Deputy Inspector General Anderson,

We write to implore you to investigate the ongoing efforts by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to dismantle the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). We're also deeply concerned about recent reports of mass terminations at NOAA facilities in our home state of Colorado. The work our scientists and civil servants do at NOAA is essential to U.S. national security, as well as the personal safety and daily lives of Americans. Dismantling NOAA or compromising its capabilities would put Americans across the country at great risk.

NOAA has a long standing and important partnership with the Department of Defense, which uses NOAA's satellites to monitor atmospheric conditions and apply imagery from those satellites for military missions. These resources are critical to the effective coordination of military resources, and they contribute to sustained military readiness. NOAA's Global Forecast System (GFS) and High-Resolution Rapid Refresh (HRRR) capabilities assist the Department of Defense in predicting battlefield weather conditions. NOAA works with the 557th Weather Wing to train military meteorologists in analyzing satellite data for operational use. NOAA's Space Weather Prediction Center (SWPC) provides critical space weather data to DoD to protect military satellites, GPS, and communication networks from solar storms and geomagnetic disruptions. These are just a few of the critical functions NOAA serves in partnership with the Department of Defense that help keep Americans safe and our warfighters effective.

NOAA also collaborates closely with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), airports, and airlines to provide them with critical information on turbulence, low-level wind shear, and fog, which are factors that can complicate landing and takeoff. By providing timely data, NOAA ensures smoother and safer air travel for American citizens. In addition, during the recent Palisades and Eaton fires, the National Weather Service's red flag warnings and fire weather forecasts assisted federal, state, and local officials in their efforts to save lives and property. This collaboration strengthens our national safety and security, demonstrating the importance of leveraging NOAA resources for the benefit of the American people.

Further, NOAA plays a critical role in protecting American technology, including GPS systems, from threats posed by solar flares and other space weather phenomena. Using cutting-edge data from satellites like NOAA's GOES (Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites), NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory (SDO), and the Deep Space Climate Observatory (DSCOVR), NOAA helps protect vital infrastructure that keeps our economy and military strong. NOAA also works with other federal agencies to monitor and mitigate GPS signal interference by using advanced techniques to pinpoint and neutralize sources of disruption, ensuring the reliability and accuracy of these critical systems. This proactive approach is vital for maintaining the strength and security of America's technological capabilities.

Moreover, NOAA's National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) provides essential information and resources to farmers and ranchers across the U.S. to help them better prepare for, mitigate, and respond to the effects of drought. NIDIS provides information on current drought conditions, forecasts, impacts, and risks to inform drought management and decision making. Upon direction from Congress, NIDIS is creating an early drought warning system for the nation. NOAA programs, like NIDIS, are essential to understanding and mitigating the risks to people, livelihoods, and communities that stem from complex environmental stresses, such as drought.

Many of NOAA's programs are authorized and funded through Congressional appropriations. The President does not have the authority to impound or otherwise withhold funds that were lawfully authorized and appropriated by the Congress. Further, the President also does not have the authority to grant unvetted individuals' access to vital government systems at NOAA, as some reports suggest. Such actions are not only irresponsible but also unlawful and pose significant risks to national security and public trust.

It is also incredibly shortsighted for DOGE to make mass terminations at NOAA facilities, as reports suggest. The scientists at NOAA facilities in Colorado and across the country have dedicated their lives and their careers to public service and innovation, and we should celebrate their contributions rather than putting our country at a disadvantage by purging the agency.

The value of NOAA and its programs are clear. Any attempt to unilaterally halt them would constitute egregious overreach of executive power, jeopardizing the safety and well-being of countless Americans. For this reason, we strongly urge you to investigate the claims that suggest DOGE is seeking to dismantle NOAA or disrupt its operations and critical research through unauthorized access to IT systems and attempts to significantly reduce staffing levels. The American people deserve answers about what President Trump and DOGE have done and plan to do with this crucial agency, which has demonstrated tremendous effectiveness at saving lives and property and serving critical economic and strategic national interests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Neguse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Hickenlooper". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name being the most legible part.

John Hickenlooper
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael F. Bennet". The signature is cursive and clearly legible.

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator