

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 9, 2025

The Honorable Howard Lutnick  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Lutnick:

We are deeply concerned by the recent workforce reductions at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Weather Service (NWS) under the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) initiative. The decision to cut positions—especially those of meteorologists and weather forecasters—poses a serious and immediate risk to hurricane preparedness and emergency response efforts in Florida. It is crucial to restore all cuts made by DOGE to NOAA and NWS immediately and lift the hiring freezes.

John Morales, the longest-serving meteorologist in South Florida, has raised serious concerns about the troubling situation facing NOAA in Florida. He recently interrupted his broadcast to describe how deeply worried he is that he will be unable to provide accurate forecasts due to critical data being unavailable. NOAA facilities in South and Central Florida are currently understaffed by 19-39%. <sup>1</sup>Additionally, hurricane hunter aircraft may lack the funds necessary to operate, leaving us vulnerable and uninformed. Morales stated, “I’m here to tell you I’m not sure I can do that this year, because of the cuts—the gutting, the sledgehammer attack on science in general.” Without reliable data, he cannot warn people, and that puts lives at risk. <sup>2</sup>

On average, 74 people die each year due to hurricanes that cause more than \$11 billion annually, and many of these deaths are preventable with accurate and timely data from NOAA. Without this data, local news stations cannot accurately warn the public about the path of a storm. Projections indicate a rise in the number of tropical events this year, as well as an increase in their severity. If funding, personnel, and functions at NOAA are not restored, the responsibility for these preventable deaths will fall on this administration.

NOAA and NWS have projected an above average hurricane season, raising concerns for coastal communities and emergency management officials across Florida. As past seasons have shown, even a single major hurricane can cause widespread damage, making preparedness vital for minimizing risk and protecting lives.

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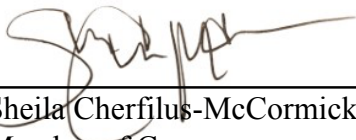
<sup>1</sup> Morales, J. (2025, June 1). *John Morales says he’s worried about 2025 hurricane season after NWS suffers loss of staff and resources*. NBC 6 South Florida. <https://www.nbcmiami.com/weather/hurricane-season/john-morales-says-hes-worried-about-2025-hurricane-season-after-nws-suffers-loss-of-staff-and-resources/3626695/>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

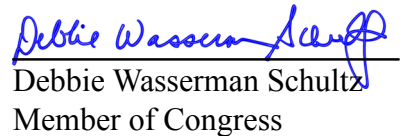
We strongly urge you to reverse these workforce reductions and ensure that both NOAA and NWS are equipped with the personnel and resources needed to carry out their critical mission. Natural disasters and extreme weather should not be politicized; they concern human lives. Robust investment in weather forecasting and disaster preparedness is not optional—it is essential to safeguarding our national security, economic resilience, and the lives and property of our constituents. NOAA's decision to hire at least 100 additional NWS forecasters highlights the critical need for weather experts during hurricane season, but nothing less than a return to pre-DOGE levels is sufficient.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your response outlining how the Administration intends to preserve the strength and reliability of our hurricane forecasting and public safety operations.

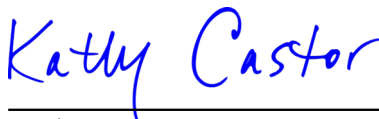
Sincerely,



Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick  
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress



Maxwell Alejandro Frost  
Member of Congress



Jared Moskowitz  
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