

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 8, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Lutnick:

As we approach the 2025 Atlantic hurricane season, which begins on June 1, we write to demand you reverse course on the Trump Administration's staffing and funding cuts, which will prevent the National Weather Service (NWS) from being fully prepared and operational.

The NWS and its employees play a critical role in protecting lives, property, and our national economy. From issuing tornado and hurricane warnings to providing essential weather information for aviation, shipping, agriculture, and emergency response, the NWS is integral to Americans' daily lives. Its employees include highly trained meteorologists, technicians, and support staff who work hard to deliver life-saving data all across the United States.

On May 2, five former NWS Directors – who served under both Republican and Democratic administrations – wrote a letter expressing alarm that the NWS is operating at a dangerous staffing deficit, with more than 10% of its workforce lost in recent months due to the Trump Administration's reckless buyouts and mass firings. These massive staffing cuts, combined with the Trump Administration's proposal to slash funding for the NWS's parent agency – the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – by 25%, led these Directors to conclude that their “worst nightmare is that weather forecast offices will be so understaffed that there will be needless loss of life.”

Forecasters at Colorado State University have predicted an “above-average” 2025 hurricane season, with an estimated nine hurricanes, four of which are expected to reach Category 3 status or stronger. Understaffed forecast offices mean longer wait times for critical alerts, slower radar maintenance, and a reduction in the high level of accuracy the public has come to rely upon. Any degradation in service risks loss of life, economic disruption, and long-term damage to public trust in our nation's ability to prepare for and respond to extreme weather.

We urge you to provide a detailed plan on how you will ensure that this critical agency has the staffing and resources it needs to ensure Americans are safe heading into this hurricane season. We look forward to your prompt response to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator