

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 28, 2025

The Honorable Howard Lutnick
Secretary
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Lutnick,

We write to express our deep outrage over the potentially illegal termination of over 800 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) employees and to call for their immediate reinstatement.¹ Mass firings, office closures, and the threat of budget cuts severely undermine NOAA's work to share weather and climate forecasts, facilitate restoration and resiliency projects, and sustainably manage our ocean's resources – especially in Connecticut.²

These attacks on NOAA are dangerous to human health and safety and economically nonsensical. Simply put, NOAA saves lives and taxpayer money. The agency's work informs severe storm warnings so people can prepare for natural disasters like tornados, flash floods, hurricanes, and wildfires.³ In the longer term, NOAA's weather and climate data helps communities take action to reduce damage from extreme weather events.⁴ These resiliency measures drastically cut the cost of disaster recovery projects, reducing the burden on agencies like the Federal Emergency Management Agency and, ultimately, taxpayers.⁵

Between 2021 and 2024, NOAA supported 15 projects across Connecticut to help bolster our \$6.5 billion marine economy that 3,189 businesses and 61,385 employees rely on.^{6,7} These projects advanced coastal resilience efforts to better prepare for severe storms, as well as habitat restoration and conservation initiatives to protect the bedrock of our seafood industry. Dismantling NOAA's workforce puts this support in jeopardy.

NOAA safeguards coastal resources and supports industries in coastal communities that inject \$10 trillion annually into the U.S. economy.⁸ As a coastal state, Connecticut communities benefit greatly from a strong and fully staffed NOAA. Our state is directly threatened by rapid sea level rise, and has seen firsthand the impacts of severe storms on our coasts.^{9,10} In 2012, Superstorm Sandy killed four Connecticut residents and

¹ "Hundreds of NOAA employees laid off in latest cuts to federal workforce," CBS News, last modified February 28, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/noaa-layoffs-trump-musk-doge/>.

² "About Our Agency," National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, last modified March 5, 2025, <https://www.noaa.gov/about-our-agency>.

³ "About the NWS," National Weather Service, last accessed March 7, 2025, <https://www.weather.gov/about>.

⁴ "About the NWS."

⁵ "Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves:2019 Report," National Institute of Building Sciences, last accessed March 7, 2025, <https://www.nibs.org/projects/natural-hazard-mitigation-saves-2019-report>.

⁶ NOAA "NOAA In Your State Connecticut," https://www.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-01/NIYSCT_2025.pdf (accessed March 7, 2025).

⁷ NOAA Office For Coastal Management, "2024 Marine Economy Report Connecticut," <https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/marine-economy-connecticut.pdf> (accessed March 7, 2025).

⁸ "Economics and Demographics," NOAA Office For Coastal Management, last modified March 6, 2025, <https://coast.noaa.gov/states/fast-facts/economics-and-demographics.html>.

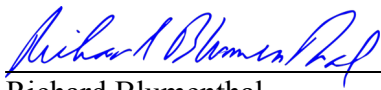
⁹ "Sea Level Rise," Connecticut Institute for Resilience & Climate Adaptation (CIRCA), last accessed March 7, 2025, <https://circa.uconn.edu/sea-level-rise/about/>.


cost over \$350 million to recover from.^{11,12} NOAA’s coastal resiliency projects work to mitigate that risk. In short, eliminating NOAA employees endangers the people of Connecticut, our businesses, and our critical infrastructure.


We understand that mass terminations at NOAA have directly impacted employees in Connecticut, with staff at the Milford Laboratory, part of the National Marine Fishery Service (NMFS) Northeast Fisheries Science Center, among those who were fired. This is bad news for our state and the country. Focusing on aquaculture projects, NOAA staff at the Milford Lab were working on cutting-edge research to maintain the sustainability and economic viability of the U.S. seafood industry.¹³ Unjustly firing experienced employees decimates the institutional knowledge necessary to best carry out that work. In 2022, NMFS helped support 2.3 million fisheries jobs that generated \$321 billion in sales.¹⁴ These job cuts will hurt commercial and recreational fishers, shellfish growers, and everyone down the supply chain whose livelihoods are tied to a healthy ocean. Further, a less effective and efficient domestic seafood industry will result in American consumers relying more heavily on imported sources of seafood.

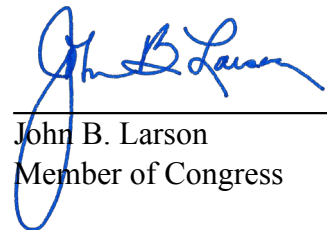
These indiscriminate firings are devastating to NOAA – to the critical work the agency does to protect our communities and to the dedicated employees themselves who have devoted their careers to public service. We demand that you immediately reinstate these federal workers and stop any action that undermines NOAA’s critical mission for the benefit of Connecticut, the national economy, and the planet.

Sincerely,


Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator


Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator


Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress


John B. Larson
Member of Congress

¹⁰ “Climate Change Connections: Connecticut (The Coastline),” United States Environmental Agency, last modified January 16, 2025, <https://www.epa.gov/climateimpacts/climate-change-connections-connecticut-coastline>.

¹¹ “Superstorm Sandy – A Look Back on Its Impact 10 Years Later,” NBC Connecticut, last modified October 26, 2022, <https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/weather-news/stories/hurricane-sandy-10-years-later/2895856/>.

¹² “Ten Year Anniversary of Super Storm Sandy,” Connecticut Institute for Resilience & Climate Adaptation (CIRCA), last modified November 7, 2022, <https://circa.uconn.edu/2022/11/07/ten-year-anniversary-of-super-storm-sandy/>.

¹³ “Current Research at Milford Laboratory,” NOAA Fisheries, last modified March 7, 2025, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/aquaculture/current-research-milford-laboratory>.

¹⁴ “Fisheries Economics of the United States Report,” NOAA Fisheries, last modified April 4, 2023, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/fisheries-economics-united-states-report>.

CC: Vice Admiral Nancy Hann, Acting Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration