

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Lutnick:

We write to you about the General Services Administration's (GSA) apparent plan to terminate at least 34 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) office leases nationwide. Working families rely every day on the services that NOAA provides from these facilities. The House Natural Resources Committee has jurisdiction under House Rule X.1(m) to conduct oversight and investigations of fisheries and wildlife, including research, restoration, refuges, conservation, international fishing agreements, marine affairs, and oceanography. The House Science, Space, and Technology Committee has jurisdiction under House Rule X.1(p) to conduct oversight and investigations of environmental research and development, marine research, outer space, and the National Weather Service.¹

The closures are imminent and will have far reaching impacts. The Committees have reviewed information suggesting that the closures will occur by August 17, 2026 at the offices for which lease termination dates are specified.² The proposed lease cancelations include 7 offices in Florida; 3 offices each in Alaska, California, and Washington; 2 offices each in Idaho, Maryland, New Jersey, Oregon, and Virginia; and one office in each of Hawaii, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Vermont, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

NOAA provides critical information about extreme weather and coastal hazards, manages fisheries, conserves coastal and marine resources, and protects American fishermen and consumers. Closing field facilities will compromise NOAA's ability to provide these services and damage the local communities and economies that rely on them.

At least five National Ocean Service (NOS) offices and two Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) labs are slated to lose their leases. Every American relies on the work of these two line offices to improve everyday services such as GPS and weather forecasting. They monitor the oceans and the atmosphere to ensure we are prepared for extreme weather events. When disasters

¹ 119th Congress First Session House Rules. <https://rules.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/rules.house.gov/files/documents/houserules119thupdated.pdf>

² Document on file with the Committees.

like hurricanes, wildfires, and oil spills occur, they collect crucial information to assess the damage and inform recovery.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) will be the hardest-hit NOAA line office by these planned lease terminations. At least 23 offices housed in facilities slated for closure are involved in critical NMFS activities, such as seafood inspection and law enforcement. These NOAA offices defend American fishermen from unfair fishing practices, bar unsafe food products from American markets, and bolster coastal economies. As the world's largest importer of seafood, the United States has a vested interest in ensuring that seafood products are safe and that seafood is not produced through forced labor or illegal practices. Weakening NOAA's law enforcement and inspection capacity could undermine American fishermen who follow the rules and endanger the health and safety of American consumers.

The National Weather Service (NWS) is at risk of losing at least three offices, including a weather center in Norman, Oklahoma. Fortunately for all who rely on NWS's forecasts, and especially for the residents in and around Norman, that office may have won a reprieve after a House Republican spoke to the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).³ This is not the first reported instance of a Republican legislator being able to defend their constituents from DOGE's indiscriminate cuts.⁴

The list of proposed lease cancelations sent by GSA to NOAA indicates that the following facilities are slated for lease termination:

1. NMFS-AK FSC – Juneau, Alaska
2. NMFS-NE FSC – NMFS/GAR/APSD – Hampton Roads, Virginia
3. NMFS-NE FSC – NMFS/OAA/OIATC/SI/NE – Hampton Roads, Virginia
4. NMFS-OLE – Seward, Alaska
5. NMFS-SE FSC – NMFS/OAA/OIATC/SI/SE – Seffner, Florida
6. NWS-WR – Salem, Oregon
7. NMFS – Pacific IS – Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands
8. NMFS-NE FSC – Salisbury, Maryland
9. NMFS-NE FSC – Northfield, New Jersey
10. NMFS-SE FSC – Baton Rouge, Louisiana
11. NOS-OMNS – Key Largo, Florida
12. NOS-OMNS – Port Angeles, Washington
13. OAR - ESRL/GML – Hilo, Hawaii

³ “Cole Statement On The National Weather Center In Norman, The Social Security Administration Office In Lawton, And The Indian Health Services Office In Oklahoma City,” Congressman Tom Cole, March 10, 2025, <https://cole.house.gov/media/press-releases/cole-statement-national-weather-center-norman-social-security-administration>.

⁴ Benjamin Storrow, “DOE restores \$1.44B loan for Montana clean energy project,” *Politico*, February 12, 2025, <https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/eenews/2025/02/12/doe-restores-1-44-billion-loan-for-sustainable-aviation-fuel-00203669>.

14. OAR – WASC – Idaho Falls, Idaho
15. NMFS-NE FSC – Narragansett, Rhode Island
16. NMFS-NW FSC – Boise, Idaho
17. NMFS-NW FSC – NMFS/NWFSC/FRAMD – Eureka, California
18. NMFS-OLE – Sunrise, Florida
19. NMFS-OLE – Wall Township, New Jersey
20. NMFS-SW FSC – NMFS/OHC/HRD – Arcata, California
21. NOS-NGS – Barre, Vermont
22. NWS-HQ-ROC – Norman, Oklahoma
23. NMFS – OLE – Sitka, Alaska
24. NMFS-SE FSC – St. Petersburg, Florida
25. NMFS-SE FSC – St. Petersburg, Florida
26. NOS – St. Petersburg, Florida
27. OGC – St. Petersburg, Florida
28. NMFS-NW FSC – NMFS/WCR/ICBD – Ellensburg, Washington
29. NOS-OMNS – Santa Barbara, California
30. NMFS – Pacific IS – Barrigada, Guam
31. NMFS-OLE – Bellingham, Washington
32. NMFS – NE FSC – East Falmouth, Massachusetts
33. NMFS – OLE – Astoria, Oregon
34. NWS – NCWCP – Riverdale, Maryland

Media reports have already publicly identified certain proposed NOAA facility closures.^{5,6,7,8} The information reviewed by the Committees lists eight facilities that have not been disclosed by DOGE⁹ or reported by the media, raising questions about the utility of the DOGE information as

⁵ Kathryn Varn, “Scoop: St. Pete NOAA offices eyed for lease termination in DOGE purge, ex-official says.” Axios Tampa Bay. March 5, 2025. <https://www.axios.com/local/tampa-bay/2025/03/05/st-petersburg-noaa-lease-termination-doge-trump>

⁶ Andrew Freedman, “DOGE moves to cancel NOAA leases on key weather buildings.” Axios. March 4, 2025. <https://www.axios.com/2025/03/03/doge-noaa-weather-building-leases-trump>

⁷ Ryan Burns, “Trump, Musk Plan to Shutter Federal Offices Includes Arcata Site for NOAA Fisheries, Redwood National Park Staff.” Lost Coast Outpost. March 3, 2025. <https://lostcoastoutpost.com/2025/mar/3/trump-musk-plans-shutter-federal-offices-includes/>

⁸ Graycen Wheeler, Chloe Bennett-Steele, “What we know about the potential closure of National Weather Service’s radar center in Norman.” KOSU. March 4, 2025. <https://www.kosu.org/energy-environment/2025-03-04/what-we-know-so-far-about-the-potential-closure-of-the-national-weather-services-radar-center-in>

⁹ *Savings*. Department of Government Efficiency. March 5, 2025. <https://www.doge.gov/savings>

the definitive source of potential federal facility closures. There are additional reasons to doubt the veracity of DOGE data.^{10,11,12,13}

To assist with the oversight responsibilities of the Committees, please provide the following documents by no later than March 27, 2025:

1. All communications sent between January 20, 2025 and the date of this letter
 - a. between the General Services Administration and individuals with a NOAA or Department of Commerce email address relating to the potential closure of any facilities that were occupied as of January 21, 2025 by NOAA personnel or contractors;
 - b. among individuals with a NOAA or Department of Commerce email address relating to the potential closure of any facilities that were occupied as of January 21, 2025 by NOAA personnel or NOAA contractors;
 - c. between individuals with a NOAA or Department of Commerce email address and contractors relating to the potential closure of any facilities that were occupied as of January 21, 2025 by NOAA personnel or NOAA contractors; and
2. All documents relating to the potential closure of any facilities that were occupied as of January 21, 2025 by NOAA personnel or contractors.

Please contact the Natural Resources Committee Oversight and Investigation Subcommittee minority staff at (202) 225-6065 or the Science, Space, and Technology Committee minority staff at (202) 225-6375 with any questions about this request. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jared Huffman
Ranking Member,
House Committee on Natural Resources



Zoe Lofgren
Ranking Member,
House Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology

¹⁰ Aatish Bhatia, Emily Badger, David A. Fahrenthold, Josh Katz, Margot Sanger-Katz, Ethan Singer. “DOGE’s Only Public Ledger Is Riddled With Mistakes,” The New York Times. February 21, 2025.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/21/upshot/doge-musk-trump-errors.html>

¹¹ Dan Ruetenik, “DOGE releases updated “wall of receipts” with more discrepancies.” CBS News. February 26, 2025. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/doge-wall-of-receipts-more-discrepancies/>

¹² Stephen Fowler, “DOGE’s savings page fixed old mistakes – and added new ones.” NPR. March 1, 2025. <https://www.npr.org/2025/03/01/nx-s1-5313853/doge-savings-receipts-musk-trump>

¹³ Brad Heath, Tim Reid, “DOGE website offers error-filled window into Musk’s government overhaul.” Reuters. March 4, 2025. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/doge-website-offers-error-filled-window-into-musks-government-overhaul-2025-03-04/>



Maxine Dexter
Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations



Gabe Amo
Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Environment

Cc:

Vice Admiral Nancy Hann, Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere
and Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Stephen Ehikian, Acting Administrator and Deputy Administrator of the General Services
Administration

Responding to Committee Document Requests

In responding to document requests from the Committee on Natural Resources, please apply the instructions and definitions set forth below:

Instructions

1. In complying with the request, you should produce all responsive documents that are in your possession, custody, or control, whether held by you or your past or present agents, employees, and representatives acting on your behalf. You should also produce documents that you have a legal right to obtain, that you have a right to copy, or to which you have access, as well as documents that you have placed in the temporary possession, custody, or control of any third party. Requested records, documents, data, or information should not be destroyed, modified, removed, transferred, or otherwise made inaccessible to the Committee.
2. In the event that any entity, organization, or individual denoted in this request has been, or is currently, known by any other name than that herein denoted, the request should be read also to include them under that alternative identification.
3. Documents must be provided in electronic form (i.e., memory stick, thumb drive, or internet-based). Documents produced should also be organized, identified, and indexed electronically. Documents should be produced in their native file format. For example, emails from Microsoft Outlook should have a “.pst” file extension, Excel files should have an “.xls_” or similar extension, and Microsoft Word documents should have a “.doc_” extension. Consult with the Committee to determine the appropriate format in which to produce the information.
4. Each document produced should be produced in a form that renders the document capable of being copied.
5. Documents produced to the Committee should include an index describing the contents of the production. To the extent more than one CD, hard drive, memory stick, thumb drive, or folder transmitted through the internet is produced, each should contain an index describing its contents.
6. Documents produced in response to this request should be produced together with copies of file labels, dividers or identifying markers with which they were associated when this request was issued. To the extent that documents were not stored with file labels, dividers, or identifying markers, they should be organized into separate folders by subject matter prior to production.
7. When you produce documents, you should identify the paragraph in the Committee’s schedule to which the documents respond.
8. It shall not be a basis for refusal to produce documents that any other person or entity also possesses a non-identical or identical copy of the same documents.

9. If compliance with the request cannot be made in full, compliance should be made to the extent possible and should include an explanation of why full compliance is not possible.
10. In the event that any document or part of a document is withheld on the basis of privilege, provide a privilege log containing the following information concerning any such document or part of a document: (a) the privilege asserted; (b) the type of document; (c) the general subject matter; (d) the date, author and addressee; and (e) the relationship of the author and addressee to each other.
11. If any document responsive to this request was, but no longer is, in your possession, custody, or control, you should identify the document (stating its date, author, subject and recipients) and explain the circumstances by which the document ceased to be in your possession, custody, or control.
12. If a date or other descriptive detail set forth in this request referring to a document is inaccurate, but the actual date or other descriptive detail is known to you or is otherwise apparent from the context of the request, you should produce all documents which would be responsive as if the date or other descriptive detail were correct.
13. This request is continuing in nature and applies to any newly-discovered information. Any record, document, compilation of data, or information not produced because it has not been located or discovered by the return date should be produced immediately upon location or discovery subsequent thereto.
14. All documents should be Bates-stamped sequentially and produced sequentially.
15. Documents produced to the Committee in response to this request should be delivered to majority staff in Room 1324 of the Longworth House Office Building or directly through the internet.

Definitions

1. The term "**document**" means any written, recorded, or graphic matter of any nature whatsoever, regardless of how recorded, and whether original or copy, including, but not limited to, the following: memoranda, reports, expense reports, books, manuals, instructions, financial reports, working papers, records notes, letters, notices, confirmations, telegrams, receipts, appraisals, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, prospectuses, interoffice and intra-office communications, electronic mail (e-mail), contracts, cables, notations of any type of conversation, telephone calls, text messages, MMS or SMS messages, other mobile-to-mobile messages, instant messages or online chat messages, meetings or other communications, bulletins, printed matter, computer printouts, teletypes, invoices, transcripts, diaries, analyses, returns, summaries, minutes, bills, accounts, estimates, projections, comparisons, messages, correspondence, press releases, circulars, financial statements, reviews, opinions, offers, studies and investigations, questionnaires and surveys, and work sheets (and all drafts, preliminary versions, alterations, modifications, revisions, changes, and amendments of any of the foregoing, as well as any attachments or appendices

thereto), and graphic or oral records or representations of any kind (including without limitation, photographs, charts, graphs, voice mails, microfiche, microfilm, videotape, recordings and motion pictures), and electronic and mechanical records or representations of any kind (including, without limitation, tapes, cassettes, disks, computer server files, computer hard drive files, CDs, DVDs, memory sticks, and recordings) and other written, printed, typed, or other graphic or recorded matter of any kind or nature, however produced or reproduced, and whether preserved in writing, film, tape, disk, videotape or otherwise. A document bearing any notation not a part of the original text is to be considered a separate document. A draft or non-identical copy is a separate document within the meaning of this term.

2. The term "**documents in your possession, custody, or control**" means (a) documents that are in your possession, custody, or control, whether held by you or your past or present agents, employees, or representatives acting on your behalf; (b) documents that you have a legal right to obtain, that you have a right to copy, or to which you have access; and (c) documents that you have placed in the temporary possession, custody, or control of any third party.
3. The term "**communication**" means each manner or means of disclosure or exchange of information, regardless of means utilized, whether oral, electronic, by document or otherwise, and whether face-to-face, in a meeting, by telephone, facsimile, mail, e-mail (desktop or mobile device), text message, MMS or SMS message, other mobile-to-mobile message, instant message or online chat, telexes, releases, personal delivery, or otherwise.
4. The terms "**and**" and "**or**" shall be construed broadly and either conjunctively or disjunctively to bring within the scope of this request any information which might otherwise be construed to be outside its scope. The singular includes plural number, and vice versa. The masculine includes the feminine and neuter genders.
5. The terms "**person**" or "**persons**" means natural persons, firms, partnerships, associations, corporations, subsidiaries, divisions, departments, joint ventures, proprietorships, syndicates, or other legal, business or government entities, and all subsidiaries, affiliates, divisions, departments, branches, and other units thereof.
6. The term "**identify,**" when used in a question about individuals, means to provide the following information: (a) the individual's complete name and title; and (b) the individual's business address and phone number.
7. The terms "**referring or relating,**" with respect to any given subject, means anything that constitutes, contains, embodies, reflects, identifies, states, refers to, deals with or is in any manner whatsoever pertinent to that subject.
8. The term "**employee**" means agent, borrowed employee, casual employee, consultant, contractor, de facto employee, independent contractor, joint adventurer, loaned employee, part-time employee, permanent employee, provisional employee, subcontractor, or any other type of service provider.