

## Susan Buchanan - NOAA Federal

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**From:** Susan Buchanan - NOAA Federal  
**Sent:** Saturday, September 7, 2019 9:35 PM  
**To:** Andrew Stern - NOAA Federal  
**Cc:** Mary Erickson - NOAA Federal; Kevin Cooley - NOAA Federal; George Jungbluth - NOAA Federal; Chris Vaccaro; John D. Murphy; Louis Uccellini - NOAA Federal  
**Subject:** Re: TIME SENSITIVE inquiry from WaPo

Julie cleared the response. [REDACTED] (b)(5) Here's the final:

"NWS leadership sent this guidance to field staff so they (and the entire agency) could maintain operational focus on Dorian and other severe weather hazards without distraction."

I realize I did not incorporate the notion of "mixed messages," in the version I sent to Julie -- but that might raise more questions and distract from our main point, which is concise as is. If all are okay, I'd like to send soonest.

--  
Susan Buchanan  
Director of Public Affairs  
National Weather Service  
301-427-9000

On Sat, Sep 7, 2019 at 9:29 PM Andrew Stern - NOAA Federal <[andrew.stern@noaa.gov](mailto:andrew.stern@noaa.gov)> wrote:  
You may be interested in the recent release from AMS:  
<https://www.ametsoc.org/index.cfm/ams/about-ams/response-to-noaa-statement/>

### Response to NOAA Statement

The American Meteorological Society fully supports our colleagues at NOAA, who consistently put the safety of the American public first and foremost. They work tirelessly employing state of the art science to keep Americans safe. With respect to the press release that was issued by NOAA on Friday, 6 September, regarding the forecast of Hurricane Dorian, AMS believes the criticism of the Birmingham forecast office is unwarranted; rather they should have been commended for their quick action based on science in clearly communicating the lack of threat to the citizens of Alabama.

On Sat, Sep 7, 2019 at 9:20 PM Susan Buchanan - NOAA Federal <[susan.buchanan@noaa.gov](mailto:susan.buchanan@noaa.gov)> wrote:  
Thanks everyone. I'll let you know if I hear back from Julie. -Susan

On Sat, Sep 7, 2019 at 9:12 PM Mary Erickson - NOAA Federal <[mary.erickson@noaa.gov](mailto:mary.erickson@noaa.gov)> wrote:  
Team - Susan has the timeline now - nothing was out of turn, but concur with message about focusing on ops.

Sent from my iPhone  
Mary Erickson  
NOAA DAA for Wx Services  
[REDACTED] (b)(6) (Cell)

On Sep 7, 2019, at 9:05 PM, Kevin Cooley - NOAA Federal <[kevin.cooley@noaa.gov](mailto:kevin.cooley@noaa.gov)> wrote:

Given that we had direction to avoid posting and run through either NWS or NOAA, I pull my thought about pushing the WaPO to NOAA Comms. I like the themes of maintaining focus on operations and avoiding unintended mixed messaging.

Kevin

On Sat, Sep 7, 2019 at 8:57 PM Andrew Stern - NOAA Federal <[andrew.stern@noaa.gov](mailto:andrew.stern@noaa.gov)> wrote:

George - was not aware of your direction - but ultimately, the message was the same.

On Sat, Sep 7, 2019 at 8:55 PM George Jungbluth - NOAA Federal <[george.jungbluth@noaa.gov](mailto:george.jungbluth@noaa.gov)> wrote:

At the same time Andy was providing that guidance we got direction from NOAA to refer any inquiries to them, and I contacted Ops Center with the same request. I did not realize we had parallel guidance to ops center!

G

On Sat, Sep 7, 2019 at 8:51 PM Andrew Stern - NOAA Federal <[andrew.stern@noaa.gov](mailto:andrew.stern@noaa.gov)> wrote:

Louis,

Here is the timeline. I received the message from Susan about the Washington Examiner article. That was the first indication that there was a POTUS post.

After that, I sent the second message for the ROC to send out a message. I coordinated this with Mary via text. The resulting message to the field is the 3rd message below.

On Sun, Sep 1, 2019 at 4:15 PM Andrew Stern - NOAA Federal <[andrew.stern@noaa.gov](mailto:andrew.stern@noaa.gov)> wrote:

FYI - see article from Washington Examiner from this afternoon. Puts POTUS impact claims against the official forecast and now one WFO is refuting POTUS comments. Just want you to be aware. Need to keep our folks safe and out of the fray.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Andrew Stern - NOAA Federal** <[andrew.stern@noaa.gov](mailto:andrew.stern@noaa.gov)>

Date: Sun, Sep 1, 2019 at 4:49 PM

Subject: ACTION: Request Ops Center transmit message to the field

To: National Weather Service Operations Center <[nws.opscenter@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.opscenter@noaa.gov)>

Cc: John Murphy <[john.d.murphy@noaa.gov](mailto:john.d.murphy@noaa.gov)>, Mary Erickson

<[mary.erickson@noaa.gov](mailto:mary.erickson@noaa.gov)>, Susan Buchanan <[Susan.Buchanan@noaa.gov](mailto:Susan.Buchanan@noaa.gov)>, Lauren

Gaches - NOAA Federal <[lauren.gaches@noaa.gov](mailto:lauren.gaches@noaa.gov)>

Ops Center,

Please send out a message to all ROCs to alert all WFOs to only stick with official NHC forecasts if questions arise from some national level social media posts this afternoon.

Staff should not provide any opinion about the national level posts and should direct any questions that cannot be satisfied to NOAA Public Affairs. Either have them contact Susan Buchanan ([susan.buchanan@noaa.gov](mailto:susan.buchanan@noaa.gov)) or Lauren Gaches ([lauren.gaches@noaa.gov](mailto:lauren.gaches@noaa.gov)).

Thank you,  
Andy

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **National Weather Service Operations Center** <[nws.opscenter@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.opscenter@noaa.gov)>  
Date: Sun, Sep 1, 2019 at 5:04 PM  
Subject: Message From NWS Leadership about Social Media Posts  
To: \_NCEP AWC NAM <[ncep.awc.nam@noaa.gov](mailto:ncep.awc.nam@noaa.gov)>, \_NWS AR ROC <[nws.ar.roc@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.ar.roc@noaa.gov)>, \_NWS CR ROC <[CRHROC@noaa.gov](mailto:CRHROC@noaa.gov)>, \_NWS ER ROC <[erh.roc@noaa.gov](mailto:erh.roc@noaa.gov)>, \_NWS PR ROC <[pr.roc@noaa.gov](mailto:pr.roc@noaa.gov)>, \_NWS SR ROC <[SR-SRH.Roc@noaa.gov](mailto:SR-SRH.Roc@noaa.gov)>, \_NWS WR ROC <[WR.ROC@noaa.gov](mailto:WR.ROC@noaa.gov)>, Christopher Landsea - NOAA Federal <[chris.landsea@noaa.gov](mailto:chris.landsea@noaa.gov)>, Darin Figurskey <[darin.figurskey@noaa.gov](mailto:darin.figurskey@noaa.gov)>, Darone Jones - NOAA Federal <[darone.jones@noaa.gov](mailto:darone.jones@noaa.gov)>, Jon Gottschalck - NOAA Federal <[Jon.Gottschalck@noaa.gov](mailto:Jon.Gottschalck@noaa.gov)>, National Water Center Ops <[nws.nwc.ops@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.nwc.ops@noaa.gov)>, NCEP - WPC - Greg Carbin <[gregory.carbin@noaa.gov](mailto:gregory.carbin@noaa.gov)>, NWS Ops Center <[nws.opscenter@noaa.gov](mailto:nws.opscenter@noaa.gov)>, Patrick Marsh - NOAA Federal <[Patrick.Marsh@noaa.gov](mailto:Patrick.Marsh@noaa.gov)>, sbf wpc - NOAA Service Account <[sbf.wpc@noaa.gov](mailto:sbf.wpc@noaa.gov)>, William Bunting - NOAA Federal <[william.bunting@noaa.gov](mailto:william.bunting@noaa.gov)>  
Cc: Lauren Gaches - NOAA Federal <[lauren.gaches@noaa.gov](mailto:lauren.gaches@noaa.gov)>, Public Affairs - Susan Buchanan <[Susan.Buchanan@noaa.gov](mailto:Susan.Buchanan@noaa.gov)>, Andrew Stern - NOAA Federal <[Andrew.Stern@noaa.gov](mailto:Andrew.Stern@noaa.gov)>, NWS Ops Center - Mike Sowko <[Mike.Sowko@noaa.gov](mailto:Mike.Sowko@noaa.gov)>, Mike Bettwy <[mike.bettwy@noaa.gov](mailto:mike.bettwy@noaa.gov)>, Cindy Woods <[Cindy.Woods@noaa.gov](mailto:Cindy.Woods@noaa.gov)>, John Murphy - NOAA Federal <[John.D.Murphy@noaa.gov](mailto:John.D.Murphy@noaa.gov)>, Mary Erickson - NOAA Federal <[mary.erickson@noaa.gov](mailto:mary.erickson@noaa.gov)>

Attention all ROCs and National Centers,

NWS Leadership is asking that we only stick with official NHC forecasts if questions arise from some national level social media posts which hit the news this afternoon. Staff should not provide any opinion about the national level posts and should direct any questions that cannot be satisfied to NOAA Public Affairs. Either have them contact Susan Buchanan ([susan.buchanan@noaa.gov](mailto:susan.buchanan@noaa.gov)) or Lauren Gaches ([lauren.gaches@noaa.gov](mailto:lauren.gaches@noaa.gov)).

ROCs please pass along this message to WFOs, National Centers please pass along to staff working social media.

Thanks,

Shawn Smith

On Sat, Sep 7, 2019 at 8:43 PM Louis Uccellini - NOAA Federal <[louis.uccellini@noaa.gov](mailto:louis.uccellini@noaa.gov)> wrote:

Andy: I was going to offer a modification to your suggested reply below but paused when I read in a later email that these were your exact words. What was going to insert was the word "ongoing" or "developing" between "other" and "severe". To read "...other ongoing severe ..." or "...other developing severe...".

If you want to stick with original, I understand but I thought your point about the other events was important and I was trying to insert a bit more urgency

Louis

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Dr. Louis W. Uccellini, Director  
NOAA/National Weather Service  
1325 East West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
[301.713.9095](tel:301.713.9095)

On Sep 7, 2019, at 8:20 PM, Andrew Stern - NOAA Federal <[andrew.stern@noaa.gov](mailto:andrew.stern@noaa.gov)> wrote:

Susan,

I concur with your assessment. However, it was bigger than just Dorian. We had wildfires ongoing in the west, developing tropical systems in both the Atlantic and Pacific basins and had other areas of thunderstorms to watch. I would modify it slightly. Our mission is supposed to be apolitical.

"NWS leadership sent these directives to field staff so they (and the entire agency) could maintain operational focus on Dorian and other severe weather hazards without distraction."

On Sat, Sep 7, 2019 at 8:12 PM Susan Buchanan - NOAA Federal <[susan.buchanan@noaa.gov](mailto:susan.buchanan@noaa.gov)> wrote:

We may not get clearance to respond, but if Julie approves, I suggest something simple like this:

"NWS leadership sent these directives to field staff so they (and the entire agency) could maintain operational focus on Dorian without distraction."

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Susan Buchanan  
Director of Public Affairs  
National Weather Service  
301-427-9000

On Sat, Sep 7, 2019 at 8:06 PM Louis Uccellini - NOAA Federal <[louis.uccellini@noaa.gov](mailto:louis.uccellini@noaa.gov)> wrote:

George et al; Including Andy if John is still in the air: Need to work with Susan and Chris on this one. Louis

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Dr. Louis W. Uccellini, Director  
NOAA/National Weather Service  
1325 East West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
[301.713.9095](tel:301.713.9095)

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Freedman, Andrew"  
<[Andrew.Freedman@washpost.com](mailto:Andrew.Freedman@washpost.com)>  
**Date:** September 7, 2019 at 7:49:35 PM EDT  
**To:** Christopher Vaccaro - NOAA Federal  
<[christopher.vaccaro@noaa.gov](mailto:christopher.vaccaro@noaa.gov)>, Scott Smullen - NOAA  
Federal <[scott.smullen@noaa.gov](mailto:scott.smullen@noaa.gov)>,  
"louis.uccellini@noaa.gov" <[louis.uccellini@noaa.gov](mailto:louis.uccellini@noaa.gov)>,  
"Itkowitz, Colby" <[Colby.Itkowitz@washpost.com](mailto:Colby.Itkowitz@washpost.com)>,  
"susan.buchanan@noaa.gov" <[susan.buchanan@noaa.gov](mailto:susan.buchanan@noaa.gov)>  
**Cc:** "Samenow, Jason" <[Jason.Samenow@washpost.com](mailto:Jason.Samenow@washpost.com)>  
**Subject:** **TIME SENSITIVE inquiry from WaPo**

Hi NWS press folks and Director Uccellini,

This is for a Washington Post story \*\*running imminently  
online and in print on Sunday.\*\*

On Sept. 1 and again on Sept. 4, NWS personnel received a  
guidance not to provide opinions on national level social  
media posts in the media and to stick with NHC forecasts if  
questions arise about the posts.

Staff understood this to be a response to President Trump's  
Alabama comments and that they were essentially being  
told not to contradict the president.

Can you respond to this and explain the reason behind  
sending these dual directives?

Please send any responses to Colby and myself. I'm cc'ing  
Jason as well who has been working on this story.

Thank you and all the best,  
-Andrew

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Andrew Stern  
Director, Analyze, Forecast and Support Office

NOAA/National Weather Service  
Office: 301-427-9120  
Cell: (b)(6)

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Andrew Stern  
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Sent from Gmail Mobile

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**Kevin Cooley**  
Director, NWS OPPSD  
SSMC2, Room 16212  
301-427-9810 (office)

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Andrew Stern  
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