

Jeffrey Snyder - NOAA Federal

From: Jeffrey Snyder - NOAA Federal
Sent: Monday, September 9, 2019 12:28 PM
To: Craig McLean - NOAA Federal
Subject: Re: Hurricane Dorian and Exceptional Service

Craig,

I'm sure you get a myriad of emails each day, and I suspect you may get more than usual today, so I'll be short. I want to personally thank you for standing up on this issue and showing tremendous leadership in pursuing integrity and ethics in science within this organization. Following the rather shocking and disheartening release this past Friday, it has been wonderful to see such support voiced by NWS, OAR, and upwards through top NOAA leaders past and present. We serve our customers, the American people (and those outside the US whose lives are affected by forecasts and science that NOAA produces), best by holding the organization accountable and requiring the highest standards for scientific integrity and truthful communication.

It was a pleasure to talk with you at the PECASE ceremony in July, and I, again, express great gratitude to you and others in NOAA leadership (to include leaders in the line offices) who want to hold this organization to the highest of standards.

Respectfully,

Jeff Snyder, Ph.D.
Meteorologist
NOAA/OAR National Severe Storms Laboratory
120 David L. Boren Blvd
Norman, OK 73072
(405) 325-6567

The contents of this message are mine personally and do not necessarily reflect any position of NOAA.

On Sun, Sep 8, 2019 at 11:57 PM Craig McLean - NOAA Federal <craig.mclean@noaa.gov> wrote:

Dear Colleagues,

The fierce storm we know as Hurricane Dorian has concluded its ferocious path through the Bahamas and along the US East Coast. Many of you have contributed to the excellent science that has underpinned the forecasts and current understanding of storms such as this one, which accelerated quite rapidly in intensity. The storm also presented challenges in track which improved with enhanced observations. We know that our collective work, from the scientists in the aircraft penetrating the storm, to the scientists deploying the glider picket line, to the modelers and folks working the physics of the storms, across OAR and in our CI's, and across all NOAA Lines, we are working the problem in order to give the NWS forecasters the best tools we possibly can to keep America and our neighbors safe. Thank you.

During the course of the storm, as I am sure you are aware, there were routine and exceptional expert forecasts, the best possible, issued by the NWS Forecasters. These are remarkable colleagues of ours, who receive our products, use them well, and provide the benefit of their own experience in announcing

accurate forecasts accompanied by the distinction of all credible scientists -- they sign their work. As I'm sure you also know, there was a complex issue involving the President commenting on the path of the hurricane. The NWS Forecaster(s) corrected any public misunderstanding in an expert and timely way, as they should. There followed, last Friday, an unsigned press release from "NOAA" that inappropriately and incorrectly contradicted the NWS forecaster. My understanding is that this intervention to contradict the forecaster was not based on science but on external factors including reputation and appearance, or simply put, political. Our NOAA Scientific Integrity Policy and Code of Scientific Conduct make clear that all NOAA employees shall approach all scientific activities with honesty, objectively, and completely, without allegiance to individuals, organizations, or ideology. The content of this press release is very concerning as it compromises the ability of NOAA to convey life-saving information necessary to avoid substantial and specific danger to public health and safety. If the public cannot trust our information, or we debase our forecaster's warnings and products, that specific danger arises.

You know that the value of our science is in the complexity of our understanding, our ability to convey that understanding to a wide audience of users of this information, and to establish and sustain the public trust in the truth and legitimacy of that information. Unfortunately, the press release of last Friday violated this trust and violated NOAA's policies of scientific integrity. In my role as Assistant Administrator for Research, and as I continue to administratively serve as Acting Chief Scientist, I am pursuing the potential violations of our NOAA Administrative Order on Scientific Integrity. Thankfully, we have such policies that are independently cited as among the best in the federal community, if not the best. Your NOAA and OAR management and leadership team believes in these policies and principles. I have a responsibility to pursue these truths. I will.

Thank you for your continued excellent work, and your trust. Carry on.

Craig

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Craig N. McLean
Assistant Administrator
Oceanic and Atmospheric Research
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1315 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Office: 301-713-2458