

Griffin Palmer

From: Griffin Palmer
Sent: Sunday, September 8, 2019 2:16 PM
To: julie.roberts@noaa.gov
Subject: You owe Americans an explanation

Ms. Roberts:

I am a taxpayer who grew up in a part of the U.S. where accurate, scientific weather information, untainted by partisan slant, political cronyism or political toadyism, is a matter of life and death.

I demand that you, NOAA's director of communications, either:

1) Publicly and forcefully repudiate NOAA's unattributed statement of Sept. 6, which attacks a faithful public servant's reputation and career, while resorting to factual dissemblance in an attempt to justify President Trump's grossly irresponsible "tweet" of Sept. 1, in which he wrote that Alabama would "most likely be hit (much) harder than expected" by Hurricane Dorian; or

2) Publicly acknowledge that you and your office are responsible for the Sept. 6 statement, apologize sincerely, and resign.

Because you held a position with Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign, and were later a member of his inaugural committee, the need for you to personally and publicly de-politicize this situation is acute.

The statement has politicized a vital branch of U.S. government in a manner that is antithetical to American ideals. You and I both know this travesty of government "communication" cannot go unrectified.

The Sept. 6 NOAA statement asserts, "From Wednesday, August 28, through Monday, Sept. 2, the information provided by NOAA and the National Hurricane Center to President Trump and the wider public demonstrated that tropical-storm-force winds from Hurricane Dorian could impact Alabama."

This is disgusting equivocation. The greatest probability of tropical-storm-force winds ever shown for Alabama in Hurricane Advisories #15 through #41 (https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/archive/2019/DORIAN_graphics.php?product=wind_probs_34_F120) is the 30 percent to 40 percent range, shown in Advisory #26, issued Friday, Aug. 30, at 2 p.m.

That range is shown only for a tiny sliver of the state's landlocked southeastern corner. The state's coastline is shown in the same advisory to face only a 5 percent to 10 percent probability.

By 8 p.m. on Aug. 30, only a small fraction of Alabama's coastline is shown to face any risk, at all, of tropical-storm-force winds, and only a 5 percent to 10 percent probability. The greatest risk faced by any part of the state at that time is a 10 percent to 20 percent probability.

By 7:51 a.m. on Sept. 1, when President Trump claimed that Alabama would "most likely" be hit by tropical storm winds, the only part of Alabama that NOAA was showing at risk for such winds was a portion of the southeastern quadrant, with an estimated 5 percent to 10 probability.

There is an enormous chasm of meaning between “most likely” and 5 percent to 10 percent probability.

There is an enormous chasm between honesty and NOAA’s shameful statement of Sept. 6.

If you are not responsible for this grotesque distortion of the truth in defense of Mr. Trump’s irresponsible, wildly inaccurate tweet, you must identify those who are, and hold them to account.

If you are responsible, you must publicly apologize and resign.

These are the only two ways you can hope to salvage NOAA’s credibility. It is a gross disservice to our country to sacrifice NOAA's credibility in an effort to shore up Mr. Trump's.

Sincerely,
Griffin Palmer
Brooklyn, NY