

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 6, 2025

Howard Lutnick
Secretary-Designate
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

Jeremy Pelter
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary-Designate Lutnick and Acting Secretary Pelter:

We are writing in response to reports that unelected and unvetted associates of Elon Musk and the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) have targeted the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), as advocated in Project 2025, the Heritage Foundation plan that was vehemently *disavowed* by then-candidate, now-President Donald Trump.

We appreciated your own remarks committing yourself to defending the independence, integrity and existence of NOAA during your confirmation hearing. We now call on you to keep your word and ask that you join us in a visit to NOAA headquarters in Silver Spring this week or next to reaffirm your unwavering support for this crucial agency.

Unvetted and unknown DOGE bureaucrats on Musk's landing team have been visiting NOAA's headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, which we represent, reportedly with the intent to break up NOAA and move its functions into the Department of the Interior, an idea that you explicitly rejected in your Congressional testimony and would require Congressional approval. Please speak out immediately once again to emphatically reject it. America needs to understand precisely the Administration's plans for NOAA's future. Will the Administration follow your testimony as the nominee to lead the Commerce Department? Or will it follow the designs of Project 2025?

As you know, and we hope you will make clear to the public, NOAA is essential to American life, science, and commerce. It is the backbone of the nation's weather-reporting infrastructure. Americans rely on the National Weather Service's forecasts to plan for a myriad of day-to-day activities and billions of dollars of economic endeavors, including construction, farming, and fishing. Our businesses can't pour a foundation, plant crops, or head out to sea without accurate weather information. Forecasting websites, TV broadcasters, and other weather-

related services rely on NOAA's data and information to give millions of American workers, businesses, motorists, and other transportation nodes crucial information. In a time of rising costs under this Administration, closing NOAA would be a costly debacle and an outrageous wealth transfer from the American people to private corporations, as citizens would be forced to pay for-profit companies for a service that we have always made free to the public.

NOAA's critical work in tracking and forecasting hurricanes, tornadoes, and wildfires is, of course, a proven and indispensable life-saver. The agency uses satellites, ships, aircraft, buoys, and other state-of-the-art scientific equipment to provide a critical safety net that is the envy of the world. By apprising the public about these potential disasters as quickly as possible, Americans can stormproof their properties, stock up on essential goods, find shelter, and, if necessary, evacuate from the danger of a storm's path in real time.

While NOAA is well-known for its role in protecting the health of commercial fisheries, including those in Maryland, the agency also plays a key role in protecting public health through the Seafood Inspection Program and the Seafood Import Monitoring Program. These services ensure that fish, shellfish, and fishery products produced in and imported to the United States are high quality and safe for public consumption. In 2023, the United States imported over \$25 billion worth of seafood. NOAA helps ensure that these products meet our health standards and prevent the proliferation of acute illnesses and diseases caused by contaminated seafood.

In short, America depends on NOAA and we are depending on you to defend its integrity and very existence against Elon Musk and his unelected, unvetted team.

We appreciate your past articulated strong support for NOAA's workers and mission. Upon your confirmation, you will come to learn what we already know from so many constituents: NOAA's employees are dedicated public servants whose love for our nation will fill you with pride about what we can achieve together.

Please join us in visiting NOAA's headquarters in Silver Spring so you can meet these dedicated professionals and hear of their crucial work for all of us.

We thank you for your attention to this pressing matter and look forward to your timely response.

Very truly yours,



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



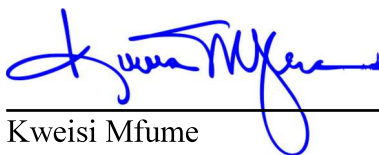
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
U.S. Senator



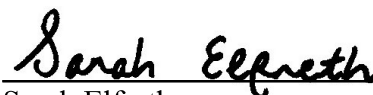
Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress



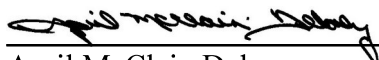
Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress



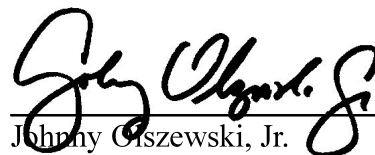
Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress



Sarah Elfreth
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April McClain Delaney
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Johnny Ciszewski, Jr.
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