

U.S. Congressman  
**Nick Rahall**  
*WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MAY 8, 1991**

**CONTACT: STEVE SPINA**

**PHONE: (202) 225-3452**

**RAHALL URGES SAVING WEATHER SERVICE "FOR A RAINY DAY"**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Kentucky Democrat U.S. Rep. Chris Perkins, working with U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV), today offered amendments that would maintain the weather service stations' standards nationally, including those in Huntington and Beckley, and require the Secretary of Commerce to ensure that closing of these stations will not result in any degradation of weather services, including community preparedness and public liaison provided to affected areas.

The amendments were included as part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration authorization bill (NOAA), which was cleared by the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

"Because of our mountainous topography, weather forecasting is all the more difficult and conditions vary greatly from one mountain to another," said Rahall. "I am just not convinced that closing these stations serves anyone's best interests. I think we need to save these stations for a rainy day."

Under the amendments, the National Weather service must maintain a liaison officer for two years after an office targeted for closing, consolidation, automation or relocation. The National Weather Service must ensure that the modernization program does not degrade the level of public and community preparedness offered to such areas.

"By community preparedness, I mean flood early warning among other things," said Rahall. "We must always strive to accurately warn southern West Virginia's communities of eminent danger of flooding. Some of those floods are flash floods and need the human factor in averting devastation."

The amendments also call for an objective agency, the National Academy of Sciences, to study those areas in which "significant doubt" exists about the ability of the modernization program to maintain the standards the law provides, service based on standards of the NASA Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1989.

The House and Senate Committees on Science and Space Technology will receive for review such questionable certifications within 180 days.

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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 30, 1991

COMMITTEES:  
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NATIONAL PARKS AND  
PUBLIC LANDS

PUBLIC WORKS AND  
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SUBCOMMITTEES:  
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Honorable James H. Scheuer  
Chairman  
House Subcommittee on the  
Environment  
H2-388 Ford House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your recent letter to me outlining your oversight and concerns of the National Weather Service's (NWS) technology modernization program. I commend you and your subcommittee's work on this matter.

You mentioned our colleague, Congressman Perkins, who did share with me a letter he forwarded you dated April 10, 1991. As you know, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Perkins and I share a common border between our districts. Our districts share many common characteristics, not the least of them being a rugged topography, which is very susceptible to flooding. Our airports' locations demand precise weather forecasting and information on current conditions.

Because of our mountainous topography, weather forecasting is all the more difficult and conditions can and do vary greatly from one side of a mountain range to another.

As you know, the NWS's modernization strategy proposes all reporting for my district be done from an office located in Charleston, West Virginia which at points is almost 100 miles from my district's borders. My concern is that the NEXRAD system be able to accurately, consistently, and with a high dependability be able to report and disseminate precise weather conditions, warnings, and forecasts for all points of my district.

Before my staff spoke with Mr. Kurt Stanford of your staff, my office was under the distinct impression from several conversations with the NWS that the NEXRAD program could receive certification from information gleaned from a handful of test sites around the country. None of the test sites on which I was briefed had much similarity to my district's needs.

The Honorable James H. Scheuer  
Page 2  
April 30, 1991

I was interested to learn that the NWS will have to 1) certify the effectiveness of the NEXRAD program in each area in which it is employed and, 2) include existing personnel in my district in certifying the NEXRAD system for southern West Virginia by comparing it to existing facilities and personnel.

While these efforts will provide some confidence in the accountability of the NEXRAD system, I am still concerned about the length of time the NEXRAD system will be studied in southern West Virginia, and the weight the local existing personnel's recommendations will have on the overall certification process. As you know, from the local office to the Secretary's desk is indeed a long road with many sidetracks and opportunities for other considerations to weigh heavily on the decision making process.


The replacement of the existing weather service seems such an essential and important element for the public welfare that some objective source of certification ought to be included in the process. Mr. Perkins has suggested the General Accounting Office, with the assistance of the National Research Council. I would continue to support this effort and ask for your thoughts on this specific issue.

I also applaud the subcommittee's support of the goals of the Perkins's amendments. I look forward to working with you and our colleagues in crafting these necessary and critical measures into agreeable language.

I would certainly appreciate your thoughts on the above and I will keep you apprised of my actions in these matters.

With warm regard, I am,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Rahall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "N" and "R".

NICK J. RAHALL, II  
Member of Congress

NJR/tkk



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TRANSPORTATION

SUBCOMMITTEES:  
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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Honorable Don Ritter  
Ranking Republican Member  
Subcommittee On The Environment  
Suite 2320 Rayburn House Office  
Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Don:

Thank you for your recent letter to me outlining your oversight and concerns of the National Weather Service's (NWS) technology modernization program. I commend you and your subcommittee's work on this matter.

You mentioned our colleague, Congressman Perkins, who did share with me a letter he forwarded you dated April 10, 1991. As you know, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Perkins and I share a common border between our districts. Our districts share many common characteristics, not the least of them being a rugged topography, which is very susceptible to flooding. Our airports' locations demand precise weather forecasting and information on current conditions.

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Member of Congress

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April 30, 1991

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The Honorable George E Brown, Jr.  
Chairman  
Committee On Science, Space, and  
Technology  
2321 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman

Knowing of your interest in the National Weather Service's (NWS) technology modernization program, I wanted to share with you my recent correspondence with Rep. Jim Scheuer:

Thank you for your recent letter to me outlining your oversight and concerns of the National Weather Service's (NWS) technology modernization program. I commend you and your subcommittee's work on this matter.

You mentioned our colleague, Congressman Perkins, who did share with me a letter he forwarded you dated April 10, 1991. As you know, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Perkins and I share a common border between our districts. Our districts share many common characteristics, not the least of them being a rugged topography, which is very susceptible to flooding. Our airports' locations demand precise weather forecasting and information on current conditions.

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Member of Congress

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**Congress of the United States**  
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**Washington, DC 20515**

May 2, 1991

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The Honorable Jim Bacchus  
Member  
U.S. House of Representatives  
431 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Jim:

As you may know, the Science, Space, and Technology Committee marks up the NOAA reauthorization bill on May 8. Our colleague, Chris Perkins, will offer two important amendments to block any closings of several National Weather Service Offices (WSO) nationwide which would endanger weather reporting services, and thus the public safety.

While you consider the reauthorization, I would ask you to keep two critical points in mind.

\* 1). The National Weather Service (NWS) has testified that the continued staffing of WSOs would fulfill the need for public liaison services and provide a conduit for community preparedness. Additionally, the Perkins amendment calls for an appropriate process of comprehensive certification and personnel relocations, stating "such action will not result in any degradation of weather services provided to the affected area."

2). The NWS has not answered to my satisfaction a pivotal question. Under current law, the NWS is NOT required to conduct side-by-side operational comparisons of the old and the new systems in every area affected by the proposed system. As Chris has said, "the Weather Service's planned demonstrations in Norman, Oklahoma, Denver, and Kansas City could suffice to 'prove' that a degradation of services would not occur anywhere in the United States." I know you will agree that the vast regions of this country differ in topography as greatly as an Arctic winter and a summer in this City do.

I strongly support these measures, and hope you will be able to fully consider them.

Sincerely,



NICK J. RAHALL, II  
Member of Congress



# OPINIONS

Robert Carlson  
President & Publisher

Zack Binkley  
Executive Editor

James E. Casto  
Associate Editor

A10 The Herald-Dispatch

SATURDAY, MAY 11, 1991

## Rahall, Perkins fight to keep forecasters

The Weather Service is in the process of installing new, high-tech equipment at locations around the country in an effort to improve its forecasting.

That's the good news. The bad news is that in many instances the new computerized equipment would take the place of those individuals now staffing the weather stations involved. In southern West Virginia, the current weather stations at Huntington and Beckley would be closed. Only that in Charleston would remain open.

Now, new action by Reps. Nick Rahall, D-W.Va., and Chris Perkins, D-Ky., has thrown a welcome kink in those plans.

The lawmakers have successfully inserted two amendments in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's authorization bill, which has been approved by the Committee on Science, Space and Technology and sent to the House floor.

The first of these would mandate that the Weather Service, before it could fully close any station, would

have to keep at least one staffer at the station for two years. This "liaison officer" would monitor the performance of the new equipment — while keeping a trained eye out for weather emergencies, such as the flash floods that are all too common in the mountains.

The second amendment would stipulate that the House and Senate committees on science, space and technology could review any permanent weather station closings.

Some doubtless will protest that Rahall and Perkins are engaging in micromanagement — if not outright meddling. But those hereabouts who know the horror that a flash flood can bring surely will breathe easier knowing that, if the Rahall-Perkins amendments are enacted, the human factor won't be totally removed from local weather observations.

"I'm just not convinced that closing these stations serves anyone's best interests," complains Rahall. "I think we need to save these stations for a rainy day."

Well said, sir.

## VOICE OF T

### Parental notification law will curb abortions

To the editor:

A bill was introduced in Congress March 19 that would prevent minor girls from having abortions without the knowledge of a parent.

The Family Unity and Parental Notification Act (HR-1490) is sponsored by Reps. Chris Smith, R-N.J., and Alan Mollohan, D-W.Va. It requires organizations receiving federal funds to notify at least one parent of any girl under 18 before she can undergo an abortion.

Several witnesses testified in favor of parental notification at a recent House subcommittee hearing. One witness testified of having an abortion without her parents' knowledge. Her teacher sent a note home requesting that she babysit all day and spend the night; but instead, the teacher took her to an abortion clinic. The teen-ager suffered serious complications from the abortion. Her mother had to give permission for her to be taken to the hospital for emergency surgery after she began hemorrhaging while at school.

The founder of Mothers Against Minors' Abortions spoke out for parental notification. Her daughter suffered complications after an abortion that was performed on her without the knowledge of her parents. Mrs. Ellene Roberts of MAMA addressed the need for parents, who are familiar with their children's medical history and psychological needs, to be involved in the abortion decision.

"It's hard to believe an abortionist-for-profit could have the best interest at heart for our daughters," Mrs. Roberts testified.

Also speaking at the hearing was James Rogers, a professor at Wheaton College. He reported on his research, which shows a sharp decline in the abortion rate among Minnesota 15- to 17-year-olds after that state passed a parental notification law in 1981.

Please urge Congress to pass a parental notification law.

Alice Click  
Mount Alto, W.Va.



*As reported*

PERKIN014

## AMENDMENT TO H.R. 2011

OFFERED BY MR. PERKINS

Page 17, after line 8, insert the following new section:

## 1 SEC. 203. WEATHER RADAR REMOVAL OR DEACTIVATION.

2 (a) As part of its review of the National Weather  
3 Service's procedure for making certifications described in  
4 section 408(b) of the National Aeronautics and Space  
5 Administration Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 1989, the  
6 National Academy of Sciences shall identify those affected  
7 areas for which there is a significant doubt that the  
8 Secretary will be able to make such certification. Within 180  
9 days following a certification for an area identified by the  
10 National Academy of Sciences, the Comptroller General of the  
11 United States shall submit a report reviewing such  
12 certification to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and  
13 Transportation of the Senate and the Committee of Science,  
14 Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives.

15 (b) Section 408(a) of the National Aeronautics and Space  
16 Administration Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 1989 is amended  
17 by inserting "<sup>remove</sup>or ~~decommission~~ any National Weather Service  
18 radar (except for the purposes of upgrading such radar on-  
19 site)" after "Service Forecast Office".

20 (c) Section 408(b) of the National Aeronautics and Space



PERKIN014

2

1 Administration Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 1989 is  
2 amended--

3 (1) by inserting "<sup>remove</sup>or ~~decommission~~ any National  
4 Weather Service radar (except for the purposes of  
5 upgrading such radar on-site)" after "any such  
6 office";

7 (2) by amending paragraph (3) to read as follows:

8 "(3) evidence, based on a site-specific operational  
9 demonstration of modernized National Weather Service  
10 operations, including the Next Generation Weather Radar,  
11 for each office to be closed, consolidated, automated, or  
12 relocated, or each National Weather Service radar to be  
13 <sup>removed</sup>decommissioned (except for the purposes of upgrading such  
14 radar on-site), which supports the conclusion that no  
15 degradation in services will result from such action.";  
16 and

17 (3) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following:  
18 "A certification under this subsection shall be initially  
19 prepared by the meteorologist-in-charge at the office to be  
20 closed, consolidated, automated, or relocated, and the  
21 Secretary shall identify and explain any substantive  
22 differences between the certification as prepared by the  
23 meteorologist-in-charge and as submitted to the Committees  
24 under this subsection."

*As reported*

PERKIN011

## AMENDMENT TO H.R. 2011

OFFERED BY MR. PERKINS

Page 17, after line 8, insert the following new section:

## 1 SEC. 203. PUBLIC INSTITUTION LIAISON AND COMMUNITY

## 2 PREPAREDNESS.

3 In order to maintain liaison with public institutions,  
4 and to assist in community preparedness, the Secretary shall  
5 provide at least one National Weather Service liaison officer  
6 for each area receiving such public institution liaison and  
7 community preparedness services, as of the date of enactment  
8 of this Act, from a Weather Service Office (WSO), a Weather  
9 Service Meteorological Observatory (WSMO), or an Agricultural  
10 Weather Service Center (AWSC). Such liaison officer shall be  
11 provided for at least two years after the WSO, WSMO, or AWSC  
12 is closed, consolidated, automated, or relocated. The  
13 Secretary shall provide such areas with sufficient personnel  
14 to ensure that the modernization and associated restructuring  
15 of the National Weather Service do not result in a  
16 degradation in the level of public institution liaison and  
17 community preparedness services offered to such areas.