

## ELON MUSK ON A SHAM MISSION SAY SENATORS

“Musk’s sham mission is bringing vital programs to a screeching halt,” Rep. Jared Huffman (D-San Rafael), the ranking member of the House Natural Resources Committee, wrote in a statement Thursday. “People nationwide depend on NOAA for free, accurate forecasts, severe weather alerts, and emergency information. Purging the government of scientists, experts, and career civil servants and slashing fundamental programs will cost lives.”

Susan Buchanan, a spokesperson for NOAA, declined to comment on the cuts, saying in a statement that the agency would not be discussing personnel matters, “per long-standing practice.”

“NOAA remains dedicated to its mission, providing timely information, research and resources that serve the American public and ensure our nation’s environmental and economic resilience,” Buchanan said. “We continue to provide weather information, forecasts and warnings pursuant to our public safety mission.”

Tom Di Liberto, a longtime scientist and spokesperson for NOAA's headquarters in Washington, was among those who received a termination email Thursday, along with at least six others in his office. Although he wasn't surprised by the decision — having watched several other federal agencies deal with similar cuts — he said he was still extremely disappointed and feared for NOAA's mission.

“This is not something you would do if you cared about the safety of Americans ... the health of the oceans,” Di Liberto said. He had worked at NOAA since 2010, first on contract for several years before being hired full-time in March 2023.

“We weren’t just hired — a lot of us were working with NOAA for a very long period,” he said. He also noted that his termination email cited that he was fired “because of his ability, knowledge and/or skills do not fit the agency's current needs” — though he said he had received glowing performance reviews.

Several other people who identified themselves as NOAA or weather service employees wrote on social media that they, or family members, had received an email Thursday notifying them that they had been terminated. It appeared that many were considered probationary employees, meaning they were recently hired or promoted.

NOAA's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory posted on X that it would be ending its public communication services "due to a reduction in staff." It wasn't immediately clear how other operations might suffer, but scientists across the globe worried there could be dangerous effects. NOAA agencies provide key alerts and forecasts during weather emergencies and monitor for extreme events, such as hurricanes, tsunamis and dangerous fire weather.

"The fact of the matter is that the private sector, as it presently exists, simply cannot quickly spin up to fill any void left by substantial dismantling of NOAA and/or the NWS," Daniel Swain, a UCLA climate scientist, said in a statement on social media. "The now-confirmed and rumored additional cuts to come at NOAA/NWS are spectacularly short-sighted, and ultimately will deal a major self-inflicted wound to the public safety of Americans and the resiliency of the American economy to weather and climate-related disasters."