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June 23, 2025

Ms. Laura Grimm  
Acting Administrator  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
1401 Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Acting Administrator Grimm:

It has come to my attention over the weekend the ongoing outage of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) All-Hazards Weather Radios in Southeast Michigan. As I hope you know, on June 22, 2025, the National Weather Service (NWS) Detroit/Pontiac office issued a public information statement stating that five NOAA Weather Radio transmitters were offline due to a telecommunications failure.<sup>1</sup>

These radios are a critical part of our public safety infrastructure, particularly for our rural and low-connectivity communities where internet and cellular based warnings may be inaccessible. The failure of these radios, especially now during a period of severe weather threats, is a threat to many communities.

Timely and accessible alerts are lifesaving. We are in one of the most dangerous weeks of the year in Michigan.<sup>2</sup> A prolonged heat dome has increased the risk of heat-related illness, power outages, and storm activity.<sup>3</sup> As of this month, Michigan has already confirmed its 29th tornado of the year, putting us on track for the highest number of tornadoes since 1991.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "NOAA Weather Radio Outage." *National Weather Service*. 22 Jun. 2025. Retrieved from: <https://www.weather.gov/dtx/NOAAWeatherRadioOutage>.

<sup>2</sup> Gmitter, T. "Extreme Heat Warning issued for several Michigan counties, temps to feel like 105+ degrees." *MLive.com*. 22 Jun. 2025. Retrieved from: <https://www.mlive.com/weather/2025/06/extreme-heat-warning-issued-for-several-michigan-counties-temps-to-feel-like-105-degrees.html>.

<sup>3</sup> "Detroit faces dangerous heat wave, with temps in high 90s forecast in days ahead." *Planet Detroit*. 18 Jun. 2025. Retrieved from: <https://planetdetroit.org/2025/06/heat-dome-detroit-michigan/>.

<sup>4</sup> Booth-Singleton, D. "Michigan's 29th tornado in 2025 confirmed in Macomb County." *CBS News*. 19 Jun. 2025. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbsnews.com/detroit/news/michigans-29th-tornado-2025-confirmed-macomb-county/>.

Reporting has highlighted significant challenges facing NOAA and NWS, including budget cuts and hiring freezes directed by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).<sup>5</sup> These constraints may have delayed radar upgrades, reduced forecasting capacity, and left critical positions unfilled, including at the NWS Detroit/Pontiac office. We must understand these impacts and communities need emergency systems that will work when in danger.

Given the severity of the current conditions and the public safety risks posed by this outage, I request a response to the following questions by June 27, 2025:

- How long have these radios been offline in Southeast Michigan, and when is full service expected to be restored?
- What are the specific causes of the current radio outages?
- How have recent proposed budget cuts and streamlining efforts — including those directed by DOGE — affected NWS’s ability to prevent, respond to, and recover from outages, including this one?
- What interim measures are in place to ensure communities continue to receive timely emergency alerts while the radios are offline?
- How are NOAA and NWS communicating both the outage and available alternatives to the public, local emergency managers, and first responders?
- What investments or operational changes are being made to prevent future outages and ensure redundancy in our national weather alert infrastructure?
- What is the current staff vacancy rate at the NWS Detroit/Pontiac office? How has it affected operations and response times?
- What concrete steps are NOAA and NWS taking to modernize, protect, and staff its critical communications systems to build long-term resilience, as extreme weather events become more frequent and severe?
- What are NOAA and NWS’s plans to ensure uninterrupted public warning services in Michigan and across the country as we move further into peak severe weather season?

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<sup>5</sup> Borenstein, S. “Nearly half of National Weather Service offices have 20% vacancy rates, and experts say it’s a risk.” *Associated Press*. 4 Apr. 2025. Retrieved from: <https://apnews.com/article/doge-weather-cuts-tornado-dangerous-staff-warnings-aa7db3e0d0009d99c143742ab722c40a>.

Communities in Southeast Michigan depend on NWS to provide timely and accurate warnings. It is essential that the public maintains confidence in these systems. I urge your immediate attention to this outage and request a full report for the public of what occurred, along with a clear plan to restore service and strengthen our weather alert infrastructure.

Ensuring public safety remains my top priority. Thank you, and I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Dingell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress