

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 28, 2023

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

We write to express our concerns that outdated coronavirus procedures at National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) facilities, including the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO), remain in place even as the COVID-19 national emergency and public health emergency has expired.

Effective on May 12, 2023, the COVID-19 vaccine mandate for federal contractors, federal employees, and others was terminated when President Biden signed [Executive Order 14099 on Moving Beyond COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements for Federal Workers](#)^[1].

According to the Department of Commerce (DOC), the DOC Workplace Safety Plan^[2] states, “the Department does not require onsite contractor employees and visitors to provide information about their vaccination status at this time. Additionally, onsite contractor employees and visitors are not required to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test when entering or in a DOC facility, regardless of their vaccination status.” While this guidance was issued in January 2023, prior to the Biden administration’s actions, there have been inconsistent applications within DOC bureaus, particularly within NOAA.

The OMAO Aircraft Operations Center (AOC) currently requires individuals to fill out a Visitor Clearance form that asks about individuals’ vaccination status, and physical symptoms. In one example of electronic correspondence, NOAA personnel directed congressional staffers that, “all participants must attest to their vaccination status and be pre-cleared by filling out this [Google] form... in accordance with OMAO COVID requirements,” as recent as July 2023. The OMAO requirements are inconsistent with the federal government’s posture regarding coronavirus management.

Based on the Congressional and Executive branch actions that ended the public health emergency, we request the following information no later than August 31, 2023:

^[1] <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/DCPD-202300394>

^[2] <https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/DOC-Workplace-Safety-Plan.pdf>, Page 10

1. Why is NOAA requiring visitors and guests to report their coronavirus vaccination status after the end of the emergency declaration?
2. How long does the Department and its agencies, plan to screen visitors based on their coronavirus vaccination status?
3. Are Department employees also required to disclose their vaccination status with E.O. 14099 in effect?
 - a. If so, what is the procedure for employees who refuse to comply?
4. Did the OMAO consult with the DOC COVID-19 Coordination Team and the Office of the General Counsel before implementing any onsite contractor or visitor COVID-19 screening testing requirements?

Considering the agency's current requirement is not in compliance with the Executive Order, we would appreciate a response as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



C. Scott Franklin
Member of Congress



Daniel Webster
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Pat Fallon
Member of Congress



Mariannette Miller-Meeks, M.D.
Member of Congress



Burgess Owens
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Chip Roy
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Member of Congress



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Aaron Bean
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Ashley Hinson
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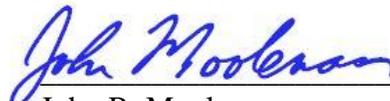
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