

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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May 3, 2012

The Honorable Jane Lubchenco
Undersecretary, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Administrator Lubchenco:

Today, in an article titled "NOAA seeks magician for training conference," *Government Executive* reported that NOAA is advertising to hire a motivational speaker for a leadership conference that would train NOAA officials on "translating magic and principals of the psychology of magic, magic tools, techniques, and experiences into a method of teaching leadership."

The solicitation from NOAA adds that the winning applicant should deliver presentations that include "experiential exercises, physical energizers, magic tricks, puzzles, brain teasers, word games, humor, and teambuilding exercises, designed to demonstrate how to stimulate creativity, encourage active participation, and practice needed skills and competencies". Questioned on the use of taxpayer spending on such activities by *Government Executive*, a NOAA official defended the program's spending.

As the Federal government continues to burden American taxpayers with trillion-dollar deficits and NOAA struggles to meet critical weather forecasting missions to protect lives and property, this type of wasteful spending is simply unacceptable. Accordingly, I call on you to immediately halt spending associated with this conference, and ask you to respond to the following items by no later than May 10th, 2012:

1. Please provide a summary of the training conference details, including the number of participants, total spending, and anticipated spending by activity type (travel, magicians, etc.).
2. Please provide a list of all Leadership Effectiveness & Advancement Program (LEAP) activities the last three years, with detailed spending broken down by activity type.
3. Please provide a list of all direct and indirect NOAA spending on magicians, comedians, and related performers for the last three years.
4. Please provide a complete list of all forthcoming scheduled NOAA employee conferences and anticipated associated spending.

Sincerely,



Ralph M. Hall
Chairman