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Public Information Statement 17-26  
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD  
750 AM EDT Mon Jun 26 2017

To:           Subscribers:  
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From:         Darin Figurskey  
              Chief, Operations Branch  
              Ocean Prediction Center

Subject: Soliciting Comments on Proposed Changes to 500mb Forecasts and Terminating Production of a Small Suite of Products through July 31, 2017

The NWS National Centers for Environmental Prediction's (NCEP's) Ocean Prediction Center (OPC) is soliciting comments on proposed changes to the 500mb forecasts through Monday, July 31, 2017.

OPC plans to automate the 500mb forecasts and disseminate via radiofax and internet forecasts produced directly by the Global Forecast System (GFS) model. The 500mb forecasts will also no longer contain indications of vorticity maxima via trough lines. Currently, forecasters perform little manual intervention to numerical weather prediction output on the 500mb forecasts with the exception of adding vorticity maxima.

Users will now receive 500mb forecasts via the internet on an hourly basis out to 384 hours, or 16 days, at:

<http://mag.ncep.noaa.gov/model-guidance-model-area.php#>

These forecasts will be linked from the OPC internet page, along with highlighting 500mb forecasts at select hours, at:

<https://ocean.weather.gov>

Currently, 500mb forecasts are only available to 48 hours. Also, the change will not affect the radiofax schedule of forecast information. The radiofax schedule can be found at:

<http://tgftp.nws.noaa.gov/fax/marine.shtml>

In addition, the OPC proposes to terminate the production of internet-only products known as "black gif" images. These images are only available via the internet. Continuing to maintain these "black gif" images limits OPC's ability to make improvements to other operational products.

The web URLs that are planned to be discontinued are:

[https://ocean.weather.gov/shtml/pbba51\\_black.gif](https://ocean.weather.gov/shtml/pbba51_black.gif)  
[https://ocean.weather.gov/shtml/ppaa50\\_black.gif](https://ocean.weather.gov/shtml/ppaa50_black.gif)  
[https://ocean.weather.gov/shtml/ppaa51\\_black.gif](https://ocean.weather.gov/shtml/ppaa51_black.gif)  
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[https://ocean.weather.gov/shtml/pwae98\\_black.gif](https://ocean.weather.gov/shtml/pwae98_black.gif)  
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[https://ocean.weather.gov/shtml/pwbe99\\_black.gif](https://ocean.weather.gov/shtml/pwbe99_black.gif)

The information can already be found in a different format in radiofax charts issued by the OPC as well as on the OPC webpage at:

<https://ocean.weather.gov>

Please send comments and requests for more information through Monday, July 31, 2017, to:

Darin Figurskey  
Chief, OPC Operations Branch  
[darin.figurskey@noaa.gov](mailto:darin.figurskey@noaa.gov)  
301-683-1497

National Public Information Statements are online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/notification/archive>

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