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Special Statement on Harassment and Intimidation of Broadcast Meteorologists

30 June 2023

The American Meteorological Society (AMS) stands firmly against the harassment and intimidation faced by Chris Gloninger during his tenure at KCCI News in Des Moines, Iowa. Respectful conduct is a basic requirement of a civil society. While disagreement and robust debate is a cornerstone of scientific advancement, harassment, threats, abuse, and intimidation in any form is never acceptable.

Furthermore, AMS champions the free exchange of scientific data and information, open debate, and the freedom of scientific expression. Threats, harassment, and intimidation, in addition to being ethically reprehensible, are an obstacle to the free exchange of ideas. Chris is a dedicated broadcast meteorologist who holds the AMS' Certified Broadcast Meteorologist (CBM) seal, which requires, among other things, the seal holder to understand critical information related to weather and climate science and the need to educate the public about its potential impacts.

Broadcast meteorologists are a critical partner in scientific discussion. It is well established that society routinely depends upon them for weather forecasts and other environmental information. Often, broadcast meteorologists are also the only people in television newsrooms who have a background in science. The AMS Certified Broadcast Meteorologist (CBM) and Station Scientist initiatives help to ensure broadcast meteorologists are prepared to add important context and information to breaking news stories, such as natural disasters, hazmat situations, and other events.

These principles are of paramount importance, particularly when science has significant implications for society. Climate change is a growing risk that all of humanity is facing, and the weather and climate-science community has a responsibility to communicate this to all stakeholders, including the general public. Critically important to this exchange is that scientists, policy makers, and their supporting institutions bear a special responsibility to safeguard and promote the freedom of responsible scientific expression during these critical times.

The AMS stands in solidarity with Chris Gloninger and all scientists who have experienced harassment or intimidation. We urge organizations, institutions, and individuals to actively oppose and address such behavior, fostering an environment that encourages open dialogue and respects the scientific process. Together, we can create a society that values the integrity of scientific inquiry and supports the essential role of broadcast meteorologists, and all scientists, in advancing knowledge and understanding for the betterment of humanity.

References:

A Statement on the Freedom of Scientific Expression, American Meteorological Society.

AMS Certified Broadcast Meteorologist (CBM) program and AMS Station Scientist Initiative.

AMS Statement on Climate Change.