



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Colorado

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, October 21, 2021

Boulder Weather Research Organization and Officers Pay Over \$2 Million to Resolve Investigation into Improper Use of Federal Grants for Scientific Research

DENVER –The Center for Severe Weather Research (CSWR), a nonprofit organization in Boulder, Colorado, has paid over \$2.4 million to resolve allegations that it engaged in fraud related to grants it received from three federal agencies: the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), an agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce.

CSWR conducted scientific weather research popularly known as “storm chasing” with its “Doppler on Wheels” fleet. The United States alleges that from 2004 to 2020, CSWR improperly requested payments from federal grants for expenses that CSWR had not incurred. The United States also contends that CSWR had inadequate internal controls for the federal funds it received, including inadequate documentation and controls over large cash transactions.

The settlement announced today also resolves allegations that the principals of CSWR, Joshua Wurman and Ling Chan, improperly obtained payments to which they were not entitled. Those allegations, which relate primarily to rental payments for CSWR offices in their personal residence, are resolved with Dr. Wurman and Ms. Chan's repayment to the United States of \$203,776.

“Our office works to protect taxpayers by stopping people who wrongfully obtain federal grant money,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Matt Kirsch. “We will pursue both organizations and individuals if they improperly obtain federal funds or fail to track those funds with adequate safeguards and controls.”

NSF Inspector General Allison Lerner stated: “Each year the National Science Foundation awards millions of dollars in grants to promote promising scientific research. However, the Foundation expects grant recipients to follow federal cost principles. Expenses charged to grants must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable. I commend the U.S. Attorney's Office and our investigative partners for their work on upholding federal grant rules in this case.”

“This investigation is a prodigious example of how we partner with other law enforcement agencies that are committed to protecting federal grants and ensuring that funds are appropriately spent,” said Bob Steinau, Assistant Inspector General for Investigations, NASA Office of Inspector General (OIG). “I want to applaud

the exemplary efforts from Commerce OIG, NSF OIG, and the U.S. Attorney's Office. The NASA OIG along with its law enforcement partners, will continue to aggressively investigate those individuals and entities that take advantage of the trust of the American taxpayers."

"We are committed to ensuring grant funds NOAA awards for important research are handled appropriately and used for their intended purpose," said Scott Kieffer, Assistant Inspector General for Investigations for the U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General (OIG). "Our office appreciates the investigative partnership with the U.S. Attorney's Office, NASA OIG and NSF OIG that led to this result, and we will continue to focus our resources on investigations that serve to protect taxpayer money."

This case was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrea Wang.

Attachment(s):

[Download Settlement Agreement](#)

Topic(s):

Financial Fraud

Grants

Component(s):

[USAO - Colorado](#)

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