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Public Information Statement PNS 15 Updated  
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD  
400 PM EDT Tue Oct 12 2021

TO:           Subscribers:  
              -NOAA Weather Wire Service  
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              Other NWS Partners and Employees

FROM:         Kimberly McMahon, Acting Chief  
              Severe, Fire, Public and Winter Weather Services Branch

SUBJECT: Updated: Comment Period extended through April 30, 2022, on the  
          Experimental Lake Effect Snow (LES) Warning Polygons from NWS  
          Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) Buffalo, NY, Binghamton, NY,  
          Albany, NY, and Cleveland, OH

Updated to extend the comment period through April 30, 2022.

WFOs Buffalo, NY, Binghamton, NY, Albany, NY, and Cleveland, OH will continue to produce experimental LES polygon warnings around Lakes Erie and Ontario per previous years' experiments. For this year, the experiment adds latitude/longitude coordinates to segments of the Winter Weather Message text products and provides increased specificity with polygons issued for sub-county areas.

These coordinates will be added to products containing the LES Warning Valid Time Event code (LE.W) for certain zones in western and central New York and northeastern Ohio, along and downwind of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario.

When a LES Warning is in effect for these areas, WFO Buffalo will also produce a graphic displaying these polygons at:

<https://www.weather.gov/buf/lespolygon>

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) users will be able to use these coordinates to plot areas most prone to heavy LES. WFO Buffalo will also provide a downloadable file of the geographic data on its website at:

<https://www.weather.gov/buf/lespolygon>

The purpose of these polygons is to display small areas of intense snowfall with low visibility at sub-zone levels in upstate New York, northeastern Ohio, and northwestern Pennsylvania where the highest impacts to transportation and commerce are expected.

Coordinates and polygons are only for experimental use. The NWS offices will continue to issue operational zone-based LES warnings for these areas.

Consideration is underway for the evolution of the Experimental LES Warning polygons into operational use. The NWS as a whole is exploring the transition from zone-based long-fuse hazard products into polygon-based long-fuse hazard products; however, there is currently no time estimate for process completion.. Given the positive feedback received since this experiment was introduced in 2015, the NWS does not favor a premature end to this product before this capability is fully realized. Options for operationalization could include transitioning to polygons enabled with Valid Time Event code and/or utilizing emerging GIS-based techniques. The feedback gathered from this experiment will help us provide more precise watches and warnings in the future and will support a decision on the best way forward to make these polygons operational.

You can find more information on the experimental LES warning polygons at the link below:

[https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/PDD\\_ExpLakeEffectSnowWarningPolygons\\_2021.pdf](https://nws.weather.gov/products/PDD/PDD_ExpLakeEffectSnowWarningPolygons_2021.pdf)

Please submit comments through April 30, 2022 via the short survey linked below:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LakeEffectSnowWarningPolygons\\_2021](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LakeEffectSnowWarningPolygons_2021)

If you have questions, please contact:

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National Public Information Statements are online at:

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

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