

November 1, 2001

The Honorable Kay Cole James, Director
Office of Personnel Management
Washington, D.C. 20415

Dear Ms. James:

On behalf of the Commission, I am writing to urge your support for S.1129 and H.R. 1824. As you know, this legislation proposes changes that will help alleviate the pay compression affecting members of the SES and other senior-level Federal employees. These changes are vital to the resolution of the current government-wide crisis involving agencies' ability to recruit and retain career senior executives. The NRC, in particular, is facing human capital challenges that could adversely affect our capability in this regard.

The availability of experienced individuals with the technical knowledge and managerial skills critical to the achievement of NRC's safety mission is diminishing. Accordingly, we often compete with industry and other government agencies for individuals from the same small community of nuclear engineers and scientists, compounding the challenge of recruiting individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills. While the availability of nuclear science and engineering managers continues to decrease, NRC's need for individuals with the appropriate level of expertise and proven leadership is increasing. This is due in part to expanded interest in renewing the licenses of existing nuclear power plants and to developing interest in construction of new nuclear plants. The proposed changes would greatly enhance our ability to effectively compete within this limited pool of human resources.

In addition, the proposed changes would not only enhance the Federal Government's ability to recruit needed career executives, but would also provide an impetus for current staff to aspire to senior leadership positions. Alleviating the pay compression which affects current senior executives would help to close the existing public/private sector pay gap, thus creating further incentives for current senior executives to remain in the Federal service. Again, we urge you to support these worthwhile proposals.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Richard A. Meserve

cc: See next page.

cc: Carol A. Bonosaro, Senior Executive Association
G. Jerry Shaw, Senior Executive Association
Senator Richard A. Durbin
Senator George V. Voinovich
Senator Harry Reid
Senator James M. Inhofe
Representative Joe Barton
Representative Rick Boucher
Representative Dave Weldon
Representative Danny K. Davis
Representative W.J. "Billy" Tauzin
Representative John Dingell
Senator James M. Jeffords
Senator Bob Smith

Identical letter sent to:

The Honorable Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr., Director
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, D.C. 20503

Mr. Albert Hawkins
Assistant to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500