

October 30, 2002

The Honorable Kay Coles James, Director
Office of Personnel Management
1900 E Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20415

Dear Ms. James:

On behalf of the Commission, I am writing to express support for any appropriate legislative or regulatory actions that can be undertaken to alleviate the pay compression affecting members of the Senior Executive Service (SES) and other senior-level Federal employees. As you are well aware, the Federal government's human capital problems are far-reaching and potentially serious. For its part, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) ability to meet its human capital challenges would be adversely affected if substantial numbers of our senior executives were to decide to retire or to pursue non-government employment due to the inability of the government to compensate them adequately.

The NRC's mission is to regulate the Nation's civilian use of byproduct, source, and special nuclear materials to ensure adequate protection of public health and safety, to promote the common defense and security, and to protect the environment. To provide the leadership necessary to direct the staff in accomplishing this vital mission, the Commission must be able to attract and retain experienced executives with the appropriate technical knowledge and managerial skills. This frequently requires the agency to compete with industry for skilled managers from the same small community of nuclear engineers and scientists. The availability of nuclear science and engineering managers is decreasing, but NRC's need for such employees with proven leadership abilities is increasing, due in part to the growing number of experienced senior executives who are becoming eligible for retirement.

The Federal government is currently in the untenable position of attempting to attract skilled leaders without being able to offer them salaries commensurate with the responsibilities they are asked to bear. I urge you to do whatever is in your power to help solve this problem.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Richard A. Meserve

cc: Carol A. Bonosaro, President
Senior Executive Association