

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

2 DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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4 NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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6 BRIEFING ON THE EEO PROGRAM

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8 THURSDAY,

9 OCTOBER 31, 2002

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11 The briefing was held in the Commission
 12 Hearing Room of One White Flint Tower, Rockville
 13 Pike, Maryland, at 2:30 p.m., Richard Meserve,
 14 Chairman, presiding.

15 PRESENT:

16 RICHARD MESERVE	Chairman
17 NILS J. DIAZ	Commissioner
18 GRETA J. DICUS	Commissioner
19 EDWARD McGAFFIGAN, Jr.	Commissioner
20 JEFFREY S. MERRIFIELD	Commissioner
21 KAREN CYR	General Counsel
22 ANNETTE VIETTI-COOK	Secretary
23 UJAGAR BHACHU	ACAA
24 SAMUEL COLLINS	Director, NRR

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1 PRESENT (Continued):

2 WILLIAM TRAVERS Executive Director for
3 Operations

4 PATRICIA NORRY Deputy Executive
5 Director

6 IRENE LITTLE Director, Office of
7 Small Business and
8 Civil Rights

9 PAUL BIRD Director, Office of
10 Human Resources

11 DAVID SOLORIO HEPAC

12 MICHAEL MARSHALL ACAA

13 AMY SNYDER FWPAC

14 BUCK IBRAHIM CAD

15 DALE YIELDING NTEU

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C-O-N-T-E-N-T-S

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

(2:33 p.m.)

CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Good afternoon. The Commission meets today to discuss the status of the agency's Equal Employment Opportunity Program. The NRC staff briefs the Commission semiannually on this topic, and our last meeting on this topic was held in February.

Based on the material provided to us before the meeting, I believe that the agency has continued to make very significant progress in the EEO arena and the related activities concerning the management of human capital and the retention of core competency.

As I think everyone in the room knows, these are central concerns of the Commission, which remains committed to achieve positive results in our EEO and human capital programs.

We, therefore, appreciate the hard work and conscientious efforts of those who you see opposite us this morning and those obviously in the agency who work on these programs.

Each of you has made vital contributions to the success of our efforts to date. Nonetheless we should not lose sight of the challenges we still

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1 face.

2 As noted at the last briefing, we
3 remained at a crossroads in the agency's history in
4 the sense that the full impact of the actions we
5 take today will affect the agency for years to come,
6 particularly when the retirements that are
7 inevitably going to occur actually happen.

8 We must insure that we can retain those
9 we hire, successfully replace those we will
10 ultimately lose, and continue to foster equal
11 opportunity for all NRC employees.

12 The Commission very much looks forward
13 to today's briefing, and I appreciate your
14 willingness today to readjust the schedule from
15 being in the morning to being a meeting this
16 afternoon. That was a step that was taken to
17 accommodate me as a result of a meeting that got
18 scheduled that I had to attend.

19 Let me just note at the outset that one
20 of the unfortunate consequences of transferring to
21 the meeting to the afternoon has been that some of
22 my Commission colleagues have some other commitments
23 that have arisen or that have existed beforehand,
24 and they may have to leave the meeting before we
25 complete it. I hope you'll understand the

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1 circumstances.

2 And with that, I'd like to turn the
3 meeting over to Dr. Travers.

4 MR. TRAVERS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
5 and good afternoon. Good afternoon to everyone who
6 has managed to come to this afternoon's meeting.

7 We are pleased to be here today to
8 provide the Commission with information on the
9 status and progress of the agency's Equal Employment
10 Opportunity Program.

11 Before we proceed, let me introduce the
12 people who are participating in today's meeting. In
13 fact, let me start my list by introducing Ujagar
14 Bhachu, who is the Chair of the Advisory Committee
15 on Asian-Pacific Americans, who will in a few
16 moments provide an EEO Advisory Committee
17 perspective.

18 Sam Collins, Director of the Office of
19 Nuclear Reactor Regulation.

20 Pat Norry, who is my Deputy for
21 Management Services.

22 Irene Little, Director of the Office of
23 Small Business and Civil Rights.

24 And Paul Bird, Director of our Office of
25 Human Resources.

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1 Also participating in the briefing and
2 seated just behind me in the first row are David
3 Solorio, who is the Co-chair of the Hispanic
4 Employment Program Advisory Committee; Mike
5 Marshall, who is the Co-chair of the African
6 American Advisory Committee; Amy Snyder, who is the
7 Chair of the Federal Women's Program Advisory
8 Committee; and Buck Ibrahim, who is Co-chair of the
9 Committee on Age Discrimination.

10 Also joining us is Dale Yielding of the
11 National Treasury Employees Union.

12 I'd like to begin my report by saying
13 that we in NRC management remain committed to
14 carrying out an effective EEO program, and we
15 continue to seek ways to solicit employee input and
16 to enhance our own accountability in this area.

17 I want to discuss just briefly some of
18 the things that we have done since our last meeting
19 with the Commission in February and reflect on some
20 of the progress that I think we have made in the
21 overall EEO Program.

22 I am happy to report that we have
23 completed action to insure that every manager and
24 supervisor in the agency has an EEO sub-element in
25 their elements and standards currently. This

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1 provides, we believe, a uniform way to evaluate the
2 progress in the EEO Program and to recognize
3 managers who are doing innovative things in their
4 organizations.

5 The feedback that I've received from Pat
6 and Irene, based on their review of SES evaluations
7 thus far, is that the rating officials are doing a
8 pretty good job in addressing EEO accomplishments in
9 the evaluations.

10 During our April 11th, 2002, senior
11 management meeting, I dedicated a special session to
12 discuss a number of topics, including communication,
13 employee development, feedback to employees, EEO
14 expectations, and general management accountability.

15 I believe this session reaffirmed to the
16 agency's top leadership that achieving our EEO goals
17 is an integral part of achieving our overall mission
18 goals.

19 While we recognize the challenge of
20 making further progress in our EEO goals, I want to
21 take a moment to reflect on some of the successes of
22 our EEO programs and take this opportunity to thank
23 our managers and staff employees for working
24 together really to get the agency to the point we're
25 at.

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1 I am pleased by the success we have
2 seen, especially over the past five years. Some
3 notable examples include entry level hiring efforts
4 which have yielded a large group of highly qualified
5 employees from diverse backgrounds.

6 As a result, representation in each
7 minority group in the work force has kept pace with
8 the agency's growth.

9 Representation of Hispanics in the work
10 force and in professional positions has doubled.
11 The number of Asian employees in supervisory
12 positions has increased somewhat, from about 4.5
13 percent to a little over five percent. Trending
14 data shows that white women in supervisory positions
15 increased steadily from about 12 percent to about 15
16 percent.

17 Additionally, our alternate dispute
18 resolution process is increasingly being used to
19 resolve allegations of discrimination in what we
20 like to call a win-win environment. It has also
21 resulted in cost savings to the agency.

22 Success in our EEO Program has been
23 recognized by our employees and by the broader
24 federal community. Our employees through the EEO
25 Advisory Committees have identified and recognized

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1 several managers and employees for their
2 contributions to the agency's EEO program.

3 And just two examples of that are Ashok
4 Thadani, the Director of the Office of Regulatory
5 Research, who was recognized by the Hispanic
6 community in 2002, and early this month Luis Reyes,
7 Regional Administrator, Region II, was the recipient
8 of an EEO award for his efforts in recruiting
9 Hispanics for federal employment.

10 Again, despite the progress the agency
11 has made, we still face challenges in maintaining
12 and enhancing our EEO Program. Two of our greatest
13 challenges are retaining the breadth and depth of
14 our technical knowledge base as members of our more
15 experienced work force retire or move on to other
16 assignments and, secondly, maintaining diversity
17 within the SES ranks.

18 Pat and Irene are going to address some
19 of the strategies that we are using to pursue in
20 assisting the agency in meeting these challenges.

21 Before I turn the meeting over to Pat,
22 I'd just like to mention that Irene has indicated
23 that she will be retiring in January, and this will
24 be her last meeting with us at the semiannual EEO
25 Commission meetings. I'd certainly like to

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1 recognize the significant contributions that Irene
2 has made to the agency both here at Headquarters,
3 and previously in Region III.

4 Noteworthy, this year Irene is also the
5 recipient of the Presidential Meritorious Rank
6 Award. We hope you'll be joining us for the annual
7 work ceremony, Irene.

8 MS. LITTLE: Yes.

9 MR. TRAVERS: And now let me turn the
10 meeting over to Pat.

11 MS. NORRY: Thanks, Bill.

12 First I'd like to echo Bill's statement
13 about management commitment. We see continuing
14 evidence that management is committed to an
15 effective EEO Program, and we're finding more and
16 more that employees have very good ideas for how we
17 can achieve some of our specific EEO goals.

18 So I'd like to talk briefly about some
19 of the initiatives that we've worked on in the last
20 six months, but first I wanted to highlight several
21 issues from the last SRM from our February briefing.

22 Staff was asked to examine how the
23 federally mandated competitive sourcing initiative
24 might impact diversity on the agency. As you know,
25 as part of the President's management agenda, OMB is

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1 requiring federal agencies to complete public-
2 private competitions or direct conversions on 15
3 percent by '03 of positions that have been
4 identified as commercial type positions.

5 And we have accomplished the fiscal year
6 '02 goal, which was 26 positions, which was largely
7 accomplished through the conversion of positions
8 that were vacated.

9 The impact of diversity on our work
10 force will have to be a large consideration as we
11 look at how we are going to accomplish our '03 goals
12 because that would involve 52 positions, and there
13 is a group representing the entire agency that is
14 studying this now and is going to be making
15 recommendations on how to accomplish this goal. And
16 we will be watching this issue particularly as they
17 go along.

18 Secondly, we were asked to examine ways
19 to assist managers in nurturing new employees. In
20 response to that request, we developed some written
21 guidance that goes to managers and supervisors as
22 they hire new employees, and it's included in the
23 Nuclear Safety Internal Program manual, which is
24 used by intern mentors.

25 And the Director of HR has advised

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1 office directors and regional administrators that
2 performance appraisals of SES managers should
3 address accomplishments in this area, particularly
4 how they help new employees to become acclimated.

5 Third, staff was asked to determine if
6 waste fund monies could be used to fund the
7 Historically Black Colleges and Universities Program
8 in support of students and faculty working at the
9 Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analysis. This
10 is a real success story.

11 We were able to modify the interagency
12 agreement, obligate \$20,000, and we're in the
13 process of posting students at the center. And this
14 effort will be continued in the following year.

15 A few other efforts are certainly worth
16 mentioning. We convened a team of employees from
17 Irene's office and Paul's office to meet, to work
18 with members, actually volunteers, from Asian,
19 African American, and Hispanic groups who were
20 interested in talking about how certain obstacles
21 could be overcome in the advancement of minorities
22 in the agency.

23 And we wanted to get their input and to
24 develop some strategies for addressing these issues.
25 We talked about focused recruitment. We talked

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1 about upper mobility. We talked about mentoring and
2 rotations, and as well as other subjects that were
3 of specific interest to specific groups.

4 We then established action plans to
5 focus on specific initiatives, and some of the
6 examples of initiatives that were identified were to
7 encourage managers and senior staff to serve as
8 mentors to employees in these groups so that career
9 advice could be provided and guidance and feedback.

10 One group suggested very strongly -- and
11 this was a developing awareness on our part -- that
12 we needed to do a better job of providing feedback
13 across the board. So it was suggested that training
14 be given because this is not necessarily an inborn
15 skill of managers.

16 And so a course has now been developed
17 which is specifically designed to train managers in
18 how to use this skill in a better way.

19 Some of the group members have agreed to
20 be proactive in meeting with management in major
21 program offices, to get information regarding
22 rotational opportunities and to share that
23 information with colleagues. I know that goes on in
24 Sam's office, and you'll probably hear more about
25 that from him.

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1 Group members are going to encourage
2 their colleagues to use IDPs to assist employees in
3 getting them some kind of an organized development
4 track.

5 We're pretty optimistic that if we
6 follow through, and there's a lot of enthusiasm in
7 these groups to follow through, that we'll be able
8 to achieve even more success in our EEO goals.

9 One of the changes that Bill noted
10 earlier is increasing diversity among our
11 supervisors and managers in the SES ranks. When you
12 graduated 42 members of the Leadership Potential
13 Program, this gave us a really good core of
14 candidates trained and eligible for assignments to
15 supervisory positions, and these graduates, as you
16 probably know, can be assigned noncompetitively to
17 supervisory positions at the same grade.

18 And they also should be hired
19 competitive for positions at the next grade because
20 of their leadership training.

21 But the current pipeline for SES
22 positions is not very diverse. The leadership
23 potential graduates will certainly feed into this
24 program in the future, but that won't be enough to
25 prevent minority under representation in the SES

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1 corps.

2 So we are certainly aware of that as a
3 major challenge. We are encouraging our managers to
4 do their part to reemphasize the IDP process, to be
5 aware of the availability of all candidates and all
6 people who could or should be, for instance, rotated
7 into different positions, to better train them for
8 the future.

9 All of that is an awareness issue so
10 that can get on a structured development path, and
11 managers are expected to encourage and facilitate
12 rotations and developmental assignments of all
13 employees, and we will continue the SES candidate
14 development program on a recurring basis as new
15 graduates are placed in SES positions.

16 And finally, I'd like to acknowledge the
17 continuing efforts of the ERB/EEO Committee, which
18 was formed actually how many years ago? It's been
19 at least ten years, and it continues and is charged
20 by Margaret Federline, and its purpose is to raise
21 awareness to office directors and regional
22 administrators of the availability of highly
23 qualified women and minority candidates.

24 They're looking now at the '02 data to
25 determine the trends in selections, and they do more

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1 than that. They look at criteria, whether the
2 criteria for the position had been properly
3 described, that kind of thing.

4 So it's a very active group, and they
5 continue. They have a lot of energy and are doing a
6 good job.

7 And so now I'd like to ask Irene Little
8 to highlight some additional EEO achievements and
9 strategies.

10 Irene.

11 MS. LITTLE: Thank you, Pat.

12 Before I make my remarks, I would like
13 to offer Ujagar Bhachu the opportunity to make a
14 statement on behalf of the EEO Advisory Committees.

15 MR. BHACHU: Yes. Good afternoon,
16 Chairman Meserve, Commissioners, directors,
17 managers, and the staff. Thank you, Equal
18 Employment Opportunity Advisory Committees and the
19 Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, for your
20 dedicated commitment, hard work, and valuable
21 contribution to the agency's Equal Employment
22 Opportunity Program.

23 As reflected in the joint statement
24 provided to you, the Advisory Committees have five
25 recommendations for addressing significant equal

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1 employment opportunity issues, and they are:

2 Increase minority representation at the
3 supervisory and SES levels;

4 Continue targeted recruitment effort for
5 minority groups;

6 Insure that performance appraisals hold
7 managers and supervisors accountable for successful
8 implementation of NRC's Equal Employment Opportunity
9 Program;

10 Insure fairness in performance
11 appraisals, retention, assignment, awards, and
12 promotions for all staff, including those at age 50
13 and over;

14 Continue to foster a family friendly
15 work place.

16 The Office of Human Resources has taken
17 some positive actions to enhance targeted
18 recruitment of minorities. This effort needs to be
19 continued and reinforced through close
20 collaborations with appropriate colleges and
21 universities to foster short and long-term
22 relationships for recruitment purposes.

23 Enhanced retention of qualified
24 employees. We much contribute an environment and
25 corporate culture that makes new employees welcome

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1 and makes them functional to their full potential in
2 the shortest space of time.

3 This will require managers and
4 supervisors to exert additional efforts to put in
5 place planning and willingness to supply sustained
6 support for development.

7 To increase minority representation at
8 all levels, particularly at the supervisory and SES
9 levels, the agency has given managers a tool kit.
10 This kit includes powerful, exotic tools, for
11 example, the NBMSS diversity panel, empowerment
12 initiative, government programs, mentoring,
13 retention, rewards, recognition, and merit staffing
14 system.

15 However, managers and supervisors need
16 to use these tools wisely and in a fair and
17 equitable manner in accordance with the instructions
18 provided in the agency established directives,
19 policies, and procedures.

20 In this world at large, it is stark
21 reality that ageism, sexism, and racism are alive
22 and doing well. However, the existence of the NRC
23 Equal Employment Opportunity Program and the support
24 of senior management for its implementation,
25 including attendance at this meeting, confirms the

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1 agency's resolve to maintain a discrimination free
2 work place.

3 It is this high level resolve that forms
4 a firm foundation for building a world class work
5 force for the agency, a diverse work force with a
6 spectrum of talents and skills which has a promise
7 to maximize the organizational performance and
8 foster greater effectiveness in actualizing the
9 NRC's vision, values, and mission.

10 As an agency, we know what to do. We
11 can do it. Actually we have been doing it.

12 Furthermore, the Advisory Committees
13 believe that we need to do more of it and better
14 still. The Advisory Committees remain confident
15 that together we can do it more effectively.

16 Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

17 MS. LITTLE: Thank you, Ujagar.

18 I want to begin my remarks by saying
19 that the overall status of the agency's EEO Program
20 is good and on a path of steady improvement.

21 Dr. Travers discussed management
22 commitment and management accountability, two
23 elements that are a requisite foundation for a
24 viable EEO Program.

25 Ms. Norry discussed her personal role

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1 for soliciting employee input on designing
2 strategies for improvement based on this input.

3 Employee input is a key element of any
4 progressive EEO program. I will highlight several
5 ongoing initiatives, the spokes in the wheel, if you
6 will, that help to make an EEO program run
7 smoothly.

8 If we are to have an EEO Program that
9 supports diversity in the work force, we must have
10 an effective recruitment program. And NRC's
11 recruitment program is easily characterized as a
12 best practice.

13 During FY 2002, our recruitment efforts
14 resulted in a total of 243 employees hired. Forty-
15 seven of those employees, or 19 percent, were
16 African Americans. Nineteen, or eight percents,
17 were Asians. Thirty, or 12 percent, were Hispanics.
18 One was Native American. Fifty-five, or 23 percent,
19 were white females, and 91, or 37 percent, were
20 white males.

21 Our recruitment program works, and its
22 outcomes have consistently identified pools of
23 candidates that are highly qualified and highly
24 diverse.

25 Our cooperative education and summer

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1 intern programs are useful pipelines to feed into
2 our interlevel recruiting efforts.

3 During fiscal year 2002, co-op program
4 participation increased from eight to 13, and this
5 included ten minorities and three white women.

6 A total of 80 students and faculty were
7 hired as summer interns. Thirty-two were minorities
8 and 48 were white.

9 We are working aggressively with
10 colleges and universities to increase student
11 participation in both the co-op and the summer
12 intern program.

13 A third spoke in this wheel is our
14 efforts to enhance employee retention. We are
15 emphasizing a number of mentoring initiatives,
16 including rotational assignments, coaching and
17 mentoring of employees to improve their potential
18 for career advancement.

19 During fiscal year 2002, my office
20 sponsored three mentoring training sessions. One
21 session was specifically designed for intern
22 employees and their supervisors. That session was
23 presented to the NRR interns.

24 A session is scheduled for November --
25 that's starting tomorrow -- by the NMSS interns.

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1 Also during fiscal year 2002, the number
2 of employees participating in formal mentoring
3 relationships increased from 98 to 151.

4 In conjunction with the Office of Human
5 Resources, we are renewing our efforts to assist
6 employees in preparing resumes, in preparing
7 individual development plans, and individual
8 training plans. We want to encourage employees to
9 focus on not only short-term, but also long-term
10 career development.

11 Providing appropriate training for
12 managers to develop and sharpen their management
13 skills is another spoke in the wheel of a viable EEO
14 program, and we are providing appropriate and up-to-
15 date training for our managers.

16 The basic EEO course for managers and
17 supervisors has been revised and updated, and since
18 the beginning of the second quarter of fiscal year
19 2002, we have presented four sessions of that
20 training. Thirteen additional sessions have already
21 been scheduled for 2003.

22 This course provides information for
23 managers on current EEO laws, managing diversity,
24 and the EEO complaint process, including information
25 on our alternate dispute resolution process.

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1 The Office of Human Resources has also
2 developed a course to assist managers in enhancing
3 their skills for providing feedback to employees.
4 Several sessions of this course have been presented,
5 and several sessions will be scheduled in the
6 future.

7 Appropriate and timely feedback to
8 employees is critical to employee development and
9 retention.

10 Our manager diversity initiative is
11 ongoing. The Office of Small Business and Civil
12 Rights has continued to provide office specific
13 follow-up to management diversity sessions. The
14 purpose of these sessions is to foster ongoing
15 dialogue between managers and staff.

16 The goal of managing diversity is to
17 create a positive work environment which encourages
18 and appreciates diverse employee perspectives and
19 minimizes the potential for conflict in the work
20 place.

21 Another element of a viable EEO Program
22 is implementing a process that effectively resolves
23 conflicts in the work place, and that's the EEO
24 complaint process, which includes mediation as an
25 alternate dispute resolution method.

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1 My office, working with the Office of
2 Human Resources and the Office of General Counsel,
3 has facilitated increased use of the ADR process for
4 resolving allegations of discrimination quickly and
5 at the lowest possible level in the organization.
6 We are pleased with the impact of ADR on our
7 complaint activity.

8 I want to take a few minutes now to
9 briefly review for you our EEO complaint activity
10 since the beginning of fiscal year 2002. At the end
11 of fiscal year 2001, we had in our backlog five
12 informal EEO allegations and 21 formal EEO
13 complaints.

14 From the beginning of 2002 to date, 36
15 informal allegations and 17 formal complaints were
16 filed. During that same period, we closed 38
17 informal allegations and 18 formal complaints.

18 As of today, we have in our backlog
19 three informal allegations and 20 formal complaints.
20 Seven of the 20 formal complaints are pending
21 hearing or decision by an Administrative Judge at
22 the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Two of
23 the 20 complaints are pending mediation.

24 We are engaged in informal settlement
25 discussions on two others, and the remaining nine

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1 complaints are at various stages in the process.

2 Of the 56 cases that we have closed
3 since the beginning of fiscal year 2002, 11 of these
4 cases were closed with settlement agreements.

5 That's a good statistic. Five of the 11 cases were
6 settled through the alternate dispute resolution
7 process.

8 With the cooperation of the Office of
9 Human Resources and the Office of General Counsel,
10 our case management, including the alternate dispute
11 resolution portion, has been effective.

12 And finally, another spoke in the wheel
13 of a viable EEO Program is understanding where the
14 challenges are and working to overcome them. We are
15 aware that there are many areas where improvement is
16 needed.

17 Dr. Travers alluded to the agency's
18 under representation of minorities in supervisory,
19 managerial, and SES positions.

20 Ms. Norry discussed some of the
21 strategies the agency is employing to address these
22 challenges.

23 I want to add two items to this list.
24 We have the challenge of assisting some of our long
25 time employees, especially minorities and older

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1 employees, in taking on broader, more visible work
2 assignments and enhancing their careers within the
3 agency.

4 Secondly, we must take steps to
5 institutionalize the EEO strategies that have proven
6 to be successful, while at the same time focusing on
7 strategies to improve in those areas where
8 improvement is needed.

9 I am confident that we have the
10 wherewithal to continue our path of success. We
11 have the commitment of the leadership, and we have
12 an effective management tool in the SES sub-element
13 and supervisory sub-element in the performance
14 appraisals.

15 We have senior management involvement in
16 numerous ways, some of which have been discussed
17 this afternoon. We have employee and employee
18 groups systematically involved in identifying issues
19 and recommending strategies. We have several
20 progressive strategies in place, and we are
21 continuously looking for best practices to improve
22 what we do and the way we do it.

23 We continue to conduct self- assessments
24 and monitor our progress not only in these
25 semiannual briefings with you, but also in more

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1 informal ways.

2 As we work together toward our common
3 goal of equal employment opportunity for all, I
4 suggest we keep in mind that success is not measured
5 by a specific destination, but by the quality of our
6 day-to-day interactions with each other and the
7 decisions we make with regards to our mission.

8 I challenge each supervisor, manager,
9 and leader in this agency to model the behavior that
10 they would like to see in their own superiors, and I
11 am sure that behavior will demonstrate an
12 understanding of employee weaknesses and acceptance
13 of employee differences and an appreciation of the
14 contribution of all employees.

15 Thank you.

16 MS. NORRY: Thank you, Irene.

17 And now we'll hear from Sam Collins.

18 MR. COLLINS: Thank you, Pat.

19 Good afternoon, Commissioners, Chairman.
20 I'm pleased to be here to address the Commission on
21 the topic that's very important to the Office of
22 Nuclear Reactor Regulations.

23 I'd like to acknowledge the retirement
24 of Irene and Irene's guidance in the past, and we
25 will surely miss her. She's a voice in the

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1 background of every meeting we have on human
2 resources as she gently reminds us of our priorities
3 and our goals.

4 And I wish you well in the future.

5 MS. LITTLE: Thank you.

6 MR. COLLINS: I'm here to present a
7 cautiously half-full story from the Office of NRR.
8 I think given our recent technical challenges that
9 we all wrestle with day to day, this is an
10 opportunity to reflect on a resource we have, the
11 wealth and the richness of our staff, and celebrate
12 successes while acknowledging challenges in that
13 area.

14 Clearly, the success of the agency is a
15 product of the staff. Our role is to provide access
16 for that, and that includes the initiatives in this
17 area of the topic today.

18 Since I last addressed the Commission in
19 1998, we in the Office of NRR have taken several new
20 activities underway and have enhanced those that we
21 believe have been successful in the past.

22 We do have challenges, however. In
23 today's job market, the ability to attract highly
24 qualified, experienced people is a challenge,
25 particularly in those areas where the expertise is

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1 in demand with our stakeholders, including our
2 licensees.

3 We have tools available to us, however,
4 to address those challenges, and I believe we're
5 making some successes, although that will not be a
6 short-term effort.

7 We strongly encourage diversity training
8 as was mentioned by Irene. We have healthy debates
9 in the sessions with Barbara Williams, acknowledging
10 and defining what diversity is and what diversity is
11 not, but I think that those are constructive, and we
12 learn from those. And I look forward to those in
13 the future also.

14 We have a very active team in the Office
15 of Nuclear Reactor Regulations. Each of the
16 executive team members sponsors one or more EEO
17 Advisory Committees. They're very active in the
18 interview and recruitment job, and we are dedicated
19 to the processes in the Office of NRR being
20 successful to achieve our goals.

21 Some of the specifics in the Office of
22 NRR is we have approximately 580 full-time
23 employees. Twenty-eight percent of those are
24 minorities. Fifteen percent are other than white
25 females, and our work force by race and ethnicity

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1 and gender is captured in a table. That's the
2 talking point paper that's provided today. I won't
3 go over that in detail.

4 It's important to note that since fiscal
5 year 2000, NRR has increased our representation in
6 all minority groups. Specifically the Asian-Pacific
7 Americans are now at 16 percent level, the highest
8 in the agency, and our Hispanic recruitment has
9 nearly doubled, acknowledging the efforts of Luis
10 Reyes and others to provide a forum for that to take
11 place.

12 I'd like to speak briefly of the
13 challenges. Increasing the representation of women,
14 particularly in the higher level positions;
15 continuing our progress with the Hispanic community;
16 establishing sustained progress with the African
17 American community; and initiating an entry level
18 pipeline for the Asian-Pacific group.

19 We're competing with others for specific
20 technical expertise, as I mentioned. We had some
21 recent challenges in the area of materials, where we
22 were not able to achieve our goals in recruiting in
23 that area, and I think that's a good example where
24 we have to be more inventive, if you will, or more
25 aggressive in pursuing that expertise.

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1 Irene mentioned the ADR and EEO
2 complaint resolution process. We are completely
3 dedicated to that. We have to maintain a balance
4 between individual rights in the process and the
5 ability to manage the organization. That's always a
6 tension, and I think it's a healthy tension, that we
7 work with day to day.

8 As Barbara would indicate, the handling
9 of DPOs and DPVs is also an indication, if you will,
10 of diversity in the form of diverse opinions, and
11 through Bill's efforts, we have performed a review
12 of that process, and I believe that we are making
13 progress in that area, too.

14 We received five DPVs in the Office of
15 Nuclear Reactor Regulations in fiscal year '02.

16 Lastly, the challenge is defining
17 success, and as Irene mentioned, there are various
18 ways to measure, if you will, our progress and
19 success in these areas, and I align with Irene's
20 talk that we're on a path and we'll be on that path
21 for as long as we're here managing the organization.

22 We can define success, however, in terms
23 of relative comparisons in many ways, and I believe
24 right now the Office of NRR, in concert with the
25 strategic plan, is measuring ourselves and the

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1 operating plan against the group statistics within
2 the NRC.

3 And currently we're comparing ourselves
4 with the group statistics in Montgomery County just
5 to be sure that we have balance in those areas.

6 There are areas in the strategic plan
7 that cascade through the corporate strategies area,
8 that move through the operating plan for the office
9 due to various measures in the Office of NRR. That
10 includes retention; it includes recruitment; and it
11 includes comparing ourselves on the office level
12 with the agency goals.

13 And I'm looking into the specifics in
14 the area of hiring policies and practices. Our
15 managers and technical staff have continued to
16 aggressively recruit highly qualified women and
17 minorities. Examples of that would be recruiting in
18 a number of universities.

19 The University of Puerto Rico is an
20 example. We recently returned. Marcia Gambrione
21 was there representing the office. We made seven
22 offers at the University of Puerto Rico, two
23 mechanical engineers, three electrical, and two
24 civil engineers.

25 Florida A&M University, we have visited

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1 that university in concert with sponsorship from
2 Region II; North Carolina A&T; and Penn State.

3 Twenty-two of our managers and staff
4 have participated in recruitment events to date.

5 We have attended professional minority
6 conferences and planned events, and 38 managers in
7 the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation have
8 participated in those activities. And as I
9 mentioned, our executive team has participated in
10 numerous of those trips.

11 One of our flagship programs is the NRR
12 intern program, and I think we have some of our
13 interns here today. Interns bring not only
14 diversity into our program, but they bring a form of
15 energy which is very, very stimulating, and that
16 cascades all the way through the organization.

17 We are very pleased and very proud of
18 our intern program, and I look for the continued
19 success of those individuals, and if we point to the
20 rising levels in the organization of NRR today,
21 including the leadership potential program and those
22 development programs, we can point to a number of
23 those candidates who have had the benefit of
24 initiating their careers through the intern program.
25 It's a key tool in producing a highly qualified,

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1 diverse work force, and it continues to be an
2 effective recruitment incentive for graduates and
3 students.

4 I'd like to acknowledge at this time
5 also the participation of two of our staff members,
6 Kim Jones and Bonita Cook in tracking the intern
7 program and working with the Office of HR in
8 defining the goals and the strategies for the
9 intern, including the intern training program.

10 Since fiscal year 2001, the NRR internal
11 program restart, we calibrate ourselves, benchmark
12 at that year. We've hired 29 interns. We have
13 eight in the class of 2003 and 21 in the class of
14 2004, which are graduating years, of which 34
15 percent are white males, 41 percent are Hispanic, 17
16 percent are African Americans, and seven percent are
17 white females.

18 We did a quick run-through on the
19 retention of interns, and I thank Mike Case and his
20 staff for doing that on my way down here, and we
21 have about a 50 percent acceptance rate for the
22 hiring of interns, and approximately two thirds of
23 those interns stay with us after the first five to
24 seven years, which is when they complete the intern
25 program and complete the orientation and go into the

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1 full performance level.

2 So it is a very successful program, and
3 by carefully managing the recruitment in that area,
4 we appear to be retaining the individuals and their
5 expertise.

6 And our summer hire program is another
7 area that we look at in a cascading way. We look at
8 the summer hire program as a feeder pool for the
9 intern program. The ability to retain co-op
10 students in the summer hire program captures, if you
11 will, individuals within the walls. It introduces
12 them to our programs. It creates an excitement for
13 them and the ability to demonstrate their
14 capabilities.

15 It also provides us an insight into the
16 origin of these individuals as far as which
17 university or which entity they arrive from, and end
18 up with a dialogue with those schools, and we end up
19 taking advantage of their programs.

20 We have recently hired a co-op student
21 from the University of Maryland who is going to be
22 helping us with our Quality Management Program,
23 which is a cutting edge program at the University of
24 Maryland, and she will be introducing those programs
25 to us and using us as a case study. So we have that

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1 type of synergism.

2 During fiscal year 2002, NRR hired 11
3 students from various colleges and universities, and
4 the demographic mix of the 2002 summer hires include
5 45 percent white males, 18 percent white females, 18
6 percent Asian-Pacific Americans, 18 percent African
7 Americans, and two former summer hires who are now
8 interns.

9 So we're achieving with some history the
10 balance between the types of groups that we would
11 like to target, as well as providing for the
12 expertise that we need to move forward as a
13 continuing learning type of organization.

14 We like to bridge opportunities through
15 upward mobility, and what the Upward Mobility
16 Program does is to afford us to introduce existing
17 staff to new and different types of challenges, and
18 specifically provide for the transition from the
19 clerical field to the administrative positions.

20 We have a number of highly talented
21 individuals in those areas, and there are levels and
22 blocks within the organizational structure which
23 without these bridge opportunities would create
24 artificial caps in those individuals' ability to
25 participate and to contribute to the success of the

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1 organization.

2 Areas of budget planning, human
3 resources, work planning are all opportunities for
4 individuals to transition from the clerical field to
5 the administrative positions, and some of the tools
6 we're using are the posting of licensing assistant
7 positions as career ladder positions starting at the
8 GG-7 level and also providing for upward mobility
9 types of positions.

10 In the area of minority and women's
11 representation in supervisory and management ranks,
12 that area has been mentioned previously by the
13 speakers as a challenge for us. It continues to be.
14 However, we do have some successes of note.

15 Since 1998, minority women
16 representation in the supervisory and management
17 ranks has increased from 14 percent to 27 percent.
18 The most significant increase in this area was in
19 the Asian-Pacific American group, which increased
20 from four to seven individuals.

21 Despite these successes, this area
22 remains a significant challenge for us. It's a
23 focus area for the leadership potential program and
24 the SES candidate development programs, as was
25 mentioned by Pat, and it will be a focus in the

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1 future.

2 And also six minorities were promoted to
3 section chief positions during this period. So also
4 we're making progress in the initial first level
5 supervisory ranks, which is the feeder group for the
6 SES candidate development program.

7 Pat mentioned the rotational
8 assignments, and I thank her for that. We're
9 encouraging staff to participate in career
10 developmental rotations.

11 We receive feedback from the staff as a
12 result of a poll of the staff of the inability of
13 the staff to achieve rotations because of the
14 tension with getting work done.

15 We believe that working with the levels
16 of the organization that that's more or less of an
17 artificial constraint; that by funding rotations,
18 which we have done at the benefit of input from the
19 leadership team, we have created one FTE within each
20 division, and that FTE is not filled. That FTE is
21 there for the purposes of providing for a rotation
22 within that division.

23 So we manage the work on the basis that
24 we'll always have one vacancy, and that vacancy will
25 allow someone to be somewhere else within the

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1 organization or with the NRC, providing for
2 developmental opportunities.

3 In fiscal year 2002, more than ten
4 percent of the NRR staff participated in rotational
5 assignments. That's quite a number of staff plugged
6 in and applied at any specific time.

7 However, experience is that there are
8 benefits to that, and you actually derive work and a
9 greater level and a greater quality of work as a
10 result of people being stimulated by rotations and
11 being exposed to different types of work, and that
12 allows them also to apply for different work that
13 they've had experience, too.

14 We have found that by tracking rotations
15 formally and creating a standard form that people
16 can apply that has to be articulated, that the
17 benefits have to be described, that supervisory and
18 management people have to sign off to; we create a
19 process by which rotations are possible. They're
20 tracked, and we can track the benefit of that.

21 The mentoring program was noted. I have
22 the benefit of mentoring two individuals who are
23 currently in the SES candidate development program.
24 Again, that's a very rewarding experience for me. I
25 have insights into the levels of the organization

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1 that way.

2 We also have the ability to support the
3 candidate development program and to steer
4 individuals through their decision makings in their
5 careers.

6 One of my personal experiences is that
7 the greatest value that we have here is developing
8 people and watching them rise through the
9 organization and contribute to the organization and
10 become the future leaders and become the
11 contributors at any level in the organization that
12 makes successful.

13 The agency's mentoring program has been
14 incorporated as a key component of the NRR intern
15 program. I've introduced two sessions of that, and
16 the contractor that we have hired to provide that
17 service does a very good job, and I thank the Office
18 of Small Business and Civil Rights for providing
19 that service.

20 Almost every NRR SES manager has
21 participated as a mentor for the NRR program, and
22 I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Tad Marsh, who is
23 the father, so to speak, of the current intern
24 program, and if you were to go to his office, you
25 would see a plaque that has been hung, and it's

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1 called "Tad, the Dad," because Tad ends up mentoring
2 many of our young people who come into the
3 organization who are in Washington for the first
4 time and may or may not be away from their families
5 in the educational structure, and there's more to it
6 than just work.

7 And I thank Tad and his team for
8 contributing to those, even to the basics of finding
9 where to shop and how to shop in transportation and
10 where to live and some of those basic essentials to
11 make the intern program successful.

12 The Flexiplace Program is part of our
13 support for providing for a work place as desirable
14 and for the retention of our individuals. NRR
15 considers ourselves a leader in that program. We
16 have over 400 employees who are eligible to
17 participate in that program in coordination with HR
18 and LMPC.

19 And I'd also like to acknowledge the
20 benefit of coordinating with our union partners in
21 these programs. We've developed guidance to help
22 supervisors for expanded participation in this
23 program.

24 Currently 53 employees, approximately
25 ten percent of our staff, participate in this

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1 program, including project based Flexiplace option
2 for supervisors and others who have specific work
3 tasks.

4 Let me talk just briefly about
5 retention. I had the opportunity this afternoon to
6 give 35 year pins to Mary King and Pam Faust, two
7 longstanding employees and contributors to our
8 program. While at the same time I gave a retirement
9 plaque to Sing Bajwa, who's retiring after 34 years.

10 So that demonstrates our ability to
11 retain individuals. A 34, 35 year retention in
12 career within the NRC, I believe, is something to be
13 proud of.

14 Our attrition is a little over what we
15 budgeted. We track that through our operating plan.
16 We're about 15 percent above where we were. Those
17 numbers are about 60. We estimated about 52. We
18 estimate losing about two people per pay period, and
19 we're a little bit above that.

20 Diversity awareness. We work closely
21 with Small Business and Civil Rights vigorously to
22 manage and providing for diversity sessions for our
23 staff. The majority of NRR staff will have been in
24 the training sessions by completion of the next
25 session in early November, and we believe that's a

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1 good way to enhance staff awareness and encourage
2 commitment to aid and maintain a positive work
3 environment in NRR.

4 Our executive team initiatives include,
5 as I mentioned, points of contacts for the EEO
6 Advisory Committees, meeting on a regular basis with
7 those Advisory Committees, providing for the focus
8 for recruitment, and a very powerful tool that we've
9 worked out with Lynn Carlson and others on the
10 ability to hire at the recruitment center.

11 That takes some coordination. We
12 believe a new recruitment tool and the tool that we
13 have to provide for individuals to apply on line
14 aids in that process. There are some barriers we're
15 working through, as with any new process, but
16 clearly it's an improvement, and our ability to hire
17 on the spot is a very powerful tool as it's proving
18 out.

19 This approach has resulted in
20 significant improved communication, both internally
21 and with the committees and with our hirees. We
22 have a recent example of an outreach program to a
23 historically black college and university. That's
24 the Howard University, and we have sponsored a
25 science and engineering facility open house for

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1 them, and that's to take place tomorrow, November
2 1st, and Brian Sheron is the sponsor for that.

3 Briefly, in communications we mentioned
4 the performance appraisals. We mentioned feedback
5 on selections for positions within the agency.
6 Interview skills, our tool to be used in that
7 regard. The quality of application packages is a
8 continual area of focus for us.

9 Feedback on performance at the midyear
10 and at the final appraisals is a continual challenge
11 for us.

12 Inviting employees to participate in
13 discussions on performance expectations is important
14 and reconciling those expectations in a "go forward"
15 sense to insure that we're aligned on providing
16 skill, will, and access to our employees.

17 Access is management's role. Skill is
18 providing the right position, and will is the
19 employee's bringing the will to provide for the job
20 being done successfully.

21 The first of those is access, and that's
22 insuring that any individual is being provided the
23 opportunity to be successful, and that's the
24 challenge that we have through our levels of
25 management and supervisory organizations.

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1 Our NRR initiative activities to improve
2 communications include the weekly newsletter that's
3 being provided to our employees. We electronically
4 transmit that to all of our staff.

5 We have electronic message boards on our
6 floors. We continually change those messages to
7 celebrate successes.

8 We have organized retreats at various
9 levels throughout the organization, and we have the
10 all supervisors meetings on an ad hoc basis.

11 We are also providing for panel
12 discussions for our interns. We're having one of
13 those in the short term on the Davis-Besse area in
14 November 15th, and that includes the lessons
15 learned task force, and Ed Hackett is going to
16 provide support for that.

17 Lastly, let me just acknowledge that we
18 take this seriously. We hold ourselves accountable.
19 That was mentioned in the discussion.

20 We do have tracking that links back to
21 the operating plans and to the strategic plan. We
22 have other standard conditions that we monitor and
23 that we analyze in the Office of NRR, and we're very
24 serious about the retention of our very valued,
25 experienced individuals. That is an untapped

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1 resource for training and mentoring that we're
2 approaching in order to provide for the transition
3 for work experience and the ability to provide for a
4 broad view of the goals throughout the agency to our
5 new employees.

6 We track hiring. We track
7 accomplishments. We do that quarterly, and we have
8 amended the section chief appraisals, some in 2002,
9 but all in 2003.

10 As Pat mentioned, element number one
11 tracks EEO and diversity initiatives, and clearly
12 the SES appraisals were revised last year to provide
13 for that, and the Performance Review Board tracks
14 accountability for that.

15 In conclusion and in summary, let me
16 acknowledge that I have noted many challenges in
17 these areas, but I would like to also be able to
18 celebrate the successes. We're very proud of our
19 staff. We're proud of what our staff has
20 accomplished, and we know that with this staff in
21 the future, we'll continue to serve the goals of the
22 strategic plan in the Office of the NRC
23 appropriately.

24 And we look forward to those challenges
25 and working with Irene and her staff in moving

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1 forward as an organization.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. TRAVERS: Thanks, Sam.

4 Mr. Chairman, that completes our
5 briefing this afternoon.

6 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: I'd like to thank you
7 all for a very helpful briefing.

8 In recognition of the fact that some of
9 my colleagues may have to depart, let me turn to
10 Commissioner Dicus first and then go to Commissioner
11 Merrifield so that they will have a chance to ask a
12 few questions before they have to leave.

13 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. Last year,
14 Ms. Little, I had asked you about the diversity
15 contractor that we had brought on board to help with
16 the issue, and I noted in my comment that that
17 person or the contractor had been acquired rather
18 recently, and perhaps you have not had an idea to
19 talk about what had been accomplished.

20 But I warned you I'd probably ask again
21 in six months. So it's six months down the line.
22 So how is that working and what are you doing?

23 And particularly, you might want to
24 address with me if there's information to share on
25 this issue of out-sourcing and how this may affect

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1 our diversity and whether this is part of what this
2 person is looking at of people.

3 MS. LITTLE: The diversity contractor
4 was also hired a few months ago, probably right
5 after or right before the last briefing.

6 COMMISSIONER DICUS: I think it was just
7 before.

8 MS. LITTLE: Just before the last
9 briefing, and they're working directly with NMSS,
10 and I think that if we were to talk to the employees
11 in NMSS, we would hear a real success story.

12 It is still too soon to evaluate what
13 the outcome will be because there's an ongoing type
14 initiative. I'm going to turn to Barbara in just a
15 second because she works closely with the diversity
16 contractor, but there is a basic diversity panel,
17 and they work through issues in NMSS, and I know
18 that they've had several sessions.

19 Barbara, is there anything else I should
20 add to that?

21 MS. WILLIAMS: You can add a little bit
22 to that, Marty, if you have a problem. You can.

23 They do have a diversity panel, and that
24 panel was in place for about a year, and new members
25 have come on now, going into the second part of the

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1 year, and that panels tries to address a lot of
2 issues that employees bring to their table as it
3 relates to operating procedures within the Office of
4 Relations and Communications.

5 They have worked on mission and value
6 statements, and they have come up with some new
7 phase to address in that area. I know they've
8 worked on communication plans, and I think at the
9 last retreat recently at NMSS, that was presented to
10 the leadership team and executive team.

11 So they are working on quite a few
12 things, and the feedback that we've gotten from
13 employees that employees feel much better about the
14 overall environment within NMSS.

15 Marty, do you want to? Does that kind
16 of cover it?

17 So we will continue, and we will be
18 giving some progress with that so that hopefully
19 other offices can pattern themselves after and
20 possibly address some of their office specific
21 diversity needs as well.

22 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. Thank you.

23 MS. LITTLE: Let me just add that
24 they're not looking at the out-sourcing issue. That
25 is something that is more centrally controlled.

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1 That is not one of the things they're looking at.

2 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Commissioner

4 Merrifield.

5 COMMISSIONER MERRIFIELD: Thank you, Mr.
6 Chairman, and I regret I will be having to leave
7 after this, and I apologize. I had a previous
8 commitment that has taken me away from that, but I
9 don't want anyone to think that lessens the
10 commitment I have for continued progress in this
11 regard.

12 I actually, given the time, I actually
13 have three comments I want to make rather than
14 putting them in the form of questions, although if
15 people want to respond, they can.

16 I noted the comments that Sam Collins
17 made about the glass being half full and not half
18 empty, and I agree with that sentiment. I think
19 looking at the materials we were provided today, I
20 think one might characterize it as forward progress
21 that is somewhat uneven.

22 The one comment I want to make, as was
23 pointed out today, we have not made the progress in
24 the pipeline as it relates to the SES candidate
25 development program that I think all of us might

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1 have wanted a year or two ago, but I think the
2 positive aspect that has been underlying today is
3 the significant forward momentum as it relates to
4 the leadership potential program.

5 And I think my comment on this is that
6 that group was, indeed, very diverse. I think it's
7 positive that we're placing those individuals in
8 positions where they may acquire additional
9 leadership positions and may hopefully be selected
10 for the next round of our SES candidate development
11 program.

12 And I think to the extent that we can
13 continue to nurture those individuals in a follow-up
14 group, in a follow-up leadership potential program,
15 we will, indeed, get where we need to be on a
16 pipeline for future SES candidate development
17 program rounds.

18 The second comment I would make would be
19 relative to NER. As many know, that has been a pet
20 favorite of mine. I want to recognize the
21 significant progress that's been made on that. It
22 really does seem to be the win-win that Irene has
23 spoken about, and so I appreciate the strong
24 commitment that you and the folks in the Office of
25 Small Business have made in that area.

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1 The final comment I would want to make -
2 - and I was amused by the comment that Irene made
3 about employee retention, where we seem to be making
4 significant progress, except when it comes to Irene
5 -- and so I do want to, although we will have many
6 opportunities over the course of the next two months
7 to tell you how much we will miss you, I would not
8 want to miss the opportunity to recognize here the
9 significant accomplishments you've made in the
10 position.

11 And you certainly are the driving force
12 for much of the progress we have made over the
13 years, and hopefully you have put in place a program
14 that will continue as a legacy.

15 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Well, I probably
16 have a couple of comments. First, I noticed that
17 there are two competing things in here that
18 everybody mentioned one was the issue of challenges,
19 and the other is the measure of success. And I
20 would just like to state that finding a good
21 challenge is a mini-success, retiring it as a
22 challenge is full success. That's certainly a way
23 of doing it.

24 In that vein, I think I would like to
25 issue a challenge, how can we keep Irene from

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1 retiring?

2 (Laughter.)

3 PARTICIPANT: We're working on it.

4 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: I do want to tell
5 you that personally I appreciate your work and I
6 think we will miss you, and we want to try to see
7 how we can find an EEO rule to keep you here.
8 You've been very good.

9 I think we all agree, and I'm not
10 speaking for everybody, but I do want to make the
11 statement that there's been significant progress in
12 many areas since I joined the Commission. And I
13 think we also, all of us, have begun to really
14 realize the importance of diversity within
15 diversity. And that's an important issue because
16 diversity by itself doesn't tell you all that you
17 want to know, the diversity within the diversity,
18 that actually allows you to focus on what other
19 challenges that can be retired and those that
20 remain.

21 Many of these activities in EEO we can
22 overlook some groups, but we need to make sure that
23 they're all considered, because the diversity, we
24 think that diversity is important. And although
25 emphasize many times those areas that have been of

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1 need, and I realize tremendous effort was put into
2 the hiding of Hispanic, which was really a bad-
3 looking area in our statistics, we also want to
4 emphasize that we need to look at everybody, because
5 that diversity within diversity is what makes us
6 strong, what makes our fabric looking very, very
7 complete.

8 We need to also try to when we hire,
9 which has been a major improvement, we need to keep
10 hiring the best people we can find. Highly
11 competent people will solve the issues down the pike
12 on the SESs. When we hire the best people that we
13 can find, trying very hard for it, it would actually
14 make those longer efforts to create managers and
15 SESs easier. And so I want to emphasize that
16 effort.

17 Having said that, this is -- I always
18 like to come with some questions. Let's see, when
19 you're talking about retaining employees, and it's
20 an issue that is extremely important to us, I
21 noticed that the number of employees participating
22 in mentoring increased, you said, from 98 to 151.
23 That's a tremendous change. What does this do and
24 can we have -- have we considered that challenge as
25 something that we're going to do better or we came

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1 up and it's level? What do you attribute the
2 significant improvement in the mentoring?

3 MS. LITTLE: I think for lack of a
4 better term the marketing of the program. We've
5 been talking a lot about mentoring. We've been
6 encouraging it, and we're conducting mentoring
7 sessions. So employees are a lot more aware of it.
8 Additionally, I meet with all new employees during
9 orientation, and I encourage them very strongly to
10 get a mentor. I do it by asking their supervisor or
11 coming to my office and meeting with Barbara
12 Williams who coordinates the Facilitated Mentoring
13 Program. And we have been getting a lot more
14 business from employees to get mentors.

15 I think a mentor can do a couple of
16 things, and I say this to employees. A mentor can
17 help a new employee avoid making new employee
18 mistakes by guiding them early on. And a mentor can
19 assist a new employee in new looking at career
20 opportunities early so that by the time they're
21 ready to make a career move they have checked all
22 the boxes and the preparation is in place. So I
23 think we can attribute the numbers a little bit to
24 the way we're talking about the program.

25 We do not have a successful mechanism

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1 for measuring the progress of how many people have
2 mentors and how many are pleased with the outcome of
3 that. We're working to get a contract to do that.
4 We've talked of that.

5 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Sam, I believe you
6 mentioned some time ago in another meeting that we
7 had that an effort is being made to not only mentor
8 but to try to put the experiences of those of all
9 who have been in this business for years and are
10 approaching 50 now into those who are just beginning
11 and really might have to carry on the torches. Is
12 that something that has begun problematically or
13 it's just in the areas you're dealing with?

14 MR. COLLINS: It's a result of two
15 efforts, really: One is the roles and
16 responsibilities effort, and the other is how do we
17 take advantage of the human capital that currently
18 exists.

19 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Right.

20 MR. COLLINS: The Committee on Age
21 Discrimination has talked to us about this for
22 periods of time. They would like to play an active
23 role in transferring information and technology and
24 life experience. And with the Intern Program coming
25 in, we hope to be able to match those two up. It's

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1 a part of mentoring but it's really technical
2 expertise and job experience that we're looking for.

3 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Right, right.
4 That's what I was trying to -- is the kind of the
5 higher --

6 MR. BIRD: If I could add to that, we
7 recently had a session involving Sam Walker for all
8 the interns, open to all the interns, to really
9 recount TMI. As you know, there was a recent
10 documentary on TMI, and certainly Sam Walker who was
11 here throughout that period has a perspective on it
12 that was different than some of the presentation in
13 the documentary, and I think that was a successful
14 session organized by my staff but for a broader
15 audience. And I think those things are very, very
16 useful.

17 MR. COLLINS: The second effort that the
18 Rules and Responsibilities Commissioner has brought
19 to light to us the fact that we have seen
20 individuals who are supervisors and senior
21 individuals who provide for a technical role, same
22 grade. So what we're trying to do is define those
23 roles so that they're complementary, not duplicative
24 and not overly burdensome. And one of those roles
25 for the senior technical staff is providing for

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1 coaching and mentoring in their technical field
2 where the supervisor would provide for a different
3 type of coaching and mentoring, and those would be
4 complementary roles.

5 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Good. Thank you.
6 Irene, the African-American Advisory Committee has
7 been commenting that the Commission should develop
8 more effective metrics for demographic information
9 to go to the effectiveness of the EEO programs,
10 diversity management and everything else. Would you
11 please address the extent to which we might be able
12 to spend metrics? Is that something that you're
13 working on, is that something that you see feasible
14 in a reasonable period of time to be able to get
15 better metrics on the effectiveness of this program?

16 MS. LITTLE: I think the most effective
17 general method that we could come up with would be a
18 survey tool, and one of the things we're looking at
19 doing we looked at some of the information that came
20 out of the IG cultural survey some time ago, and
21 we're looking forward to doing a comparison there.
22 Trying to measure EEO success by counting numbers
23 only gets us half there. We, of course, can count
24 EEO complaints, we can count the number of people
25 hired, but I think some of the things I talked about

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1 today we've got to factor into it, the qualitative
2 things, do employees feel that they can talk to
3 their management about any issue that comes up, do
4 they feel that they're valued? I think we have to
5 factor those in as well.

6 There is not a big effort on our part
7 right now to increase the metrics. I think that in
8 our own operating plans and in the operating plans
9 of the offices there is a variety of methods being
10 used by different offices, and while we can look at
11 those, I think that's adequate. I think the
12 outcomes are what we're looking at. If we have a
13 diverse work force and people feel pretty good about
14 what we do, which we can pick up in the survey,
15 that's a measure of our success in this program.

16 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Well, I understand,
17 but I think they are concerned whether the metrics
18 are complete or not, and maybe that deserves to have
19 a second look at it.

20 MS. LITTLE: Maybe that's something we
21 should look at.

22 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Right, right. And
23 there's a concern about that. Now, Commissioner
24 Merrifield already referred to the SES, and that's
25 one thing that we have already seen. I don't want

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1 to forget another sector of our employees, those who
2 are not in SES programs, who are the managers and
3 supervisors. Are we doing similar types of reviews
4 on how these issues are being addressed and how the
5 reviews that people are getting from them are being
6 addressed? You know, it's a totally different
7 track, not SES's.

8 MS. LITTLE: Our movement into
9 supervisory positions?

10 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Right, right.
11 Movement into management and supervisory positions.

12 MS. LITTLE: We do track that. We have
13 training data. We have five-year training data on
14 every aspect of an EEO program that you can think of
15 on the work force. We include that.

16 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: How are we doing
17 diversity-wise?

18 MS. LITTLE: It's a mixed bag. If you
19 look at the training data right now for the past
20 five years, supervisors and managers, you can see
21 that the Asian employees who have had a real
22 challenge in the past have improved a little bit.
23 But last year we lost three African-American -- the
24 members of African-Americans in supervision is down
25 by three. So it's kind of a mixed bag.

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1 MS. NORRY: The other aspect that
2 applies, I believe, to your question is that when we
3 mentioned that SES were being trained and were being
4 accounted, had been held accountable for results,
5 that is not just SES, that goes down the supervisory
6 ranks in terms of EEO elements, yes.

7 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you, Mr.
8 Chairman. Mr. McGaffigan.

9 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: Thank you, Mr.
10 Chairman. I join very briefly in wishing Irene
11 well. My understanding is you're not planning to
12 stay in the area, is that right?

13 MS. LITTLE: I didn't intend to make
14 this forum to discuss it. I am going to be in the
15 area a while.

16 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: Okay. We wish
17 you well.

18 MS. LITTLE: Thank you.

19 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I'm not going
20 to spend very long because the annual Halloween
21 traffic jam is probably forming on Rockville Pike as
22 we talk here, but I do want to comment that I was
23 clueless at the outcome of the last meeting that we
24 managed to get the Center for Nuclear Waste
25 Regulatory Analysis into the Historically Black

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1 College and University Grant Program. I read the
2 other part of the June 30 email with regard to the
3 Adarand decision. I am not a lawyer. I'll only
4 note, and basically the staff's bottom line was that
5 they didn't think that it was time to recommend that
6 we seek legislative authority for funds to program
7 Hispanic-serving institutions.

8 My recollection, which may be bad, is
9 that in the energy bill, which may or may not emerge
10 from this Congress, there was on the Senate side
11 that encouraged the Department of Energy to work
12 with Hispanic-serving institutions in some sort of
13 way, maybe not passed the Adarand test, if I'm
14 pronouncing that right, but if that provision
15 emerges on the energy bill, I'll probably come back
16 at you again saying, well, Congress is willing to
17 pass these provisions, maybe we should try again.
18 When you have two SES managers who are Hispanic and
19 relatively few people in the civilized positions, I
20 know we're recruiting now, but I think it's pretty
21 clear that it may not be discrimination but the
22 Hispanics are underserved in government and
23 scientific and technical positions, not just at NRC.

24 And so I am not a lawyer, I have not a
25 clue what the Supreme Court decided in Adarand other

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1 than it is obviously is an impediment to what the
2 DOD that exists today which the note says is under
3 court review and probably this DOE program if it's
4 created by the energy bill will be instantaneously
5 under court review. But, I don't know, we have to
6 obey the law, and the Supreme Court is the Supreme
7 Court, so if there isn't a way around it, I'll --

8 MS. CYR: We'll look at the legislation
9 and certainly if that passes, we'll look and see
10 what the basis was and findings that were made with
11 respect to that legislation and see if there an
12 opportunity for some of the background there to be
13 useful to us.

14 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: Thank you.
15 That's all, Mr. Chairman.

16 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. I just
17 have few questions. I wanted to pursue the point
18 that Commissioner Diaz raised about there are other
19 metrics, and there's one that goes into your
20 tracking that you didn't mention. You did have some
21 data about complaints and your progress on that,
22 which I suppose within an ideal world we'd never
23 have any complaints, but we're never going to get --
24 presumably, human nature being what it is, there
25 will be misunderstandings of some. We're always

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1 going to have some but I guess it sounds like we get
2 about 50 a year in the last year that are either
3 dispositioned ultimately as formal or informal. Do
4 you have any sense of how, number one, what is the
5 significance of the number of the complaints, and,
6 secondly, how are we doing as compared with other
7 agencies in terms of compared with the complaints
8 for hired employees or what have you and what are
9 the trends?

10 MS. LITTLE: Yes, we do. We report on
11 our complaints the number of complaints and the
12 number of resolutions and the ages of the complaints
13 to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. And
14 we are on the very lowest tier with numbers of
15 complaints. There are two ways to get EEOC traffic,
16 the larger agencies and the smaller agencies. And I
17 believe the small agencies are agencies with 5,000
18 employees or fewer. We are in the very lower group
19 of the number of complaints per 100 hundred
20 employees or 1,000 employees or whatever. The
21 numbers are very low. I don't have that particular
22 data here, but we can get that and certainly share
23 that with you, some very specific data.

24 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: I was just trying to
25 calibrate myself with regard to the information you

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1 provided us as to what we should draw from it.

2 MS. LITTLE: There are a few things that
3 are really important. The money complaints we look
4 at, yes. The number of former complaints is the
5 more important piece because any former complaints
6 are generally resolved before they get into a court
7 or hearing arena. And of course we look at the
8 number that we can resolve through ADR and the
9 number of complaints that are closed without costing
10 the agency any settlement costs, whether it's
11 monetary or non-monetary. And those statistics are
12 very good. We closed 56 complaints and only 11 of
13 them were settlement agreements. That's a very good
14 statistic, but we certainly can provide you with
15 some more specifics on how we compare Monday to
16 Monday without the agencies by our sides.

17 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: I had only one other
18 question and it was for Sam. In your presentation,
19 you indicated that the petition I guess in '02 was
20 larger than expected, that you expected or planned
21 for 52 and you had 60. Is there any -- is that a
22 trend we should be worrying about, is that -- what
23 conclusion should we draw from that, and do you have
24 any explanation for why the numbers are bigger than
25 expected?

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1 MR. COLLINS: I think HR does exit
2 interviews with the individuals. I'll let Paul
3 speak if he sees any specific trends. It's been a
4 year of a lot of coming and going between the
5 formulation of NSR and there is a lot of attrition
6 within the NRC as far as people moving back and
7 forth.

8 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Well, some of that
9 attrition is moving within NRC.

10 MR. COLLINS: That number, I think --
11 yes.

12 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Okay. So that --

13 MR. COLLINS: Well, I'm not sure. It
14 is, Mike? I know we cut it both ways but I forgot
15 which one was which.

16 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Our external
17 attrition now has been about the same as it was in
18 previous years, around five percent. Our attrition
19 internal to the Agency about doubled in this year.

20 MR. COLLINS: And it's mostly because of
21 the formulation of new groups and our ability and
22 willingness to trade with offices' resources.

23 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: So the number of 60
24 being bigger than 52 includes the internal movement
25 of people.

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1 MR. COLLINS: That's correct.

2 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Okay. Thank you.

3 Well, thank you very much. Before we close out the
4 meeting, we do have representatives from the various
5 advisory groups are here, and I would like to
6 provide them with an opportunity to make statements
7 to us if they choose to do so. Mr. Bhachu, you're
8 at the table, would you like to speak now on behalf
9 of the Asian-Pacific American Advisory Committee?

10 MR. BHACHU: Greetings, ladies and
11 gentlemen. Thank you for the opportunity to brief
12 you on APAAC concerns and recommendations to address
13 those concerns. We welcome the recent selection of
14 Asian-Americans in the NRC Leadership Retention
15 Program and the 2002 Executive Leadership Program.
16 We believe these are positive steps and will serve
17 to increase the presentation of Asian-Americans into
18 supervisory and management positions.

19 During the early part of this year,
20 Asian-Americans felt they were not receiving fair
21 attention in entry level hiring and upward mobility
22 in the corporate structure. These concerns were
23 made known at the last Equal Employment Opportunity
24 briefing. Since the last meeting, Asian-Americans
25 have actively engaged in meeting with the EEO office

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1 Leadership Team Program offices, Office of Small
2 Business and Civil Rights and Human Resources and
3 other employee groups. The discussion in these
4 meetings focused on strategies for targeted
5 recruitment and enhancement of upward mobility for
6 Asian-Americans and other minorities. These
7 meetings proved to be fruitful and beneficial in
8 reaching a common ground.

9 We have actively supported target
10 recruitment efforts at selected universities. The
11 most recent initiative is the University of
12 California-Berkeley, and we want to thank the Human
13 Resources, Len Carsely here, for in spite of the
14 fact they are so busy, they have supported us to the
15 hilt in this area, and we also remain faithful to
16 our Office Director, Marty Rigilio for taking the
17 lead and give us support and the other senior staff
18 that are going to go there and make on-the-spot
19 offers.

20 We believe this initiative has been, and
21 continues to be, a success. However, the major
22 challenge continues to underrepresentation of Asian-
23 Americans in supervisory and senior executive
24 service positions. To address this challenge, APAAC
25 recommends that Agency management increase Asian-

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1 American participation in leadership programs and
2 high-profile management assignments and encourage
3 active participation in formal and informal
4 mentoring between SES managers and Asian-Americans.
5 Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your time and
6 attention.

7 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. Mr.
8 Solorio?

9 MR. SOLORIO: Good afternoon,
10 Commissioners. My name is Dave Solorio, and I'm the
11 Co-Chair for the Hispanic Employment Program
12 Advisory Committee. I'd like to thank you for the
13 opportunity to speak to you today. On behalf of
14 HEPAC, I want it recognized that NRC management has
15 made substantial progress in increasing Hispanic
16 representation over the last few years. We believe
17 this continued focus on recruiting, coupled with the
18 Intern Program, will continue to provide positive
19 results. We hope that these successes will continue
20 as the Agency addresses the underrepresentation of
21 Hispanics.

22 We also feel to ensure long-term success
23 it's even more important now to focus additional
24 attention on retention, because success breeds more
25 success. If people feel they have a rewarding

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1 career path, the word will get out. To highlight a
2 point we made in our statement related to retention,
3 as the data shows, the numbers of Hispanics in
4 senior staff, supervisory and management ranks is
5 very low and has been constant going back at least
6 the last seven years. In particular, it's been over
7 15 years since a Hispanic entered the senior
8 executive service here at the NRC. Hispanics
9 currently only comprise one percent of the SES
10 ranks.

11 As we've said for several years now,
12 it's very critical that NRC management takes an
13 active role in development staff attempting to enter
14 the senior supervisory and management positions so
15 this long-standing item can be addressed. This also
16 has a secondary benefit of providing more models so
17 that the young staff feel they have a career path
18 here. HEPAC acknowledges that some effort has
19 occurred through the Leadership Retention Program to
20 feed the supervisory ranks, and therefore we hope it
21 will be continued. However, we know the NRC
22 management has the capacity to expend additional
23 effort needed to develop more senior staff through
24 our supervisory and management ranks. Thanks again
25 for this opportunity to share our recommendations.

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1 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. Mr.
2 Marshall.

3 MR. MARSHALL: Good afternoon. My name
4 is Michael Marshall. I'm Co-Chair of the Advisory
5 Committee for African-Americans. On behalf of ACAA,
6 I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to address
7 the Commission. For the past two years when we've
8 addressed the Commission, our areas of interests
9 have remained largely the same. However, I'd like
10 to say there's been visible progress in each of the
11 areas we work with, SBCR, EDO, in particular Ms.
12 Norry, the individual program offices and H.R.

13 The areas of emphasis for ACAA is to
14 encourage and enhance African-Americans in SES, non-
15 SES and SLS positions. In particular, though, I'd
16 like to emphasize the SES and SLS positions. Also
17 to make sure there's a good pipeline for that, we're
18 encouraging enhanced representation of African-
19 Americans in what we consider the fetal groups for
20 those, which is your GG-14 and GG-15 positions.

21 And just working our way down the chain,
22 we also encourage and recommend African-Americans'
23 participation in development programs, again, to
24 help you get to the GG-15, the GG-14s, the
25 supervisory positions, those being the Leadership

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1 Retention Program which was brought up today, the
2 SES Program, the Upward Mobility Programs.

3 And, finally, at the front end of all
4 this is the recruitment which has been a very good
5 success over the last year or two years here at the
6 NRC. I'd like to see continued representation of
7 African-Americans in the recruitment classes.

8 I would like to take the opportunity
9 here to kind of explain that recommendation we had
10 in our position paper. One benefit I and some other
11 African-Americans that met with Ms. Norry and these
12 groups over the last I think it's been a year and a
13 half now is even though we have visible progress as
14 far as some of the numbers go, sometimes in a lot of
15 these discussions there was still some level of
16 dissatisfaction, and a lot of that had to do with
17 what was mentioned with fair and equitable climate,
18 how some things were implemented.

19 And we really don't have anything to
20 measure how well we're doing in those areas. And
21 right now the NRC, the management in particular, has
22 committed a lot of resources to the EEO arena and it
23 would likely be if we had a more complete measure,
24 we could make sure those resources are used
25 effectively. And not only do the numbers increase

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1 but the way people feel about the Agency, how they
2 feel about the fairness of programs or merit
3 staffing as it's implemented, that would probably go
4 a long way to making this a much better place to
5 work that. And, again, on behalf of the ACAA, I
6 would like to say thank you for this opportunity.

7 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. Ms.
8 Snyder?

9 MS. SNYDER: Good afternoon. My name is
10 Amy Snyder. I'm representing the Federal Women's
11 Program Advisory Committee. The Federal Women's
12 Program Advisory Committee's goals for fiscal year
13 2003 continue to be to enhance opportunities for
14 women to achieve positions to successfully advance
15 at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission through the
16 development of upward mobility positions, increased
17 vocational opportunities, aligning mentors with
18 women and training opportunities to prepare women
19 for more advanced positions within the Agency.

20 The Federal Women's Program Advisory
21 Committee would like to highlight some recent
22 progress towards these goals in the development of
23 administrative upward mobility positions. In the
24 Office of Nuclear Material, Safety and Safeguards
25 over the last year, several positions have been

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1 identified as upward mobility in the administrative
2 area. The Federal Women's Program Advisory
3 Committee has drafted a report that provides
4 recommendations for potential mobility upward
5 positions and career enhancement opportunities in
6 the administrative support area.

7 Some of the recommendations include
8 update position descriptions, a draft position
9 description would be attached to the report and
10 would be available for all offices in order to
11 remove the requirements for stenography and include
12 requirements for computer skills and programs such
13 as Starfire and ADAMS. Other recommendations are to
14 encourage Agency managers to identify or develop
15 positions as upward mobility positions and identify
16 training opportunities that are key to success to
17 upward mobility in the administrative area. The
18 Federal Women's Advisory Program -- Federal Women's
19 Program Advisory Committee continues to track the
20 progress in these various goals that are included in
21 this year's objectives.

22 In closing, I would like to thank the
23 Office of Nuclear Regulatory -- Nuclear Reactor --
24 NRR --

25 (Laughter.)

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1 -- and the Office of NMSS for their
2 support and involvement in the Federal Women's
3 Program. Thank you.

4 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. Mr.
5 Ibrahim.

6 MR. IBRAHIM: Good afternoon, Mr.
7 Chairman, commissioners. On behalf of the Committee
8 on Age Discrimination, I would like to express my
9 thanks for giving us the opportunity to address the
10 Commission on aging issues. The Committee would
11 like to bring some of their concerns to your
12 attention. You'll notice that our current statement
13 has not markedly changed from previous statements
14 presented to the Commission. So far we have not
15 seen much in the way of positive action and response
16 to these concerns.

17 For example, we have recently analyzed
18 performance data for the last 15 years. That is
19 from 1988 to 2000. We found that the downgrading to
20 upgrading the staff over 15 years is about twice
21 those of the general staff. As you can see here,
22 this is here the issue of downgrading over upgrading
23 as a function of age. And, see, as you get older,
24 the downgrading increases with respect to upgrading.

25 The second example I would like to say

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1 we examined data submitted in the SECY 02182
2 regarding the assignment in fiscal year 2002, and we
3 found that rotation of assignments for staff less
4 than 50 years was two and a half times the rate for
5 staff 50 years and older. And we can here show you
6 the percentage of staff under 39 years at the number
7 of rotations for the staff as a function of age
8 also. And this is over 60 years. So it seems also
9 as you get older, you get less rotation.

10 We recommend that the NRC investigate
11 why performance is more likely to be downgraded than
12 upgraded for older staff than younger staff and why
13 they are not getting more rotational assignments as
14 compared to the younger staff. Staff 50 years and
15 older are the core of this Agency. They possess the
16 critical judgments and experience which are
17 essential to the mission of the Agency. The Agency
18 needs to recognize and value their experience. We
19 hope in future briefings we can report to you that
20 progress has been made regarding this issue.

21 Finally, the Committee would like to
22 thank the EEO, Dr. Bill Travers, for meeting with us
23 to discuss our concerns and goals. In addition, we
24 thank Ms. Irene Little and her staff for their
25 cooperation providing us with performance appraisal

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1 data for our continued analysis. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. Finally,
3 I'd like to call on Mr. Yielding who is here
4 representing the National Treasury Employees' Union.

5 MR. YIELDING: Thank you, Mr. Chairman,
6 Commissioners. My name is Dale Yielding. I'm the
7 local President here of Chapter 208 of the National
8 Treasury Employees' Union. I like to always keep
9 the Union's comments kind of directed towards EEO
10 since that's what the purpose of this meeting is,
11 even though our function and mission goals for the
12 Union are widespread for our employees.

13 And I guess the connection I make is
14 retention. Recruitment is, I guess, the focus of
15 EEO, and of course there's been a lot of talk about
16 retention, and I think the Union's aspect on that is
17 our major effort of always trying to improve the
18 workplace through, I guess, starting by changing the
19 collective bargaining agreement. We only looked at
20 that every two years, but we've made significant
21 changes last October of 2001. And I think if
22 everyone takes a look at the accomplishments and
23 maybe the agenda items of what we look at on a
24 monthly basis at the Agency of Labor/Management
25 Partnership Committee. This is issues where we

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1 bring forward hopefully improvements to the Agency
2 and I guess improvements to the Agency could
3 directly associate with retaining employees here.

4 So we're always trying to bring this
5 forward, and I think our last accomplishment, of
6 course, was agreement on work-at-home. That program
7 is being implemented and hopefully it will be real
8 widespread in the future. And I guess in the future
9 here we're going to try to expand a pilot work-at-
10 home -- not work-at-home but a pilot workplace
11 schedule that was implemented in Region 4 and we're
12 going to try to see if it might have some benefits
13 to be expanded throughout the Agency to people to
14 adjust their work schedule over a seven-day period
15 rather than just the current Monday through Friday
16 period.

17 A couple of comments on the statistics.
18 I talked with Irene about the informal versus the
19 formal EEO complaints. I was a little unclear about
20 the definition of informal complaint and Irene said
21 it was when an EEO counselor proceeded, through
22 authorization from the employee, to pursue a
23 resolution of the allegation. So that does not
24 include when the employee stops by the EEO
25 counselors with a concern where it might just be

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1 discussed with a counselor. I'm not sure how many
2 of those are but whether they're worth counting,
3 whatever it is, it doesn't graduate into the formal
4 EEO counting stage. I'm not sure whether it had
5 significance or whether the counselor was able to
6 resolve it with an answer to a question or two.

7 But what it also doesn't encompass is
8 grievances and which might have EEO implications.
9 When an employee feels that they've been harmed and
10 they connect it with discrimination, they file an
11 EEO complaint. There's a twofold burden on the
12 employee there: One to prove they were harmed and
13 the second is to prove it was due to discrimination.
14 But if the employee is harmed and they don't want to
15 pursue discrimination, they can just file a
16 grievance if they feel like they've been harmed
17 through an appraisal or harmed through a merit
18 system promotion. And a lot of employees would
19 probably elect the easier route, to just use the
20 Union and go through filing a grievance. So
21 the recommendation might be twofold, to look at the
22 number of grievances that are filed, not necessarily
23 looking at whether there's an EEO implications of
24 discrimination with the grievance, but that might be
25 another measure of whether we have a good workplace

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1 here to retain employees because the number of
2 grievances is direct relation to how satisfied the
3 employees are working here. So I'm sure that those
4 statistics will be available through the Union or
5 through Claude Berman in H.R., but we're trying to
6 train all our union stewards to resolve grievances
7 and I think in the past couple of years we've got
8 the numbers down considerably well. Thank you very
9 much.

10 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you. I would
11 like to thank all of the participants this afternoon
12 for their excellent presentations. I think it is
13 clear that we do have some challenges that are
14 before us, but I think it is also clear that we've
15 made some great progress as acknowledged by several
16 of the advisory committees that spoke here this
17 afternoon.

18 The most critical asset of this Agency
19 is our manpower. We depend crucially on the skills
20 of our staff in order to fulfill our function. And
21 in this context, it is important to hire and advance
22 the most competent people here. And it's completely
23 counterproductive to us as an agency to fail to
24 provide opportunities for all staff, regardless of
25 race, ethnicity, age or other irrelevant type

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1 characteristics, and we must continue our efforts to
2 emphasize the assurance of equal opportunity for
3 all.

4 I'd also like just to note in closing
5 that our great appreciation to Irene Little for the
6 kind of presentation that we had today where we have
7 achieved great progress, which I'm sure is
8 attributable, in large part, to your efforts. We've
9 accomplished a lot thanks to you, and we very much
10 appreciate it and we're going to miss you. And with
11 that, we're adjourned.

12 MS. LITTLE: Thank you. Could you
13 indulge me for just a moment? I really did not want
14 to make this a discussion of my retirement, but
15 since it has come up I think I would be remiss in
16 not giving at least a couple of things. First of
17 all, I want to thank all of you who supported me
18 here, but I have to share with you the secret of my
19 success, and I do think that we've been successful,
20 and that's my hardworking staff. They're always
21 there. I want to thank them publicly in here so
22 that they know that I know the value that they have
23 given to this program and to Paul Bird who sits
24 quietly over here until he's spoken to and his staff
25 who've actually done a lot of what we are talking

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1 about today as success. The EEO counselors, they're
2 in the background. The chairpersons of the EEO
3 advisory committees. There are a lot of people that
4 are making this program a success and I am sure it
5 will continue regardless of who sits in my seat.

6 Thank you very much.

7 CHAIRMAN MESERVE: Thank you.

8 (Applause.)

9 (Whereupon, at 4:18 p.m., the briefing
10 was concluded.)

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