

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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BRIEFING ON HUMAN CAPITAL AND  
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY (PUBLIC)

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TUESDAY

JUNE 23, 2015

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ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

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The Commission convened in the Commissioners' Hearing Room, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, at 9:00 a.m., Stephen Burns, Chairman, presiding.

NRC COMMISSIONERS:

CHAIRMAN STEPHEN G. BURNS

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MIRIAM COHEN, OCHCO

KRISTIN DAVIS, OCHCO

JASON LISING, OCHCO

DOUG THARP, OCHCO

MELODY FOPMA, SBCR

PAM BAKER, REGION I

ALSO PRESENT:

MARIA SCHWARTZ, NTEU

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

9:00 a.m.

CHAIRMAN BURNS: Good morning, everyone. I want to welcome our panel that is here, and they will I am sure introduce themselves as they go, and also welcome members of the NRC staff as well as members of the public here today.

The Commission meets today to receive a briefing on the agency's Human Capital Activities and an update on our Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Management Program, part of our semi-annual briefings related to that topic.

The programs we're going to talk about this morning are very important to the agency because, after all, the people of the agency are our most important asset in terms of achieving our mission and strategic objectives.

Obviously, NRC is in the midst of change. I think anybody who has been around, and certainly since I got back last November, I am well aware in terms of the -- some of the challenges ahead, particularly as we undertake implementation of the initiatives that the Commission has approved in Project Aim 2020 that are designed to improve our operational effectiveness and right-size the agency.

So we look forward this morning to hearing about the agency's strategies for strengthening the organization and positioning it for change and shaping our future workforce, including our training programs.

And we'll hear presentations also from the Office of

1 Small Business and Civil Rights, and also have a -- be addressed by  
2 the representative from the NTEU, our union, at the end of the  
3 presentations.

4 But first, I'll ask if my fellow colleagues have anything  
5 they'd like to say? Okay, Mike, please --

6 MR. WEBER: Good morning, Chairman and  
7 Commissioners. It's a pleasure for the staff to brief you this morning  
8 on our Human Capital Programs and on our Equal Employment  
9 Opportunity Programs.

10 Both programs continue to receive accolades across  
11 the Federal government. For example, the 2014 Federal Employee  
12 Viewpoint Survey, NRC had among the highest engaged employees,  
13 and engagement of the employees is very critical to the success of the  
14 agency in accomplishing its mission.

15 I am also pleased to report that based on the 2015  
16 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, NRC had one of the highest  
17 response rates, so again, it's a testament to the high level of  
18 engagement of the NRC workforce.

19 OMB recently conducted a review across the Federal  
20 government, a benchmarking review in five corporate areas, and  
21 among them, NRC again was rated in the top category for the quality  
22 and the level of customer service in human capital.

23 And our Diversity and Inclusion Program has been  
24 used as a model across the Federal government agencies, so the work  
25 that we've done here on diversity and inclusion has not only benefitted  
26 our agency, but also other agencies, and thus the American public.

1                   We do have our share of challenges, as you've alluded  
2 to, Mr. Chairman: workload reductions and tighter fiscal environments  
3 mean that the agency needs to get smaller and that we need to improve  
4 the efficiency of our operations while maintaining or improving the  
5 effectiveness of our accomplishment of the mission of the agency.

6                   We appreciate the Commission's approval of the  
7 Project Aim recommendations, and we're moving into implementation  
8 now. Project Aim 2020 will be essential for positioning the agency to  
9 continue to succeed and improve the effectiveness, efficiency, the  
10 agility, and the responsiveness of the agency in meeting the changes  
11 that are necessary to improve the agency.

12                   And, as you pointed out Chairman, the employees of  
13 the NRC are that key factor that delivers on the mission and also  
14 enables the change of the organization.

15                   So with that, I am happy to turn it over to Miriam  
16 Cohen, our Chief Human Capital Officer.

17                   MS. COHEN:        Good morning, Chairman,  
18 Commissioners -- I still don't learn.

19                   Good morning, Chairman, Commissioners, and fellow  
20 NRC employees. It's an honor and privilege to be with you today.

21                   I actually went through some records and saw that this  
22 is my fifth year presenting at these meetings, and in fact, since that  
23 time, some of the major themes that have come across in those  
24 meetings are things that would be timely today: employee engagement,  
25 investment in learning and development, maintaining a positive  
26 organizational culture, and resilience amidst change. These issues

1 will be addressed as part of our various topics this morning.

2 I want to begin briefly with an update of where we are  
3 today as an organization. Next slide?

4 Our agency is continuing its gradual decline in FTE, as  
5 we expect our onboard staff to be around 3650 as we begin the new  
6 fiscal year in '16. Next slide.

7 We continue to lose approximately 180 employees per  
8 year, which equates to about a 5 percent attrition rate.

9 As the agency workload declines in expected areas  
10 and our attrition continues its historical patterns, I do not expect any  
11 problems in meeting the 3600 FTE target for fiscal year '16. We have  
12 excellent processes in place to monitor staffing and have recently  
13 provided updated hiring and staffing planning guidance to the offices.

14 As we move towards 2020, we need to embrace the  
15 changes that are coming and equip our leaders, managers, and staff to  
16 deal with the agency's new reality. While staffing will not be as robust  
17 as in years past, we will continue to ensure that the agency has the  
18 critical skills it needs to carry out the important work of the agency.

19 The agency will always need highly skilled staff and  
20 supervisors as the workforce continues to age, and in light of that, we  
21 need to focus our efforts on developing a diverse pipeline of future  
22 leaders.

23 The work this agency does is very important, and that  
24 is one of the reasons why employee engagement, as Mike mentioned,  
25 remains very high. We want to build on the strengths of our agency,  
26 our employees, by continuing to invest in them through our technical

1 training programs, development opportunities, and our leadership  
2 programs. These programs have been a hallmark of the agency and  
3 are going to need to continue into the future.

4 Thank you once again for being able to brief you this  
5 morning on our human capital programs. I'd like to turn the  
6 presentation over to Jason Lising.

7 MR. LISING: Thank you, Miriam, and good morning,  
8 Chairman and Commissioners.

9 I am pleased to have the opportunity to discuss  
10 OCHCO's plans for supporting NRC's readiness for change in  
11 anticipation of the increasingly complex and uncertain environment in  
12 which we operate. Next slide.

13 NRC has a longstanding history of positively  
14 responding to change. Given the pace of change, the capacity to  
15 adapt is as important as ever. Looking ahead at what the future  
16 landscape of the agency may be, a glimpse back provides some  
17 important lessons.

18 Consider how effectively the staff responded to 9/11  
19 and Fukushima. The NRC demonstrated an ability to respond  
20 immediately to these grave events. The Headquarters Operations  
21 Center response teams and the NRC at large acted professionally and  
22 without hesitation to adapt as events unfolded and changing conditions  
23 warranted different necessities.

24 We are fortunate to have a very talented staff with the  
25 right skills ready and willing to step up during such significant changes.

26 On a different level of change, staff experienced

1 regular ongoing changes, such as space consolidation moves,  
2 fluctuating budgets and Federal employee perceptions, advances in  
3 technology that bring continually upgraded systems, turnover in  
4 leadership, and dynamic stakeholders that focus and refocus as the  
5 nuclear industry changes.

6 Through uncertainties, disruptions, and even  
7 inconveniences, the NRC has remained a high-capacity -- retains a  
8 high capacity to adapt because of a strong commitment to our mission,  
9 our values, and our people.

10 Our mission is one thing that has not changed. It is  
11 what has grounded us in the past and will continue to guide us into the  
12 future.

13 OCHCO remains faithful to providing steadfast support  
14 across the agency to implement our mission. Whether the change --  
15 whatever the change may be, the formula for success remains the  
16 same: take care of our people so that they in turn can carry out the  
17 mission.

18 OCHCO is working to prepare the workforce for  
19 change by focusing on building both individual and organizational  
20 readiness, thereby boosting the agency's capacity for change. Next  
21 slide, please.

22 OCHCO is fully invested in efforts to build individual  
23 readiness. This year, training and development emphasized  
24 leadership at all levels in order to build self-management and  
25 self-leadership skills.

26 A tangible application of this campaign resulted in the



1 newly developed Aspiring Leadership Certification Program that has  
2 garnered high participation throughout the agency. This endeavor  
3 aligns with the OEDO's recent seminar on situational leadership  
4 featuring Captain Richard Phillips and OCHCO's increasingly popular  
5 executive leadership seminars series, which highlighted adaptive  
6 leadership and strategic thinking.

7 OCHCO is preparing the workforce using a variety of  
8 tools and methods that focus on getting staff ready for shifting priorities  
9 and workloads. For example, we have rolled out new classroom  
10 training, and at the PDC -- at the PDC to help staff develop skills in  
11 communication and interpersonal relationships, critical thinking, and  
12 conflict management.

13 These courses, combined with the NRC's  
14 Comprehensive Employee Assistance Program, give our people a  
15 number of opportunities and outlets in preparing for changes and for  
16 seeking assistance.

17 Behavior Matters Phase 2 was initiated last fall. This  
18 campaign seeks to foster skills in self-awareness, self-regulation, and  
19 giving and receiving feedback, skills all necessary to continue to be  
20 effective during times of uncertainty and change.

21 The team-building open discussion forum of these  
22 seminars bring work units together for open dialogue on how behaviors  
23 reflect the NRC values and how living these values enriches our work  
24 environment.

25 We continue to work to improve employee  
26 engagement by supporting improvements in the workplace in response

1 to the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey and other data-gathering  
2 tools to increase the individuals' capacities to adapt. Research has  
3 shown a direct business case correlation between a highly engaged  
4 workforce and a highly productive workforce, which in our regulatory  
5 world translates to improved safety and security.

6 Knowledge management remains a top priority and an  
7 integral part of the agency's strategic plan. Key activities include the  
8 annual November campaign, an improved internet homepage, Ask A  
9 Subject Matter Expert learning sessions such as the one with Jim  
10 Wiggins before his retirement, and continued governance by the  
11 agency's KM Steering Committee.

12 Every individual at the NRC can maximize their  
13 potential. The Powered By You campaign introduced in 2014  
14 highlights self-motivation as the primary driver to propel one's  
15 professional goals.

16 OCHCO recognizes that the changing environment  
17 may make it more difficult for staff to feel empowered or to face the  
18 reality of reduced opportunities, but we are working together with  
19 employees to find fulfilling, innovative, and career-enhancing avenues  
20 through popular programs such as mentorship and the career  
21 counseling program.

22 There can be a bright future for everyone here at the  
23 NRC, no matter how uncertain the future may be. Next slide please.

24 OCHCO is fully invested in building organizational  
25 readiness by working with the OEDO to effectively manage change,  
26 especially on communicating and engaging the workforce. We

1 acknowledge the importance of ensuring a clear understanding among  
2 employees and explaining the why, or as some may phrase it, the  
3 burning platform behind proposed changes.

4 We also recognize that in order to build trust within the  
5 organization, it is imperative that we provide honest and transparent  
6 communications when actions are taken, either in response to or in  
7 preparation for change.

8 This open communication provides a platform for  
9 transformative and successful change. Hence, it is important that we  
10 in OCHCO alongside the OEDO and you the Commission continue to  
11 be mindful when communicating these changes by building a  
12 foundation of trust through transparency regarding change initiatives.

13 The request for organizational development  
14 interventions has tripled over the past year. These engagements,  
15 requested by work units at headquarters and throughout the regions,  
16 vary in size and complexity.

17 They both -- they include both proactive and reactive  
18 responses to change and have resulted in augmented performance  
19 with more engaged and satisfied employees.

20 One example of a successful intervention involved two  
21 groups who adamantly expressed differing views related to each other's  
22 priorities. Our contracted experts in the field of behavioral psychology  
23 assessed the situation and developed a strategy in which both groups  
24 could express their opinions. Using research-based techniques, they  
25 learned to see each other's perspectives and came to a resolution.

26 The Organizational Development Team, in

1 coordination with the Executive Leadership Development Team,  
2 actively emphasizes modeling the NRC values and promotes the  
3 development of a mission-based NRC culture. Strong leadership  
4 plays such a vital role in change management.

5 The Leadership Development Team fortifies  
6 leadership at all levels by defining required competencies, simplifying  
7 access to developmental courses that support these competencies,  
8 and then evaluating and updating these tools as required.

9 In closing, we continue to strengthen our strategic  
10 partnership across the agency and are confident that these actions will  
11 increase readiness for change at the individual and organizational level  
12 and will help the workforce adapt to change in order to successfully  
13 meet the NRC mission.

14 Thank you for the opportunity to provide a high-level  
15 overview of our activities that support organizational readiness for  
16 change, and at this point, I will turn the presentation over to Kris Davis,  
17 Chief of the Outreach and Recruitment Branch.

18 MS. DAVIS: Thank you Jason, and good morning,  
19 Mr. Chairman and Commissioners.

20 As I was reflecting upon the conversation for this  
21 briefing today, I realized that every year we talk about our ability to  
22 manage change, and this year is no different, as change has just  
23 become a normal part of our everyday working lives.

24 As far back as I can remember, we've been under  
25 pressure to reduce costs, seek efficiencies, and as an agency, we've  
26 always met these challenges head-on and been very successful.

1                   So as I speak to shaping the future workforce, I would  
2 like to begin by -- by reflecting on the strong foundation of human  
3 capital strategies that have made us successful thus far. These  
4 strategies and activities have enabled us to respond to our workforce  
5 needs and to ensure that we have the right skill mix to support our  
6 mission. Next slide, please.

7                   The NRC has a history of recruiting highly skilled  
8 professionals, ranging from entry level to senior executives, and will  
9 continue to use targeted recruitment and outreach to ensure we have  
10 the right talent in place. We will continue to leverage key human  
11 capital programs such as the Nuclear Safety Professional Development  
12 Program to ensure a pipeline of talent that can be trained and groomed  
13 to fulfill our regulatory needs in the years to come.

14                   Although our future hiring will be more targeted, we will  
15 still maintain a strong campus outreach program to expose students to  
16 NRC's important mission and to the opportunities which are available  
17 here.

18                   At the same time, we have broadened the recruitment  
19 of students who receive support under the Integrated University and  
20 Minority Serving Institution Programs in order to maximize our return on  
21 investment for these programs.

22                   For this recruitment year, the majority of our events will  
23 be focused on recruiting a workforce to increase diversity of our feeder  
24 pools and to attract those that are eligible for special government  
25 programs.

26                   We continue to focus on employment of our nation's

1 veterans by attending targeted recruitment events and advertising on  
2 digital media. For 2014, the Office of Personnel Management tracked  
3 agency performance by comparing us to like-sized agencies.  
4 Comparisons were made on the number of veterans hired, number of  
5 disabled veterans hired, our veteran retention rate, and the number of  
6 veterans onboard.

7 I am proud to say that we ranked very high overall,  
8 especially with our veteran retention rate. However, we still have  
9 some work to do in our disabled veteran hiring.

10 We continue to have at our disposal recruitment and  
11 workplace flexibilities that allow us to stay competitive in the  
12 marketplace. We use recruitment, retention, and relocation bonuses  
13 when necessary. We also promote work-life balance, have  
14 maintained the health unit and fitness center, and have encouraged  
15 telework for our employees.

16 For the most part, these types of benefits have  
17 remained unchanged, but it's important to point out that these  
18 flexibilities contribute to making NRC a great place to work, especially  
19 when you compare us to many public and private organizations.

20 In addition to hiring, we continue to utilize  
21 developmental programs such as the Graduate Fellowship and Senior  
22 Executive Service Candidate Development Program to maintain our  
23 cadre of leaders and to meet specific critical skill needs.

24 The agency is currently supporting four graduate  
25 fellows. Disciplines being sponsored include materials engineering,  
26 non-destructive examination, probabilistic risk assessment, and

1 nuclear engineering accident progression.

2 The agency recently graduated 25 participants of the  
3 Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program, one of  
4 whom will share her personal insights regarding the program later on in  
5 this briefing.

6 In addition, 26 individuals were recently selected to  
7 participate in the next cohort, which will be -- which begins -- which  
8 began this month and will graduate in 2017.

9 To further encourage on-the-job development, the  
10 agency continues to support the use of rotations and details, offers a  
11 formal mentoring program, encourages and promotes the use of  
12 individual development plans, and hosts a variety of technical and other  
13 training at the Technical Training Center in Chattanooga and at the  
14 Professional Development Center here at headquarters.

15 In addition, we offer over 4,000 online courses via  
16 iLearn. Next slide.

17 So, as we leave the present and prepare for the future,  
18 we are seeking to implement the Commission-approved Project Aim  
19 2020 recommendations under the people strategy by supplementing  
20 and tying together what is already being done across the agency to  
21 achieve the optimum workforce of the future.

22 Keeping in mind that this is something we already  
23 know how to do on a more targeted scale, we are now aligning these  
24 initiatives in a more comprehensive method that is simple and  
25 structured. The systematic process will help us identify and address  
26 gaps between the workforce of today and the desire workforce of

1 tomorrow, tomorrow meaning the year 2020 and beyond.

2 I want to point out that this phase of workforce planning  
3 is a process rather than a tool or an IT system. The benefits of this  
4 more structured approach will keep us focused on our long-term  
5 objectives and strategies and provide an action plan to execute those  
6 strategies. It will help us avoid short-term decisions that may result in  
7 long-term problems, help us prepare for unplanned situations, and  
8 ensure that core jobs and key skills are secured.

9 OCHCO has already taken a number of steps to lead  
10 the agency in implementing actions to align our workforce with the  
11 recommendations under Project Aim. We issued agency hiring  
12 guidance to help offices plan for and achieve the 2016  
13 Commission-approved FTE ceiling of 3600 and to ensure we are  
14 forward-focused on 2016 and beyond.

15 We have issued 2016 staffing plan guidance as well to  
16 make certain office staffing plans reflect the right mix of employees'  
17 skills, grades, and numbers to accomplish the agency's mission.

18 We are working with offices to identify all current and  
19 former supervisors that have been or are projected to be displaced to  
20 facilitate placement of those individuals in vacant supervisory positions,  
21 and we are pursuing the possibility of a limited buy-out early-out  
22 authority for employees in certain job categories.

23 Throughout this effort, OCHCO was partnering with  
24 offices to ensure their staffing plans are integrated with our longer-term  
25 workforce planning efforts.

26 These short-term actions help us identify what current



1 resources we have and how they will evolve over time. We will then  
2 focus on the future by identifying expected program changes, drivers of  
3 those changes, and an understanding of how -- of the impact that those  
4 changes will have on our organizational structure and our resources.

5 Based on this information, we will determine the kinds,  
6 numbers, and locations of resources required in the future.

7 Once we understand where we are going, we will  
8 identify areas where there are competency surpluses as well as gaps.  
9 These will then become the focus areas as we identify and implement  
10 strategies to close the gaps and alleviate the surpluses, all to align our  
11 resources with mission needs.

12 Doug Tharp's presentation on learning transformation  
13 will delve into some of these strategies in more detail.

14 One key point to remember is that strategic workforce  
15 planning is not a one-time action. As we execute our workforce  
16 planning activities, we will continue to monitor and evaluate them to  
17 assess progress towards meeting our objectives and to make  
18 necessary course corrections.

19 We are ever-mindful of the possible pitfalls and are  
20 looking at lessons learned from previous workforce alignment activities.  
21 We understand the embracing change is oftentimes difficult, so we will  
22 strive to communicate in an open and transparent fashion and to take  
23 actions commensurate with our agency values.

24 I believe that the important point to take away is that  
25 we're once again taking a proactive approach to addressing our human  
26 capital challenges. We expect that the actions we take now will result

1 in minimal adverse impact on our workforce in the future.

2 I would now like to turn the briefing over to Doug Tharp,  
3 whose presentation will cover transforming learning to enhance  
4 employee agility. Thank you.

5 MR. THARP: Thanks, Kris.

6 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, for the  
7 opportunity. I am excited about introducing learning transformation to  
8 you this morning.

9 In training and development, our actions are -- the  
10 things that we do are to ensure that employees have the necessary  
11 knowledge and skills to successfully complete the mission. The  
12 purpose of learning transformation is to ensure that we're doing that in  
13 the most efficient and effective way to actually affect employee  
14 performance.

15 So we put together a short video that we'd like to show  
16 now that kind of introduces learning transformation.

17 (Video begins.)

18 FIRST NARRATOR: The fundamental landscape of  
19 professional training and education is changing. Online or distance  
20 education is revolutionizing the way students learn by providing more  
21 efficient and effective learning opportunities. It also overcomes the  
22 limitations and failures of the traditional approach to education.

23 Here at the NRC, our historical classroom model has  
24 become practically unsustainable due to shrinking budgets for training  
25 and travel. It also fails to capitalize on the opportunities made  
26 available through the use of current technology and the advances in the

1 understanding of how adults learn.

2 SECOND NARRATOR: Changing the traditional way  
3 we train and educate our employees is one of the most important  
4 challenges facing our agency today. In order to meet this challenge,  
5 we've created the NRC Learning Transformation Initiative.

6 Our mission is to create a learning environment that  
7 offers innovative, real-time collaborative learning opportunities and  
8 enables employees to acquire and apply the competencies that sustain  
9 a high-performing workforce.

10 FIRST NARRATOR: The learning transformation  
11 team's recommendation is to combine online, on-demand learning  
12 resources and events with revised in-person onsite training.

13 This blended learning approach gives each employee  
14 online access to all of the educational and informational content they  
15 need anytime and anywhere.

16 SECOND NARRATOR: The major benefit of blended  
17 collaborative learning is the ability to offer more learning opportunities  
18 throughout the year, so this can shorten the time to competency for  
19 students, and it also allows them to complete their qualifications faster.

20 FIRST NARRATOR: It will also save time and money  
21 by reducing travel time for students and improving staff availability due  
22 to less time away from work.

23 SECOND NARRATOR: Well, blending learning is  
24 one of our key components in how we're going to transform learning at  
25 the NRC. It's going to redefine how we do our traditional in-person  
26 training. It allows students to learn at their own pace, when they can,

1 instead of spending valuable class time in learning the basics.

2 Instructors will then have the time to focus on what  
3 they've learned and be able to tie it directly back to job performance,  
4 resulting in a more meaningful, engaging, and yet effective learning  
5 experience for these students.

6 FIRST NARRATOR: The fundamental landscape of  
7 professional training and education is changing. Here at the NRC, we  
8 are dedicated to innovate and explore the latest instructional  
9 techniques, trends, and technology available because we are not only  
10 evolving our training content and structure, we are pioneering a  
11 complete education and training solution that will help define the very  
12 nature of professional training both now and for the future.

13 The NRC Learning Transformation Initiative,  
14 evolutionary training: pioneering solutions for the future.

15 (Video ends.)

16 MR. THARP: All right. Can you go to the next slide?

17 So first, let me start out with telling you what learning  
18 transformation is not about. It's not about putting everything online,  
19 and it's not about just converting the existing training courses that we  
20 have into some other more efficient method. It's actually about finding  
21 the right way, the best way to do things.

22 We've had a lot of success with our existing programs,  
23 and there are some efficiencies that could be gained in our existing  
24 programs.

25 Last year, we conducted a training needs assessment  
26 of 16 different positions of inspectors throughout the agency, and one of

1 the most memorable data points that we got out of that survey was that  
2 inspectors feel that it takes an additional two to five years after  
3 qualification before they actually feel comfortable and confident in the  
4 job to work on their own.

5 So what transformation is really about is about  
6 changing our culture from a culture of training where we focus on  
7 individual events and we learn some -- to gain some knowledge to more  
8 of a culture of learning where it's a continuous journey of learning and  
9 development activities that lead to actual performance on the job.

10 One of the first major benefits of transformation relates  
11 back to what Kris was talking about, and -- with the changing workloads  
12 and how to deal with surpluses and gaps in skills, first by building  
13 competency models and identifying the essential skills and knowledge  
14 and the demonstration criteria for each of those competencies will allow  
15 employees to move from one position to another if they're in one of  
16 those positions that may be surplus to identify a position where there is  
17 a gap and then compare competencies, compare those knowledge and  
18 skills that they have with the ones for the new job, and then just focus  
19 on the gaps that they have, and then demonstrate those competencies.

20 It moves them very quickly into that new role and it  
21 gives their managers confidence that they can actually perform in that  
22 new role.

23 So it gives them a chance then to demonstrate that  
24 competency.

25 The other benefit transformation offers is a reduced  
26 time to competency. The existing programs, as I mentioned, focus a

1 lot on knowledge, so we learn a lot about things, but then it takes two to  
2 five years to get comfortable applying that knowledge.

3 By redesigning the learning programs with more of a  
4 focus on doing, once you're qualified, when you're out in the field doing  
5 something for the first time, it won't be the first time you've actually done  
6 it, you'll have done it previously with a coach or a mentor. You've got  
7 practice, so you'll have confidence that you're able to perform on the  
8 job.

9 The other benefit is reduced cost. An example of that  
10 we actually have going on right now with our Fundamental Health  
11 Physics Course. It used to be conducted -- it was two weeks in Oak  
12 Ridge, and we had students from NRC and from agreement states that  
13 would travel and spend two weeks in Oak Ridge. Now we have moved  
14 a lot of that knowledge to an online format. Over an eight-week period,  
15 students on their own learn and get the knowledge they need, with once  
16 a week being guided by an instructor in a live virtual session.

17 They still take two exams like they did in the live  
18 course. They take them online. And now they come to Chattanooga  
19 for four days instead of ten, so we've been able to make that reduction  
20 in the travel costs.

21 The last benefit I'd like to talk about is an increased  
22 experience through learning.

23 Last week, I spent the week out with some Boy Scouts  
24 at a high adventure camp, and for the first time, I went rappelling. Now  
25 a lot of people have done that, but I have this terrible fear of heights,  
26 especially edges at high places, so prior to the event, I could probably

1 have passed an oral board, told you everything you needed to know  
2 about the equipment and about the process and about the right position  
3 to rappel. There is no way I would go over that edge.

4 But with a really good coach walking me through,  
5 getting me comfortable with the position and how the equipment works  
6 and feels, I was able to actually -- to do it. I was still scared, but I did it,  
7 so now if I had to do it again, I am confident that I could do it.

8 So we can relate that to maybe an inspector who has to  
9 give a -- a public meeting or -- or conduct a meeting, or do some public  
10 speaking, who has a terrible fear of doing that. If we can coach them  
11 through the first time to give them that comfort level, they'll be able to  
12 perform better in the future.

13 Go to the next slide. So the proposed methods that --  
14 that we're laying out for transformation include the competency models,  
15 do detailed analysis identifying the right knowledge and skills and the  
16 correct evaluation criteria that allows employees to demonstrate their  
17 competency and allows them to move more quickly between roles.

18 Blended learning, like we mentioned in the video,  
19 moves a lot of the knowledge aspects to an online environment, and  
20 then when you come to class, what you learn is how to apply that  
21 knowledge, and then through guided practice in the field, they actually  
22 get that experience. This becomes that learning journey. It also more  
23 closely relates to the learning experiences that a lot of our younger  
24 employees have had in the past.

25 Performance support, our qualification programs now  
26 are approximately two years. We gain a lot of knowledge to lead to

1 that qualification, and then when we go to the field and do things for the  
2 first time, we have to relearn much of it.

3 Brain science shows that after the first hour when we  
4 learn something, we remember about 58 percent of it. A week later,  
5 we're down to 21 percent of what we learned. So a week from now,  
6 you will remember just a little bit of what we talked about today.

7 (Laughter.)

8 MR. THARP: So one example of performance  
9 support, I go back to last week again, one of the activities I knew we'd  
10 be doing was a pioneering event. It requires tying knots and doing  
11 lashings. For some reason, I can't remember how to tie knots, so I  
12 downloaded an app on my phone so when we had to get to that, I could  
13 quickly look at a 45-second video of how to tie that knot and allowed me  
14 to do that without having to remember.

15 One of the things we're working on currently is related  
16 to safety culture. Right now, there's a -- it's about a two-hour  
17 independent study activity that's done early in the Inspector  
18 Qualification Program. It covers everything from the basics of safety  
19 culture all the way through how to analyze and evaluate inspection  
20 findings for cross-cutting issues.

21 Now, the inspector won't write their first inspection  
22 finding for about two years. At that point, they'll have to relearn all the  
23 details about how to evaluate those findings.

24 So what we're doing with the project we're working on  
25 is the initial training will cover only the very essential knowledge and  
26 information about safety culture, why safety culture is important and



1 what it is, and then we'll provide a tool in the actual workflow that  
2 teaches how, at the time they need it, how to actually evaluate the  
3 findings.

4 That shortens the initial training and puts the job aid  
5 where they need it when they're actually doing the job.

6 And the final thing I'd like to talk about is  
7 micro-learning, and it's kind of a new term that's very popular in the  
8 learning industry currently, so I'm going to show you an example of one  
9 that we did recently.

10 You think about micro-learning, it's really how most  
11 people learn outside of work today related to Youtube videos on how to  
12 do different things.

13 So the example I'm going to talk about is there is a site  
14 in Region I that recently came out of an outage, had some issues when  
15 they were testing their safety relief valves, they failed to open at low  
16 pressures, so the inspectors at the site provided this black-and-white  
17 picture on the left to regional management along with a  
18 three-paragraph explanation about those Three-Stage Target Rock  
19 Safety Relief Valves actually worked.

20 Mike Johnson asked if we had a model that  
21 demonstrated how they work. We didn't at the time, so it took us about  
22 two days to create what you see on the right.

23 So now, any future event, if someone needs to see  
24 how one of these valves works, we have that asset available to them.  
25 It can also be used in initial training, for refresher training, or any time  
26 an issue comes up with the Three-Stage Target Rock Safety Relief

1 Valve.

2 So what we're proposing is that we identify these types  
3 of things that we can create and make available. It will also then  
4 reduce some of the requirement for initial training and will prevent  
5 having to write a three-paragraph explanation of how the thing works  
6 ever again, because you can see it.

7 All right. Let's go to the last slide.

8 So in summary, with learning transformation, how does  
9 it impact agility? Well first, by modeling the knowledge and skills and  
10 performance criteria for each critical position, and then building blended  
11 learning programs focused on performance and experience will reduce  
12 the time to competency and allow for quicker transitions between roles.  
13 It will reduce travel and the costs associated with that travel. And it will  
14 also keep people on the job actually doing work rather than going off to  
15 training events to gain the knowledge, they'll actually gain that  
16 knowledge and experience on the job in the workflow.

17 So thank you again for the opportunity to introduce  
18 learning transformation, and I'm going to turn it over to Pam Baker from  
19 Region I, and she'll share her experience and her insight as a recent  
20 graduate of the SES Candidate Development Program.

21 MS. BAKER: Thank you, Doug.

22 Good morning, Chairman and Commissioners. I am  
23 pleased to be here today to share with you my perspective on the future  
24 as a participant in the recently completed 2015 class of the NRC's  
25 Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program.

26 Unlike many of my colleagues at the table, I am not an

1 HR professional. Rather, I am here today to provide a different view of  
2 the NRC's Human Capital Program, that being the role of leadership,  
3 and more specifically, what the next cadre of NRC leaders need for the  
4 future.

5 One message we heard over and over as our class  
6 developed and honed our leadership competencies over the past two  
7 years was you are the future leaders of the NRC. Senior executives,  
8 when briefing us at information sessions and the like, told us that the  
9 future of the NRC rests in our hands.

10 At first, I found this an intimidating prospect. Finding  
11 strength in numbers, though, we transcended these initial doubts, and  
12 we discovered some personal courage to try these new roles, first in the  
13 safety of the Development Program, and now as we face real life  
14 challenges as we are placed in our new positions throughout the NRC.

15 All of us will ultimately be the very ones effecting the  
16 human capital initiatives that have been discussed today, whether it's  
17 workforce shaping, blended learning, or the change in management  
18 strategies that Jason outlined.

19 Preparing for today's brief, I did solicit from my class  
20 their thoughts on what the future holds. How have we been prepared,  
21 and how are we equipped for that role? And more importantly, what  
22 obstacles are going to be ahead of us that we need to overcome?

23 I've sequenced my discussion today accordingly, and  
24 first, I'll examine what that future is that we see. What are those  
25 implications? And last, I will share three areas that we'll need to focus  
26 on to be effective leaders.

1                   While some will say you can't predict the future, what  
2 we can do is project what today's trends may be taking us, and the one  
3 in the forefront -- I am sorry, next slide, I guess it's up there, sorry -- is  
4 budget constraints. They're going to continue to tighten, and we  
5 approach this with doing more with less, but that's only going to take us  
6 so far because that implies that we're going to be doing the same things  
7 the same way, just with less resources.

8                   Really, we need to add an effectiveness and an  
9 efficiency in that process, which means that we're going to be doing  
10 what must be done, and we're going to have to streamline our  
11 processes in order to get quality results in a quicker fashion, and then --  
12 and doing that with less people, equipment, and dollars.

13                   Looking at change, though, we need to recognize what  
14 needs to stay constant. For us, it's our mission for public safety and  
15 security. Our regulatory universe continues to evolve with the mix of  
16 what we regulate. The breadth of our rulemaking, licensing,  
17 inspecting, and research keeps expanding.

18                   Additionally, how we manage staff will become more  
19 complex as organizations are merged and collapsed and span of  
20 control increases to achieve optimum supervisory ratios.

21                   Another area that is our future is the level of external  
22 scrutiny. It will continue to grow.

23                   Project Aim recommendations are not just an internal  
24 initiative in the NRC. There is strong interest from Congress, our  
25 licensees, and the public, and with so many looking on, our consistency  
26 and speed of response will impact how our results and outcomes are

1 perceived.

2 The future landscape is daunting. Change is the  
3 imperative, as you've heard throughout the presentations today, as the  
4 status quo can no longer be maintained. What got us here is not  
5 sustainable without significant change in how we do what needs to be  
6 done.

7 As future leaders, it is our charge to take the NRC  
8 through the necessary change, questioning the why, what, and how we  
9 operate. This means letting go of some past practices that are no  
10 longer affordable. It's examining our priorities with a critical eye. It's  
11 trying new ways of doing things, however, with one caveat: we'll need to  
12 discern the appropriateness of what we change.

13 Our mission is founded on stability, consistency, and  
14 reliability, so as we manage change, it needs to be internally focused  
15 while continuing to project externally a credible front.

16 So what is needed in the leader of the future?  
17 Reflecting on my CDP learnings, three focus areas resounded with me.  
18 Future leaders will need to collaborate, connect, and be catalysts,  
19 meaning we can't do this alone, we need everyone's talent, and  
20 implementation must be achieved.

21 First, collaboration. Obviously, this is not a new term  
22 in the NRC, but it has a lot of different connotations. Per my CDP  
23 mates, the relationships we build in the program has been viewed as  
24 the greatest benefit of the last two years, and we actually had a soiree  
25 last night exchanging some of our war stories in our most recent  
26 assignments.

1                   But although this has been expressed by classes  
2 before us, I think the demographic makeup of our class served the  
3 concept of interdependency, which is what one NRC means to me.

4                   The mix of functional disciplines exposed us to every  
5 office and region in the NRC. As we attended training together and  
6 worked as our group projects, we coalesced over a broad range of  
7 issues. We got to know each other's perspectives, respected our  
8 differences, and we appreciated our similarities.

9                   Rotational assignments extended our reach even  
10 further. As an example, my background, I grew up in the area of  
11 corporate support and budget and HR, but I completed a rotation in the  
12 Response and Preparedness Division of NSIR and experienced  
13 firsthand the operational political challenges as the agency examined  
14 emergency preparedness for decommissioning plants.

15                   Our group projects revealed the synergy that emerges  
16 from when a talented group of people transition into a high-performing  
17 team. Thus, the foundational network has given us capacity to  
18 empathize and understand that the change we implement in our  
19 specific areas of concern may affect and impact others differently. It  
20 has given us a clearer view of the bigger picture, that being one NRC,  
21 not a composite of separate offices and regions.

22                   For my second focus area, I deliberately chose the  
23 word "connect" as opposed to "engagement." For me, connect is more  
24 active voice. It's seeing eye-to-eye and achieving a mutual  
25 understanding. When a connection is created, inclusion results.

26                   The new SES succession planning model stresses

1 additional leadership competencies beyond the traditional ECQs, or  
2 executive quality.

3 One of these is emotional intelligence, or EQ. EQ  
4 fuels the personal awareness to realize we don't have all the answers or  
5 the best solutions. It's that employee who is working in the broken  
6 process who does, and as leaders, we need to tap that knowledge.

7 As part of my executive development plan, I read the  
8 book Quiet as recommended during this briefing last year. My  
9 development plan also included my sponsorship of a leadership  
10 seminar. I brought in Laura Liswood to discuss her book, The Loudest  
11 Duck.

12 Both of these resources point to the necessity of  
13 creating an environment where the unheard are heard and encouraged  
14 to contribute and give their input.

15 The concept of leadership at all levels referred to by  
16 Jason stressed that regardless of your position in the organization, you  
17 can take action to improve how we work. When as leaders we connect  
18 with our staff, creativity and innovation are fueled.

19 The final focus area is being a catalyst. We need to  
20 facilitate implementation. Again, referring to the most recently  
21 launched SES succession planning model, the competency of  
22 decisiveness is included, and I feel is applicable here in meaning taking  
23 action.

24 Elements of this focus area include delegation and  
25 empowerment, and change-management theory emphasizes  
26 ownership, which stems from accountability.

1                   None of these are new terms for us, but I feel the  
2 difference for the leader of the future is the trust factor. As new ideas  
3 emerge and are tried, there needs to be some acceptable risk and  
4 tolerance for an occasional failure. For some of you in the room, this  
5 may sound like sacrilege, and let me be clear, I am not suggesting by  
6 any means anarchy.

7                   What I offer, though, is that we have employed a rigor  
8 in our regulatory practices that transcends into almost everything we do  
9 or how we approach our work processes, and our challenge is  
10 recognizing that we need to take a more stratified approach and  
11 communicate that to the employees where there are high risks levels,  
12 and then there are lower risk levels, and where can we effect change  
13 appropriately?

14                  Final element in this area is our speed to recover,  
15 adjust, and course correct. We are not going to get it right all the time  
16 the first time, but with the connections that we make with employees,  
17 we'll facilitate that timely feedback so that we can quickly adjust and  
18 course correct and ensure desired outcomes.

19                  In conclusion, the future will be challenging, but I  
20 believe if we work together, tap the talent of our staff, and encourage  
21 action at the right levels, we'll lead the NRC into that future. Thank  
22 you.

23                  Next is Melody Fopma, who will discuss Equal  
24 Employment Opportunity and Diversity Programs.

25                  MS. FOPMA: Thank you, Pam.

26                  Good morning Chairman and Commissioners, and



1 thank you for the opportunity to present to you today the status of Equal  
2 Employment Opportunity and Diversity Inclusion at the NRC. Next  
3 slide, please.

4 I would like to first start off by talking about Equal  
5 Employment Opportunity and will address three areas: EEO complaint  
6 statistics and trends, followed by an update on our Alternative Dispute  
7 Resolution Program, and lastly, I'll give an update on EEO training.  
8 Next slide, please.

9 The NRC continues to have a very low number of EEO  
10 complaints filed. So far this fiscal year, less than one half of one  
11 percent of the NRC workforce has filed complaints, which is very low in  
12 comparison to other federal agencies.

13 The number of complaints filed so far this year is  
14 comparable to the last two -- past two fiscal years. Next slide.

15 The most frequent bases of alleged discrimination  
16 raised thus far this year are age and sex, sex meaning gender. About  
17 half of NRC's formal complaint activity involved these bases. This is  
18 relatively consistent also with prior years. Next slide, please.

19 The most frequent issues raised in EEO complaints  
20 this year are performance appraisals; harassment, both non-sexual and  
21 sexual; and non-selection for promotion. Assignment of duties is also  
22 a commonly raised issue.

23 These issues are consistent with those raised in past  
24 years, and other Federal agencies have reported the same trend.

25 Earlier this year, the U.S. District Court judge in  
26 Maryland issued a finding of age discrimination against the NRC

1 regarding a non-selection for promotion case. The agency had  
2 previously prevailed in the same case after a hearing before the  
3 administrative judge at the EEOC, and the employee appealed to  
4 Federal court. The original complaint was filed in 2010.

5 While this is only the third finding of discrimination  
6 against the agency in its history, we are taking this finding seriously and  
7 are in the process of developing lessons learned.

8 The NRC continues to have success with its  
9 Alternative Dispute Resolution, or ADR program, as both managers  
10 and employees have been very willing to participate to resolve issues.  
11 There is significant savings to the agency when the ADR program is  
12 utilized successfully. Settlements help the agency save financial  
13 resources and time invested to process cases, avoid EEOC hearings  
14 and court filings. ADR also promotes the repairing of working  
15 relationships and opens communications between the parties.

16 So far this year, 55 percent of our cases that went to  
17 ADR were settled, and one was withdrawn.

18 Now, I'll move on to update you on EEO training.  
19 SBCR program managers Joel Kravetz and Tony Barnes have  
20 continued conducting EEO and diversity training of our managers and  
21 supervisors.

22 The mandatory training covers responsibilities  
23 managers and supervisors have relating to EEO, affirmative  
24 employment, and managing diversity.

25 This fiscal year, approximately 150 of our managers  
26 and supervisors have received training, and we anticipate training

1 about 125 more before the end of the fiscal year. They're also training  
2 our managers in the regions and plan to go to the TTC. In fact, I think  
3 they were in Region I last week.

4 SBCR trains our EEO counselors every year, and this  
5 September, we will host our second joint EEO counselor and advisory  
6 committee conference. We expect over 100 participants.

7 Our Civil Rights Program manager, civil rights  
8 specialists, and our cadre of 26 collateral duty EEO counselors do a  
9 tremendous job in helping to address and facilitate resolution of issues.  
10 This keeps the number of formal complaints filed very low. Next slide.

11 Next, I'd like to give an update on diversity and  
12 inclusion efforts at the NRC. As Mike mentioned, OPM and EEOC  
13 have recognized the NRC as a model agency for supporting diversity  
14 and inclusion in the workplace. The NRC has ongoing diversity and  
15 inclusion initiatives which help support and keep employees engaged.  
16 For example, we are very proud of our Veterans Employee Resource  
17 Group, or VERG, that was created this year.

18 As our first agency employee resource group, the  
19 VERG was formed to bring veterans together to help address their  
20 concerns and support veteran recruitment and outreach. The group  
21 has been up and running for only a few months but has already  
22 developed its charter and are busy planning events.

23 For ongoing initiatives, the agency has eight EEO  
24 advisory committees to assist management in accomplishing its  
25 diversity objectives. These committees provide advice and  
26 recommendations to SBCR and senior leaders regarding policies,

1 procedures, and practices related to career development of NRC  
2 employees and selection of applicants for employment. They are  
3 helping the agency to increase the pool of applicants for supervisory  
4 and SES positions by providing training and seminars on subjects such  
5 as how to prepare application packages and interviewing techniques.

6 The NRC also supports two affinity groups, the NRC  
7 chapter of Blacks in Government, or BIG, and GLOBE, who oftentimes  
8 co-sponsor events with our EEO advisory committees, and this  
9 increase in level of effort often results in strong attendance and success  
10 of our events.

11 As a model agency and continuous learning  
12 organization, we acknowledge that we have more to do in the area of  
13 diversity and inclusion. We recognize that the most recent SES CDP  
14 class selections were not as diverse as we would have liked compared  
15 to prior classes.

16 Senior leaders, together with OCHCO and SBCR, will  
17 continue efforts to address ways to ensure that the agency has a  
18 sufficient pool of well-qualified, talented, and diverse candidates to  
19 select from.

20 The NRC continues to be at the forefront of federal  
21 agencies for its best practices. Our very own Darren Ash is  
22 representing the agency on the Federal government's Diversity and  
23 Inclusion Government Council, and at the first meeting, during opening  
24 remarks, EEO Chair Jenny Yang singled out the NRC as the -- as a  
25 best place regarding diversity and inclusion.

26 Our newest best practice is the NRC's recently created

1 Executive Sponsor Program, which matches volunteer members of the  
2 agency's senior executive service with our EEO advisory committees to  
3 provide advice and mentoring to our future leaders.

4 SBCR Director Vonna Ordaz has been invited to serve  
5 as a panel member to discuss NRC's best practices of diversity and  
6 inclusion at EEOC's annual conference, which is celebrating its 50th  
7 year this year as a Commission.

8 So in closing, I would like to thank all of the NRC  
9 employees who serve as EEO counselors, EEO advisory committee  
10 members, our Employee Resource Group, our Diversity Management  
11 and Inclusion Council, our regional diversity management advisory  
12 councils, and our university champions. We have counted, there's  
13 about 300 in all who work on a volunteer basis to assist the agency in  
14 obtaining its diversity and inclusion goals.

15 They are our ambassadors, and they truly do make a  
16 difference here at the agency, so thank you, and I will now turn it back  
17 over to Mike.

18 MR. WEBER: Thanks, Melody, and this completes  
19 the staff's briefing. We're happy to answer questions or listen to  
20 comments at this point. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN BURNS: Okay, thank you, thank you  
22 very much to all, and we'll begin this morning with Commissioner  
23 Svinicki.

24 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Good morning  
25 everyone. To all of the presenters, I thank you for your very insightful  
26 presentations that you've given this morning. I'm very pleased that the

1 room is full, that's always very gratifying for this meeting in particular. I  
2 will begin with a couple of comments; I have some questions and some  
3 topics I'd like to hear a little bit more about as well.

4 In my role as a Commissioner I am engaging  
5 particularly with students and young professionals, it's inevitable that  
6 afterwards, I will be approached by one or two brave individuals who  
7 will express some interest, perhaps newly formed or perhaps an  
8 interest they've had for some time in working at the NRC. While it  
9 would be a wonderful stroke to my ego to think that is because of me, it  
10 is because of all of you, not just you sitting at the table or in this room,  
11 but as Melody mentioned, we have many individuals formally or  
12 informally who are ambassadors for who we are and what we do and  
13 what it means to affiliate our careers with the U.S. NRC and then build a  
14 meaningful and gratifying work experience, however long it is that we  
15 might stay with the NRC.

16 So I want to acknowledge all of the capacities within  
17 which and through which NRC staff are really modeling what it is, why  
18 they choose to work here and come here every day, and you know it  
19 was a little easier in the years when the agency's hiring was more  
20 robust to respond to those young professionals; now, although of  
21 course I indicate that the need for strategic and targeted hiring will  
22 always be true of any agency or department of the government, that  
23 they should not get discouraged if it appears that there are not as many  
24 opportunities as there may have been in years past. So I appreciate  
25 that although, as has been mentioned in years past, in this meeting  
26 we've talked about our need to adapt to change; all of you have put that

1 aspect front and center in your presentations this year, and I agree that  
2 that's very appropriate.

3 I do have one particular suggestion on the way we're  
4 transforming learning and training, and this just occurred to me. Doug,  
5 as I saw your micro-learning example, you put up this slide which of  
6 course when you put it up, it's an animated version on the other side. I  
7 would ask, I'm very encouraged by this, but I have a suggestion that  
8 instead of developing the dynamic modeling, I have had an opportunity  
9 to visit Oak Ridge National Laboratory, where under their CASL  
10 program--and I've forgotten exactly what that stands for, but it's  
11 C-A-S-L and I think the A and the S are Advanced Simulation--they are  
12 developing--the U.S. Department of Energy is funding the development  
13 of extremely detailed dynamic modeling of current generation nuclear  
14 power plants.

15 And I also read in some trade press last week that  
16 Department of Energy witnesses before a congressional oversight  
17 committee were asked to provide proof that this advanced simulation  
18 that's been conducted is of benefit to the current nuclear energy and  
19 nuclear power fleet, and I think if we tapped into that, and number one it  
20 would be efficient because someone else would have already  
21 developed the dynamic modeling and simulation capability, but also if  
22 we could tap into that and use that to arrive at training and regulatory  
23 outcomes, I think it certainly would be an effective use of taxpayer and  
24 rate payer dollars. So I just bring that to your attention to the extent  
25 we're not already doing that.

26 I do appreciate, and as I heard about transforming our

1 learning opportunities, our training, I'm excited about it because it not  
2 only has the potential to be more efficient, it has the opportunity I think  
3 to be more effective, and I want to credit our former Chairman, Allison  
4 Macfarlane, with her academic background, I think she pushed the  
5 agency to think more about the current state of how do adults learn  
6 effectively, and she challenged us to look more closely at that. And so  
7 although she's returned to academia, I'm sure if she were here today,  
8 she'd be very gratified to hear that we are applying that; I think that  
9 that's been very productive for us.

10 So with that as a lead-in, I had a couple of questions,  
11 and I don't know to whom to direct these; perhaps whoever is more  
12 appropriate at the table or in the well will step up. I appreciate the  
13 update on the FY16 staffing plan; of course as a part of the staff's  
14 recommendations, the Commission approved a more extensive  
15 re-baselining of work activity against current staff and future, perhaps  
16 identifying any gaps. Could someone speak at a very high level to the  
17 difference between the kind of staffing plans and that more routine  
18 activity, and what is envisioned as a part of a re-baselining. I know for  
19 me, and perhaps maybe for other members of the Commission, we  
20 worried that a re-baselining sounded so extensive that it might end up  
21 becoming this tremendous undertaking, and so I know in our approval,  
22 we asked for it to be integrated and blended with other planning that  
23 we've done. So, I don't know Mike if you want to start just at a high  
24 level, what are the points of departure between staffing planning that  
25 we do routinely and re-baselining? Where does it overlap and where  
26 is one different from the other?



1 MR. WEBER: On re-baselining, we got the clear  
2 direction from the Commission, we're not going to make it a  
3 monumental initiative, but it's an important initiative. So one of the first  
4 things that I discussed with Fred Brown when he arrived from Region II  
5 to take on his new position in leading that activity is we need to get on  
6 with developing the detailed plans for how are we going to do this, and  
7 we need to be responsive to the direction that the Commission has  
8 provided us. We're not waiting for re-baselining to move forward with  
9 the staffing because staffing is something that we do every day. It's  
10 important that as we move forward, we do it in the right way, mindful of  
11 at some point down the road, we're going to have the benefit of the  
12 insights from the re-baselining initiative that will then feed into more as  
13 of a refinement to where we're going with our strategic workforce  
14 staffing.

15 So we fully expect with the workload before the  
16 agency, as we look out into the future, that the bulk of the staff  
17 capabilities competencies that we have on board will remain necessary,  
18 and so we're really talking about kind of fine-tuning what are the  
19 emerging disciplines, competencies that we need to add, what are  
20 those competencies that we don't need as many of anymore because  
21 time has moved on. So with that I'll turn it to Miriam to talk about more  
22 of the--oh, to Kristin.

23 MS. DAVIS: So we are using a workforce planning  
24 model that is a best practice from the Office of Personnel Management.  
25 One of the phases in that workforce planning model is really defining  
26 your current and your future workforce needs. We separated that out

1 into two different activities mostly because when we look at our current  
2 workforce, we're looking at it from a position and a people perspective;  
3 what do we have on board now. The reason we separated out future is  
4 because the perspective that we want to take with the future is from a  
5 mission work perspective. So we want to look at the work that we're  
6 going to have in the future and the resources required for that work  
7 before we ever match positions and people to that. So once we get  
8 done with those two phases, we'll be able to do a gap analysis, and  
9 that's where we're going to come up with the competency or position  
10 people surpluses and also the gaps.

11 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Thank you for that  
12 response, and I should have acknowledged up front as Mike made  
13 reference to, I know that the staff has under development a broader  
14 response; the Commission asked for allowing us to look at some of the  
15 implementation of the recommendations that we've approved, and I  
16 know--so I was jumping the gun a little bit there, but I knew of course  
17 you weren't waiting for us, so thank you Kris for that answer. On the  
18 Federal Viewpoint Survey, I now and we acknowledge every year that  
19 in general, the NRC's indicators are positive when we look across the  
20 Government; however, that does not stop us from looking at our  
21 individual responses and indicators and where we might see some  
22 vectors going in the direction that is not positive, and then we put in  
23 place action plans against a set of targeted measures that we think  
24 address that.

25 One of the areas that we have seen a delta is in the  
26 group of metrics that get binned together kind of under the terms of

1 leaders leading and how well do employees view management and  
2 leadership, and for NRC in our results for 2014, the leaders lead scores  
3 have traditionally been the lowest within the employee engagement  
4 index, which is again a set of measures that is looking at our  
5 engagement. And so for three years I think, those have been  
6 decreasing. So could someone address--and Pam, actually given the  
7 topics you covered from your presentation and the areas that you  
8 identified, as we look at--you call it connection and non-engagement,  
9 but the need for leaders to lead and address that particular viewpoint  
10 survey aspect, is there anything you would say there was discussed  
11 amongst your candidate development colleagues in terms of that area  
12 and looking at perhaps turning some of those vectors which have been  
13 declining in terms of employee response on the leaders leading  
14 category?

15 MS. BAKER: Okay. I don't recall us having that kind  
16 of direct conversation amongst our group, but one of the things, like I  
17 said, we had a casual meeting last night, and we were talking about the  
18 proposal for the Senior Executive Service succession planning model.  
19 And in that, we spent two years charging after the ECQs and getting  
20 proficient in those. For me, I think the additional focus on these  
21 developmental competencies that the senior executive team that put  
22 this new model together examined address those issues as to the  
23 leaders leading concept. And when I look at the fed's results, it is more  
24 or less that EQ, Emotional Quotient, that needs to be part of the mix,  
25 and it's somewhat challenging sometimes to exactly put your finger on it  
26 as to what that looks like.

1                   So going forward, I think if we roll this new model out  
2                   and really start having those conversations with folks on their  
3                   development once they have completed sort of the rigors of the  
4                   program, and realize that it's a continual learning, you know, you don't  
5                   arrive just because you've been certified; you have to continue growing.  
6                   And I feel that that's going to help in that regard.

7                   COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Okay, thank you. Go  
8                   ahead Miriam.

9                   MS. COHEN: Good morning. I think it's a really  
10                  good question and I think all of us in this room should be concerned  
11                  about, you know, the continuing downward trend, and I think people  
12                  vote with their pocketbooks, and I think we've been lucky as an agency  
13                  where we've weathered a lot of external pressures fairly well. But if  
14                  you look really at what's happened over the last three or four years,  
15                  we're very--we're pretty much not a lot different than a lot of agencies  
16                  downtown that have experienced the reduced resources, the declining  
17                  budgets, and I think employees want people that will be honest and up  
18                  front with them about what's going on. And we've tried through our  
19                  executive leadership seminars to equip our leaders and managers with  
20                  those skills that they need to navigate through the difficult times.

21                  And it's not easy stuff, right? I mean, Pam alluded to  
22                  emotional intelligence and these things that--and I'll always go back to  
23                  in a highly technical agency, I mean we move people up because their  
24                  technical prowess, and while we do a lot to help develop leaders, it's  
25                  sometimes a struggle. And so I think one of the things we're going to  
26                  continue to do, and we've looked at other agencies, NASA and some

1 other places that have really re-invented their first level supervisory  
2 programs to actually focus more on the softer side. I know NTEU is  
3 here, we've heard a number of our agency partnership meetings about  
4 the need to focus on the first level supervisors and equip them. They  
5 have the hardest job in the agency, and so I think that we have to give  
6 them the tools that they need to be successful, and some of the things  
7 that Jason alluded to--and he might have some additional information--I  
8 think is only going to make them stronger, and therefore the agency as  
9 well.

10 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Jason, do you want to  
11 add to--

12 MR. LISING: Thank you. Yes, I would like to add  
13 that in a recent OPM OMB White House meeting, we went downtown to  
14 try to benchmark ourselves against other agencies and found that that  
15 particular question was low across the board with all other agencies as  
16 well. So taking a better look at it, we had the ability now this past year  
17 to look deeper into the agency at more granular levels, and we find that  
18 some sub-organizations within the agency that are higher performing  
19 than others, and this past year we've pulled out some of those  
20 higher-performing leaders and asked them to do a presentation to  
21 share their best practices, which was a recorded event, and they  
22 provided such great insights that we hope that other people throughout  
23 the agency will be able to use.

24 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Great, I think that's very  
25 constructive. Thank you, Chairman.

26 CHAIRMAN BURNS: Thank you. Commissioner

1 Ostendorff?

2 COMMISSIONER OSTENDORFF: Thank you,  
3 Chairman. Thank you all for your presentations today. The  
4 Chairman in his opening remarks highlighted the importance of this  
5 meeting; Commissioner Svinicki also commented on the great turnout  
6 we always see here, and it's always very positive. So Miriam, I give  
7 you and your team and Mike and your team in the EDO's office a lot of  
8 credit for leading these programs into and putting them at the forefront  
9 before the Commission. I think Miriam, I'll comment to you and your  
10 leadership role in the Human Capital office that I'm always impressed  
11 with the programs, but also impressed that you and your team are  
12 never satisfied, and that I would ever accuse OCHCHO of being  
13 complacent, which is a real compliment.

14 Mike, you in your opening comments, and Melody  
15 made reference to diversity and inclusion; I just wanted to make a very  
16 brief remark in this area. Last Thursday, I had the opportunity to  
17 attend the Pride celebration led by the Advisory Committee on Lesbian,  
18 Gay, Bisexual and Transgender, and I had a chance to hear  
19 Commissioner Baran make some very thoughtful comments. Heard  
20 very thoughtful comments from Larry Burkhart and others, and I know a  
21 lot of you were there, but the sense of humanity and candor and  
22 openness that were present for those who attended that hour and 10  
23 minute session was remarkable. I know I was personally moved by  
24 the personal stories, and I bring this up by way of stating that I don't  
25 think that diversity inclusion is something that is just being given a lip  
26 service; I think it's really being actualized in this agency in a very

1 constructive way. So I thank all involved across all advisory  
2 committees and the leadership and even the folks that are not leaders  
3 but that participate to make this a better agency, because I think it's  
4 really important.

5 Like Commissioner Svinicki, I have some comments  
6 I'm going to make, and then I had one question to get back to--I'll watch  
7 the clock here, but I want to save it towards the end. Last Friday, I had  
8 the chance to speak to 14 college students as part of the Washington  
9 Intern for Science and Engineering College graduates. And so  
10 the--I'm getting into an individual development program piece here,  
11 IDP, because it's something that I'm very interested in. And I told this  
12 group, you know, if I were to give you one piece of advice, you know,  
13 this is a bunch of people that had electrical engineering majors,  
14 chemical engineering, information technology, mechanical engineering,  
15 and maybe one aerospace engineer in there. That's probably a good  
16 summary.

17 But I gave them, you know, from years of experience, I  
18 told them if I were really looking to try and develop their own skills in  
19 policymaking, in being effective in management and leadership, that I'd  
20 really seek out opportunities to enhance their writing skills, and more  
21 importantly, to provide briefings to other people. I think the  
22 face-to-face commentary that people provide and the ability and  
23 confidence that comes with giving a presentation is just so important.

24 Commissioner Baran and I had a session Friday  
25 afternoon on research and test reactors, and I think our staff did a great  
26 job of presenting to commissioners their viewpoints on license renewal

1 and other issues and RTR. But I encourage, in the context of IDP, or if  
2 not an IDP, other avenues for supervisors to please give your people a  
3 chance, give them an opportunity, because those skill sets do not come  
4 without practice. And as I think Pam so capably mentioned, you know,  
5 the tolerance for failure. It's okay for somebody to give a briefing and  
6 to make a mistake, but giving that briefing up front is just so important to  
7 developing our workforce.

8 Jason, I wrote down a comment you made that caught  
9 my attention, which I completely agree with. I think it was words to the  
10 effect "There can be a bright future for everyone here at the NRC, even  
11 in the face of an uncertain future." And I go back to Pam's comments  
12 on Project Aim and changes. So I would just give my personal views; I  
13 think this is a great opportunity. The Project Aim implementation is a  
14 great opportunity for this agency to become even better, to look at how  
15 can we do things in a different way that would result in greater  
16 efficiencies. So I think it's a good news story, and not many agencies  
17 get a chance to really participate in this kind of an event that I consider  
18 part of transformation. So I appreciate your highlighting that, and Pam  
19 your comment, leveraging off your comments on Project Aim. So  
20 thank you for raising those issues.

21 Kris, I'd like to comment--make two comments on your  
22 presentation. I want to thank you for your ongoing efforts in looking at  
23 hiring veterans. I had the opportunity to work alongside Kris as I  
24 represent the NRC in an inter-agency group on the hiring of vets in the  
25 Federal government, and I think Kris has achieved a really good  
26 balance with OCHCHO in providing these opportunities, but not to the



1 detriment of non-veteran hiring, because I think there's a balance there;  
2 it's so important. And I just want to applaud you and your team--I know  
3 you work with Jennifer and Miriam in this area--for working on that very  
4 important area for us.

5           You also mentioned, as did Pam, rotations and details.  
6 I want to tell you a positive story I saw just last week on rotations. I'm a  
7 big believer in rotations, Department of Defense, Department of Energy  
8 do not do this on any wide scale. We do--you've heard me say this  
9 before and I think the other Commissioners have said this before, but I  
10 think it's a real strength in our human capital approach is to provide  
11 these detail opportunities. So last Tuesday, I was at Pilgrim, and  
12 they've had some challenges recently which I won't go into, but their  
13 Acting Senior Resident, Eric Miller, came down from Nine Mile Point  
14 during the maternity leave of the Senior Resident at Pilgrim. So Eric at  
15 Nine Mile has seen transformation from Constellation Energy to Exelon  
16 up in New York, and has brought that experience to see how Entergy is  
17 operating Pilgrim.

18           And I'll just tell you without going into details, he had  
19 some very insightful observations to make, because he's seen different  
20 perspectives, different corporate arrangements, different levels of fleet,  
21 ownership of issues, different standards at the corporate level as far as  
22 our licensees, and I think that his presence there, having been assigned  
23 by Region I for a five-month period to Pilgrim, really had a lot of value.  
24 You all in the audience have many more stories than I do, but I just  
25 wanted to echo the point you made and that Pam made in the value of  
26 rotations in the context of your recent rotation to NSIR. So I think that's

1 a real strength we have.

2 Doug, I shared your rappelling experience when I was  
3 assistant Scoutmaster at Goshen Scout Reservation in the summer of  
4 2000, and I scared to death. And I still have a scar on my left thumb  
5 from where I grabbed that rope and got a huge rope burn. So that was  
6 a great example you used, and I agree with Commissioner Svinicki's  
7 comments on the looking at the Oak Ridge piece; I think that a real  
8 strong program. Pam, in your comments, I'm glad you enjoyed the  
9 book Quiet; since I last that comment at a Commission meeting, I  
10 probably read 10 to 12 books; there's still no more impactful book for  
11 me than Quiet in the last six years now, last time I said five years. So  
12 I'm glad that you enjoyed reading that.

13 The tolerance for failure piece, I'll go back to and tell  
14 you a sea story here, because it's directly relevant to what Pam has  
15 indicated as far as leadership and management ability to let somebody  
16 make a mistake in a scenario where it's not going to be a disaster or  
17 cause an irreversible problem. So when I was captain of a submarine,  
18 it was always scary to me to--and Glenn, I'm looking at Glenn Tracy  
19 back here because he's had this experience when he was driving  
20 submarines in his four years ago. To how much extent does the  
21 commanding officer of a submarine let the Lieutenant JG who's 24  
22 years old, drive a \$1 billion submarine into a port in close proximity to  
23 other ships, maybe a 100,000 ton aircraft carrier, and basically land that  
24 ship alongside the pier with assistance of a tug boat without the captain  
25 basically telling him everything to say and every order to give?

26 So having personally lived through that, and having

1 evolved significantly over the three years I had command, where I had  
2 to make sure I was giving more latitude to somebody to make a  
3 mistake, as long as there's time and under defense and depth  
4 perspective to catch it, I think your comment is very well taken, and I  
5 think something everybody ought to listen to. That's the end of my  
6 comments; Miriam, I have one question for you. In the context of other  
7 agencies in the Federal government dealing with strategic workforce  
8 plans, and trying to restructure how they look at these issues, who does  
9 it best? Is there a model out there that we ought to be looking at?

10 MS. COHEN: Well I think Chris mentioned, you know,  
11 as part of our work, you know, we're doing some due diligence to find  
12 out best practices. I think the advantage that we have is that we're  
13 small. When I sit in some of the OCHCO council meetings with large  
14 agencies, Veteran's Affairs, DHS and others, I mean I'm thankful that I  
15 work here because it's a little bit more--I mean a lot more manageable.  
16 And so I think that Kris made a really good point that it's a process, it's  
17 not a system, it's not an IT tool. And so I think that we've already  
18 shown instances of being able to move staff around to where the work  
19 is, and so I think by being proactive, I think that we can become one of  
20 the models actually.

21 COMMISSIONER OSTENDORFF: Okay. Very  
22 good. Thank you all, thank you Chairman.

23 CHAIRMAN BURNS: Thank you. Commissioner  
24 Baran.

25 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Thanks, and thanks to  
26 everyone for your presentations; I thought they were very good.

1 Miriam, I--maybe it would make sense to start with you. You and your  
2 team I think are going to do a fair bit of the heavy lifting around Project  
3 Aim, and so I have a few questions there. One is just kind of to start  
4 with is a little bit of a factual question, which is when I look at the hiring  
5 trends from the last few years, it looks like we've kind of had more hires  
6 from 2012 to '13 and '14, but over that period, the number of staff we've  
7 actually had on board has been pretty flat. Can you walk us through  
8 that dynamic? Did we have larger than expected turnover in that time,  
9 or why are we flat even though the hiring had gone up for those couple  
10 of years?

11 MS. COHEN: Yes, I think there was a couple of  
12 things. I think in 2011, we had an early out buyout, and we were  
13 having some salary and benefits challenges, and so part of that was to  
14 help accelerate a little bit of attrition at that point. We also had in the  
15 past couple of years some accelerated departures in SES space as  
16 well, and so that's one of the reasons why we started looking at  
17 secession planning for executives. So--and if you really look  
18 historically at the hiring over the past five years, it's really been much  
19 more of a targeted recruiting; it wasn't sort of like the free for all that we  
20 had sort of prior to 2010, so we've been looking strategically at where  
21 the vacancies are and trying to hire accordingly.

22 I also think that one of the challenges that we're going  
23 to have looking ahead is that we've heard for a number of years, and  
24 Commissioner Svinicki will remember when Jim McDermott was here  
25 and the retirement tsunami we kept thinking was going to happen, and it  
26 kind of sort of didn't. And what's happening is that if you look at our

1 workforce now, we have about 20 percent of our employees re eligible  
2 now, but it moves up to 60 percent in four or five years. And we've  
3 always been able to sort of buck the tsunami because people stay in  
4 this agency longer than in a lot of other places, and there was this  
5 unscientific formula that Mr. McDermott had which was your years of  
6 service plus your age, if it was greater than 92, you probably were going  
7 to leave.

8 And so don't take that to the bank, but I think we kind of  
9 look at that model because what's happening is as people live longer,  
10 right, people need more money to extend into retirement, so it's really  
11 hard to plan for when people are going to leave. And so I think we  
12 have to be mindful of what the work is, what we're going to need to  
13 replenish, because I know that in this environment, we--Kris did a really  
14 good job of explaining how we want to keep the pipeline going. We  
15 have to sort of be mindful of the other end of the spectrum, when people  
16 are going to leave, ensure that we have the knowledge management in  
17 place, but also ensure that we get that diverse pipeline coming in  
18 because when those 60 percent leave at whatever pace that's going to  
19 be, we need to have the people to do the critical work of the agency.  
20 And we've been fortunate that we've been able to buck that trend; I just  
21 don't know for how long.

22 COMMISSIONER BARAN: In terms of the hiring  
23 trend then, the graph here goes through FY2014; what would 2015 look  
24 like here? Is this --will we see a drop in hiring?

25 MS. COHEN: Well, I think we've hired about 100  
26 people; historically, we've hired a couple, you know, close to 100, 200 a

1 year, you know, our attrition is around five percent. Again, is it going to  
2 go higher? I mean there's certain things as Kris alluded to in her  
3 presentation that we think it's important to look at workforce shaping as  
4 the agency gets smaller. So we'll be looking at that in concert with the  
5 re-baselining and where the work in the future is going to be.

6 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Okay, and then I wanted  
7 to follow up on the point you just were making about targeted hiring and  
8 kind of our focus on limited targeted hiring balanced with the need to  
9 keep Agency recruitment efforts going and having a stream of new  
10 talent coming in. Can you just talk a little bit more about how we  
11 balance those things? I noticed there's a--one of the documents here  
12 that was a background reading had kind of last year versus this year in  
13 terms of recruitment, and there's still significant recruitment this year,  
14 but at much less than in prior years. So a little bit about, you know,  
15 how do you get the sweet spot on that where we're bringing in enough  
16 people to fill the gaps we have, but we're not over-hiring at a time when  
17 we don't have that luxury.

18 MS. DAVIS: I can try to answer that question. So  
19 what you have in the background binder is our Calendar Year '15  
20 Recruitment Events Schedule, and that basically shows the events that  
21 we go to, most of them which we pay to go to, and with dwindling  
22 budgets, we have narrowed the focus as well. So last year we had  
23 about 60; this year we have about 28 total. So we did some pretty  
24 in-depth analysis to get down to that 28. We wanted to have diversity  
25 in our feeder pool, since most of them are university-targeted. Some  
26 of them are professionally targeted as well; we wanted to make sure

1 there was diversities there as well. We looked at historically where we  
2 find applicants, where we make our hires from, from what programs.

3 This in no way is everything we do in the world of  
4 recruitment and outreach; I know that the regions do quite a bit locally  
5 for themselves as well; we also do a large bit of K through 12 outreach.  
6 Our university champions, we have a nice cadre of them; however,  
7 we're unable to go to all of their universities now that we have a  
8 declining budget. So we do encourage them to still outreach to their  
9 universities, to go there, do information sessions, presentations, let the  
10 students know about the important mission that we have and the kind of  
11 work we do. At the same time, we find that we have to manage  
12 expectations of applicants. As an example, for the NSPDP program  
13 this year, we had over 1,000 applicants; we made about 20 selections.  
14 Within those selections, as Commissioner Ostendorff mentioned, we do  
15 balance veteran hire with non-veteran hires, as well as the grant  
16 recipient students. We did hire seven grant recipients this year out of  
17 those 20.

18 So it is difficult when you're talking on campus, as  
19 Commissioner Svinicki mentioned, to speak to these students. You  
20 know, 1,000 applicants, 20 positions, what are the chances? We try to  
21 say positive; obviously there is no shortage of great talent out there for  
22 us.

23 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Okay, thank you. In a  
24 couple of recent events, I've gotten--I was down in Region II, and then  
25 separately at the Fuel Cycle Information Exchange, I got almost  
26 identical questions in both settings; only one particular question, and

1 that was related to our focus on enhancing the agency's agility, which I  
2 think is very important. But the concern behind the questions was  
3 essentially as an agency, by increasing our agility, are we going to  
4 sacrifice something that we have now, which is individuals with deep  
5 expertise in certain areas. And I'd just like your thoughts about that. I  
6 mean, from my point of view when I answer that question, I say well I  
7 think that's really something that Strategic Workforce Plan has to get  
8 right, but you could probably answer the question better than I could.  
9 How would you have answered that question? How do we avoid  
10 sacrificing that kind of deep expertise, but also have the ability to deploy  
11 expertise where we need it, when we need it?

12 MS. COHEN: Well I think the highly technical experts  
13 that we have, we're going to keep them in those fields that we need to,  
14 assuming that the work is there, right? I mean, so I think when people  
15 think of the NRC, maybe agility is--maybe it's agility light, right, because  
16 as a regulator, how much do you want to say you're flexible, malleable,  
17 adaptable, right? I mean, people want predictable processes in the  
18 business that we're in, but I think when it comes to human capital, what  
19 we have to do is move people to where the work is, and I think the NRC  
20 is no different from any other bureaucracy, which is that over time,  
21 people get comfortable doing certain things because they've done them  
22 for years, and that goes--that's across the government.

23 And I think sometimes we all get attached to the work  
24 that we do, and then when we find out that the budgets are reducing, it's  
25 hard to let go. And so I don't think we'll ever sacrifice people's  
26 technical prowess in the areas that we need them to, I think what we



1 have to do is align people to where the work is, and I think that's where  
2 we probably haven't been as successful.

3 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Okay, thanks. And  
4 Melody, I want to turn to you for just a minute. Thanks for your  
5 presentation, and I wanted to ask about EEO complaint trends. So  
6 given the hard look that we're going to be doing at resources and  
7 staffing in the coming months and years, how is your office preparing  
8 for a possible uptick in EEO complaints? Is that something they're  
9 concerned about, focused on, and what if anything are you doing there?

10 MS. FOPMA: Thank you for that question. We are  
11 prepared for a possible uptick in complaint activity. As everyone has  
12 talked about, we are going to be in a time right now of a lot of change,  
13 there could be a lot of reorganizations, people moving around, possibly  
14 less hiring opportunities, promotional opportunities, and that historically  
15 has resulting in this agency in an uptick in complaints. And back in  
16 2011, we saw that trend, and we actually developed an action plan in  
17 SBCR to deal with that uptick in complaint activity, and we instituted  
18 EEO training; I think that's when we started a lot of our EEO training for  
19 managers and supervisors. We had specific targeted training for  
20 certain issues that were cropping up. So we will certainly dust that off  
21 and utilize the plan that we already had in place.

22 And we're always keeping a look out for trends and  
23 addressing those as they come up. So we also have a--as I mentioned  
24 before, we have 26 collateral EEO counselors out in the agency, and  
25 they are our eyes and ears of what's going on, and we'll utilize them.  
26 They handle our informal complaints, so we think that we are ready for

1 that if that should happen.

2 MR. WEBER: Thank you. Commissioner, it's  
3 important to be prepared for that, but there doesn't have to be an uptick,  
4 right. Even in tough times, our behaviors drive a lot of that trend, and  
5 so how we behave and how we respond will be critical to determining  
6 whether in fact there is an uptick.

7 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Thanks for that, Mike.  
8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN BURNS: Well thank you again for all  
10 your presentations. Miriam mentioned Jim McDermott's formula, and I  
11 did quickly the math and I realize I met the formula when I left in 2012,  
12 but somehow--just on the mark, 92. But then I sort of cracked the  
13 model or something I think. [Laughter.] Actually let me--I will reflect  
14 perhaps on the earlier career a little bit, not to tell so much war stories  
15 or whatever. Oh actually, one of the things I want to note today is that  
16 this week, we welcome Research back to the White Flint campus; that's  
17 a significant thing in terms of our reconsolidation and again, particularly  
18 and probably Brian will remember as well as some others is that when I  
19 started at the agency in 1978, we were in something like a dozen  
20 buildings stretching from here to Rockville to H Street, from Silver  
21 Spring to about half a dozen or more buildings in Bethesda, one of  
22 which is now a brew pub.[Laughter.]

23 But with that little bit of history--but the importance of  
24 that is I do think is from the standpoint we've talked a lot, and I think very  
25 importantly about the interactions of us as people, but also the  
26 environment that we have in terms of our work environment, the

1 physical environment as well as the support we get through IT and  
2 other things is very important in terms of I think the morale of the  
3 workforce and our capability to carry out our mission. The one other  
4 reflection I would have is from my past time and from my early years,  
5 and then to the point where when I left in 2012 as General Counsel, and  
6 what from your presentations particularly impresses me that has  
7 continued is this greater interaction and flexibility in terms of having  
8 people go across offices and across disciplines.

9 That was something I think when I started working, it  
10 would be unheard of that one of the lawyers in then the Office of the  
11 Executive Legal Director, the office that had the bulk of the legal staff at  
12 that time, it would have been unthinkable for someone I think to go into  
13 NRR to work or to supervise project managers. And I know one  
14 Brooke Poole is now the Director of OCAA, Office of Commission  
15 Appellate Adjudication. I know Jim Dyer, when he was Director of  
16 NRR, was very impressed and said, you know, give me more of that in  
17 terms of the quality of people. But what I say about that is again, this  
18 ability to I think cross feed I think is extraordinarily important, and I think  
19 something that both Commissioner Ostendorff and Svinicki noted.

20 So again, I think that's--I want to underscore that for my  
21 own experience, but also from what you're speaking about today. It's  
22 very important in terms of building our workforce, and also it  
23 contributes, I think contributes to our effectiveness. There are a  
24 couple of questions I might have. Miriam, I think in one of the  
25 comments you made in response to Commissioner Baran, you talked  
26 about one of the things in terms of our adapting, in terms of size of the

1 workforce and looking at disciplines as potential barriers to moving  
2 people. What do you see as the primary--and some of these are  
3 bureaucratic barriers I would say--but what do you see as the primary  
4 difficulties or challenges in that area?

5 MS. COHEN: Well, the offices sometimes don't want  
6 to give up resources, right, so one is a recognition A) that the work may  
7 be going away, and then there's always discussions about people,  
8 right? I mean, these are people that have jobs, that come to work, that  
9 enjoy what they're doing, and you're kind of turning their life upside  
10 down. And so I think what we have to figure out is, again, having open  
11 and honest communication with employees that okay, at one point the  
12 work was here; that work is no longer here; the agency needs you to  
13 move to this particular new area. We've demonstrated that over time,  
14 and we've done it a lot this year between NRR and NRO to help  
15 address some of the work load challenges in NRR, and Glenn Tracy  
16 and Bill Dean I think have exerted tremendous leadership in sort of  
17 starting that process.

18 But I think we have to remember at the end of the day  
19 that these are people that have jobs, that enjoy coming to work, that  
20 have committed their life to this work, and then we're sort of changing  
21 what they know and what they're used to, and that's hard. And we  
22 even saw that, I mean TABS is a taboo word around here, I mean I  
23 prefer to call it centralization. But that was hard, I mean when you  
24 were hired into an office and you were supposed to do X, Y and Z, and  
25 then we kind of said well you know, your job's kind of moving. I mean,  
26 it's how you do it, how you orchestrate those conversations, how you

1 take care of people.

2 But I think at the end of the day, one of the things that  
3 Mike alluded to very early in the meeting was employee engagement in  
4 this agency always remains high. People are committed to the  
5 mission, they want to come and do a good job, and we just have to  
6 really capitalize that and make sure we do it with the right--with  
7 behavior matters in mind, and I think that will really help us.

8 CHAIRMAN BURNS: Okay, thanks. Doug, I want to  
9 talk a few minutes on with respect to training, and one of the things I'm  
10 trying to get your sense of, from your presentation, this mixture of both  
11 what I call the sort of didactic training, you know, presentations and all  
12 that combined with more experiential type training. Do we see that as  
13 potentially accelerating the time that people are qualified and are able  
14 to do the job more so than what has been perhaps a traditional model, I  
15 say again, probably the model when I came in in terms of inspectors  
16 and engineers?

17 MR. THARP: And the short answer is yes. Yes, we  
18 think that will shorten the time of qualification. Only the critical  
19 essential knowledge will be done up front. It's done online, you can go  
20 at your own pace. Right now, one of the biggest delays in any  
21 qualification program is waiting to get into the formal training courses.  
22 You may sign up for a course that you need for your qualification; it  
23 might be offered once or twice a year; if you just missed it, then you  
24 might wait six or nine months to get into it. It delays qualification by a  
25 few months. So by having that knowledge portion done online at your  
26 own pace, you get those all knocked out as fast as you're ready, and

1 then the application, when you go to the course, it's shorter. So you're  
2 not traveling as long, you're not outside of your work flow; you're  
3 actually, you know, fewer days away from the work.

4 And then the--what we have to do I think is recognize  
5 that you're not going to be fully qualified the first time you do things, but  
6 if you have a mentor there to help you through it, you can still perform.  
7 You've met some minimum requirement; you can perform and you can  
8 still do it well, and after that, then you move to the next level. So rather  
9 than maybe we don't need to wait until somebody is fully qualified as we  
10 call it today to actually do part of the job; they can get out there and  
11 perform the things they can do sooner, and that will allow us to have  
12 people actually doing useful work at a much faster pace.

13 CHAIRMAN BURNS: Okay, thanks. That's great.  
14 Go ahead, Mike.

15 MR. WEBER: If I could add, I think the last point that  
16 Doug made is the key one, and that is setting our standards or the  
17 qualifications based on competencies. You don't need to know  
18 everything about, for example, materials before you go out and do your  
19 first radiography inspection, right. So you can pace yourself by going  
20 more of a gradual accretion of competencies and align the training  
21 program around that gradual accretion. The important thing is,  
22 especially with the new millenials coming in and then the generation  
23 beyond the millenials is accelerating that time to competency, because  
24 odds are they're not going to be staying around as long as some of us,  
25 and so we really need to capitalize on getting them invested, getting  
26 them engaged, so that they get that positive feedback, they get their

1 sense of contribution, and they help to contribute to fulfilling the  
2 mission.

3 CHAIRMAN BURNS: That actually leads to --your  
4 last comment leads to a question I had maybe for KRISTIN in terms of  
5 attraction--I mean, I think we had a little bit of discussion at the last  
6 Commission Human Capital meeting that this ability to attract basically  
7 this cadre coming up in their early 20s, new graduates and all of that are  
8 there particular challenges that you see, Kris, in terms of doing that?  
9 You see some of the literature, you know, who wants to work for the  
10 government, quite honestly. Well 1,000 people do; we used to have  
11 that there.

12 MS. DAVIS: It's interesting. We do some  
13 benchmarking and we work with some companies that look at  
14 especially the recent college graduates or the students that are still in  
15 college, and they ask them the questions about what makes a good  
16 employer, what are you looking for. And I think that we have the right  
17 mix for the students for this next generation. They want a true mission  
18 match with their skills, they want to do something that they feel has  
19 meaning, which we obviously have meaning here, and they want really  
20 workplace flexibilities, and I think that we offer a nice toolkit of those as  
21 well. What I don't hear a lot of is that they're looking for rapid  
22 promotion or a lot of money. I'm sure that some of them are, so I think  
23 that government service is still something that is sought after from these  
24 graduating people.

25 MS. COHEN: Mr. Chairman, one data point just for  
26 folks is that we started about a year or so ago meet and greets with new

1 employees, we meet with them every quarter and all of office directors  
2 in the EDO attend those. And it's really heartening to see not just  
3 millennials, we hire a lot of mid-career people, many from industry, and  
4 they are thrilled to be here. They are thrilled not to be on shift work, we  
5 have employees that are traveling an hour and a half to two hours for  
6 quality of life, they appreciate the opportunity to get significant,  
7 high-quality work, that they're not just thrown in a corner somewhere.  
8 And so it's not just millennials that are still attracted to come to the NRC,  
9 we hire people at all levels, and I would say also the mid-career, which  
10 has been also a focus of our recently, they're also finding that the NRC  
11 is still a really good place to work.

12 CHAIRMAN BURNS: Thanks. Actually, let me invite  
13 Maria Schwartz, Chapter Executive Vice President and Chief Steward  
14 of the National Treasury Employees Union. Good morning, Maria.

15 MS. SCHWARTZ: Good morning Chairman Burns,  
16 Commissioners, executive managers and fellow bargaining unit  
17 employees. I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak with you on  
18 behalf of the National Treasury Employees Union. NTEU as you know  
19 is the exclusive representative of our bargaining unit employees. I'm  
20 joined here today by Robert Heard, our Chief Steward, and Chapter  
21 Secretary and Chapter Officials and Stewards Ellen Martin, John  
22 Goshen and Peter Hearn. This morning, we've heard a lot of  
23 information about how to accomplish the agency's mission while  
24 right-sizing it using fewer resources, FTE and dollars. We've heard  
25 about how important it is to know what our goals are so as an agency,  
26 we know how to more effectively target those goals.



1                   We have heard about how important it is for our  
2 employees to understand their roles and responsibilities and have  
3 appropriate training in order to be empowered to effectively engage in  
4 the work they are tasked to accomplish. The Project Aim report states  
5 several times that the agency's most valuable asset is its people. The  
6 presentations this morning support that assertion. However, many  
7 employees would tell you, and will tell you even more clearly in the  
8 FEVS result for 2015, that they are feeling less, rather than more  
9 valued. Part of this has to do with civility in the workplace.

10                   The New York Times Sunday included an important  
11 opinion piece entitled "No Time to Be Nice at Work" by Christine Porath,  
12 an Associate Professor at Georgetown's School of Business. The  
13 article describes the devastating impact that a mean boss can have on  
14 employees. The author makes clear that not only experiencing this  
15 behavior, but also witnessing this behavior, can elevate levels of  
16 hormones throughout the day, potentially leading to a host of health  
17 problems, and over the long term, result in long term health effects as  
18 well as significant losses of productivity.

19                   Several  
20 of the issues that I have worked on over the last year support the  
21 conclusion the author draws in this article. Employees that I have  
22 worked with specifically pointed to behaviors of their branch chiefs as  
23 real impediments to their sense of engagement with their work, and with  
24 the organization as a whole. Two employees that I am aware of were  
25 hospitalized, both because of the level of stress they were experiencing  
26 on a regular basis as they tried to complete their work. Several  
employees expressed how anxious they felt every day just coming to

1 work. A couple of these employees also felt they had health-related  
2 issues that were related to that anxiety. One employee who was  
3 targeted as a poor performer went on a rotation and within months was  
4 apprised as an excellent performer. His whole demeanor changed.

5           Whether actual health problems, poor performance or  
6 horrible morale issues result, the mean boss in these cases was clearly  
7 the biggest driver. Three of those employees, all in different branches  
8 who recently started or will soon start working for new branch chiefs,  
9 commented that they were once again happy to come into work  
10 because they feel they now have a new opportunity to contribute more  
11 effectively and will be treated fairly rather than worrying about every  
12 aspect of their working environment. As one employee exclaimed with  
13 a huge smile on her face, "Life is once again good."

14           NTEU's comments this morning are not new; we have  
15 brought this message to the forum several times. But even if NTEU  
16 said nothing, our employees have expressed the impact that they feel  
17 incivility has had on their working environment, and the declining FEVS  
18 scores which show a downward trend over the last four years, with the  
19 jury still out on this year's result. In 2014 for example, only 42 percent  
20 of those responding to the FEVS believe that difference in performance  
21 are recognized in a meaningful way. Only 30 percent of those  
22 responding are satisfied with their opportunity to get a better job in their  
23 organization. Only 25 percent believe that creativity and innovation  
24 are rewarded. A dismally low 24 percent believe that promotions in  
25 their work unit are based on merit; an even lower percentage of those  
26 responding, 23 percent, believe that in their organizations, senior

1 leaders generate high levels of motivation and commitment in the  
2 workplace.

3 In an era where the agency will be driven hard by  
4 external factors, including Congress, to reduce FTE and our budget, the  
5 enormous cost--it is important, more important than ever to recognize  
6 the important, enormous cost of incivility. A December 2014 OMB  
7 OPM White House memorandum entitled "Strengthening Employee  
8 Engagement and Organizational Performance" provides key strategies  
9 for strengthening an organizational culture of engagement. One of the  
10 strategies the memo points it to is the inclusion as specific parts of  
11 annual performance and appraisals, for SES members and senior  
12 managers cascading down to mid-level managers and supervisors a  
13 focus on how they are fostering employee engagement and creating  
14 inclusive work environments.

15 Looking at the FEVS trends and last year's scores  
16 specifically, how is employee engagement and creativity and creating  
17 an inclusive work environment actually being measured in these  
18 performance plans? While the agency cannot make rude and  
19 thoughtless managers or employees behave better or even more  
20 professionally, how is the agency making the consequences of  
21 inappropriate behaviors significant? I've almost completely lost track,  
22 as many of us have, on what is happening with Behavior Matters, but  
23 what we do know and have always known is that it does. Behavior  
24 does matter.

25 The New York Times article references Charles Horton  
26 Cooley's 1902 notion of the looking-glass self; that we use other's

1 expressions, behaviors and reactions to define ourselves. How we  
2 believe others see us shapes who we are. We ride a wave of pride or  
3 get swallowed in a sea of embarrassment based on brief interactions  
4 that signal respect or disrespect. Project Aim 2020 stresses that the  
5 agency's most valuable asset is its people. NTEU could not agree  
6 more, yet in conversations with the looking-glass self-employees who  
7 have dealt with mean bosses, I am often disheartened.

8 The New York Times article concludes with an  
9 observation and a question. In every interaction, you have a choice.  
10 Do you want to lift people up, or hold them down? As the agency's  
11 most valuable asset, we must strive to lift our employees up; they  
12 deserve nothing less. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN BURNS: Thank you, Maria. Before we  
14 close, any final comments or questions? Well again, I want to thank  
15 the panel here and Maria Schwartz on behalf of the NTEU for your  
16 comments and discussion here this morning. I think you provided  
17 good overview of where we are in our programs in terms of human  
18 capital as well as in SBCR area and the policies we have in place, and  
19 our efforts to further develop our highly competent work force. I want  
20 to also acknowledge, as Melody did, the work of our committees, the--I  
21 had to write the number down, our eight EEO advisory committees, the  
22 newest one the Veterans Committee, and also the affinity groups, BIG  
23 and GLOBE, for their work, because I think it's all of the work together  
24 that we do that make this a great place to work, and improve the agency  
25 for the betterment of not only us as employees who work here, but for  
26 the American people. So with that, we are adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, the proceedings were concluded at 10:51

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a.m.]

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