

UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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BRIEFING ON EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY,  
AFFIRMATIVE EMPLOYMENT, AND SMALL BUSINESS

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THURSDAY,  
DECEMBER 15, 2016

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ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

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The Commission met in the Commissioners= Hearing Room at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, at 9:30 a.m., Stephen G. Burns, Chairman, presiding.

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

STEPHEN G. BURNS, Chairman

KRISTINE L. SVINICKI, Commissioner

JEFF BARAN, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT:

ANNETTE VIETTI-COOK, Secretary of the Commission

MARGARET DOANE, General Counsel

NRC STAFF:

ANTHONY BARNES, Affirmative Employment and Diversity Management Program Manager, Office of Small Business and Civil Rights (SBCR)

ANTHONY BRIGGS, Small Business Program Manager, SBCR

MICHAEL WEBER, Acting Deputy Executive Director for Materials, Waste, Research, State, Tribal, Compliance, Administration, and Human Capital Programs

PAMELA BAKER, Director, Office of Small Business and Civil Rights

DANIEL DORMAN, Regional Administrator, Region I

MIRIAM COHEN, Chief Human Capital Officer

R. LYNNE FINCH, Chair, Veterans Employee Resource Group

MARIA SCHWARTZ, Executive Vice President of the National Treasury Employees Union

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

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9:31 a.m.

CHAIRMAN BURNS: All right, thanks. We'll transition then into the briefing, today's briefing on Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Employment and Small Business. So I say good morning everyone and welcome our panel of briefers, other NRC staff and members of the public who may be in the room, who are listening, reviewing us remotely today.

The Commission meets today to receive its semi-annual update on the progress and opportunities related to equal employment opportunity, diversity, inclusion and small business. As many of you know, one of the reasons we do this is because when we were created as an agency 40 plus years ago, this was a provision, to have a periodic briefings and periodic meetings on EEO matters, and I think it's been a useful and fruitful discussions that we've had over the many years.

Now we all know we're adjusting our program's budget and workforce to reflect projected workload, that differs from what we anticipated just a few years ago. These changes will not affect our mission as we remain focused on protecting public health and safety, promoting the common defense and security and protecting the environment.

The changes will also not affect our dedication to a diverse, empowered workforce. It's through our extremely dedicated and capable employees that we meet our mission. There can be no doubt that the programs we're discussing today are essential to support the agency's efforts to build and retain the best and most diverse workforce possible. I look forward to our discussions.

I also would mention that what we do is noticed, I think, in the

1 international community, because I was really pleasantly or very pleased on a  
2 recent trip to India, that during one of my present -- one of my meetings, that  
3 the participants from the Indian organization put up the picture that we have  
4 on our website from our Diwali celebration. I think that was -- and it was --  
5 they were very touched.

6 So not only that, I want to say not only are these important in terms  
7 of growing our workforce, but they're part of our diplomacy as an agency in  
8 the world, and it was really -- it was a very nice touch on their part to show the  
9 picture of all us in our regalia after the luncheon.

10 So anyway, I want to look forward to this morning's briefing. I also  
11 want to acknowledge this is Pam Baker's first Commission briefing in her role  
12 as Director of the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, although she's  
13 been on the job for a number of months.

14 Following the staff, we'll hear from Maria Schwartz, Executive Vice  
15 President of the National Treasury Employees Union for a perspective from  
16 the union.

17 Before I begin, would any of my colleagues like to make opening  
18 remarks? Okay. Again thanks for being here today, and I'll turn it over to  
19 Acting Deputy Executive Director for Operations Mike Weber.

20 MR. WEBER: Good morning, Chairman, Commissioners. It's a  
21 pleasure to appear before you today for this warm briefing for a cold day  
22 outside. The purpose of the briefing, as you've already alluded to, is to  
23 provide a status report and highlight the accomplishments of the agency in the  
24 programs of equal employment opportunity, affirmative employment, diversity  
25 management and our small business program.

26 As you've talked about with Pam, she is the Director of the Office of

1 Small Business and Civil Rights, and of course that office provides leadership  
2 for the agency to carry out our obligations under various civil rights laws and  
3 small business statutes. The theme of our presentation today is  
4 "Communicating Safety Across Many Cultures."

5 This theme is important for a variety of reasons. Not only does it  
6 reflect the mission of the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, as the  
7 Office fosters a diverse and inclusive workforce in the agency as well as equal  
8 employment opportunity for employees, applicants and partners, as well as  
9 maximizing practical, prime and subcontracting opportunities, but it also aligns  
10 with the four pillars of our EDO, Vic McCree's focus, and that's on mission,  
11 people, values, and our communications.

12 How we behave is integral to demonstrating our agency values, and  
13 that's especially important for respect and for openness. And as you've  
14 talked about Chairman, we do welcome Pam Baker as her first time for this  
15 briefing, and with that I will turn it over to her. Next slide, please. Pam.

16 MS. BAKER: Good morning Chairman and Commissioners. We  
17 appreciate the opportunity to brief you today on the status of the agency's  
18 Equal Employment Opportunity, Diversity and Small Business Programs.

19 Next slide. As Mike stated, our theme today is communicating safety  
20 across many cultures. We purposely carried forward our theme from our  
21 Diversity Day celebration held earlier this year, to emphasize the imperative  
22 of constructive communications at a time when empathy and understanding  
23 are most needed.

24 The Office of Small Business and Civil Rights provides leadership in  
25 meeting the agency's obligations under various civil rights and small business  
26 statutes, and encouraging an inclusive work environment. In doing so, we

1 strive to provide and foster safe spaces and appropriate venues for  
2 communication that facilitates understanding.

3           The NRC has experienced a number of changes this past year, and  
4 in addition to identify our mitigating strategies in the constrained resource  
5 environment, I will describe emerging trends with respect to EEO complaints.  
6 I'm joined today by two of SBCR's program managers, Anthony Barnes and  
7 Anthony Briggs, who will provide more specific information on their programs  
8 of affirmative employment, diversity management and small business,  
9 respectfully.

10           Margie Doane, general counsel, will highlight the efforts within the  
11 Office of General Counsel supporting engagement and diversity. Dan  
12 Dorman, the regional administrator from Region I, will share the regions'  
13 journey to leverage diversity in creating an inclusive work environment.

14           Today's EEO Advisory Committee's joint statement will be provided  
15 by Lynne Finch, chair of the Veterans Employee Resource Group. Miriam  
16 Cohen is in the well. The chief human capital officer also joins us to answer  
17 any questions about human capital management. Collectively, we hope to  
18 provide a comprehensive briefing, and welcome your comments and  
19 questions upon its conclusion.

20           Next slide, please. Through the years, the NRC has been  
21 recognized as a model EEO organization throughout the federal community,  
22 and we have actively partnered and supported a wide range of initiatives and  
23 programs. We now need to concentrate our focus on our internal core work,  
24 leveraging those external relationships as the agency right-sizes itself.

25           Due to limits on external hiring, SBCR has not been able to fill a senior  
26 EEO specialist for the Civil Rights Program, nor do we have the requisite skills

1 or experience elsewhere within the NRC. To address this skills need, we  
2 have reached out to the EEO federal community and are soliciting for a detail  
3 assignment to provide needed depth to the Civil Rights staff.

4 As of today we've actually received four responses to that solicitation,  
5 and we'll be interviewing candidates in the coming future. As we implement  
6 our Project Aim initiative and adjust to staffing reductions to contain corporate  
7 support resources, we've examined the competencies and talents of our office  
8 staff and determined the required skills in order to realign resources and  
9 expand capacity.

10 Through cross-training we are broadening staff skills to include the  
11 full scope of the EEO disciplines. Recognizing the extent of experience  
12 required to build competency in specific EEO functional areas, we have  
13 augmented our workforce with a reemployed annuitant who has been  
14 instrumental in transferring her knowledge and expertise to both staff and  
15 office leadership.

16 The development of staff into the full disciplines of EEO will in turn  
17 facilitate our organizational agility to support the cyclic workload surges in our  
18 various program areas.

19 Next slide. Regarding the Civil Rights Program, this morning I will  
20 focus on the overall program, including ensuring compliance for processing  
21 EEO cases, monitoring recent complaint activity, assessing complexity and  
22 bases of issues, and the resolving of complaints.

23 Next slide. As you look at this chart, please note the actual scale.  
24 NRC formal complaints comprise approximately less than a half percent of  
25 NRC's total workforce. This remains a very low number in comparison to  
26 other agencies of similar size. At present, we continue to ensure that the

1 agency is in compliance with meeting the mandatory time frames to process  
2 EEO complaints, pursuant to EEOC regulations with no backlog.

3 We ended fiscal year 2016 with a similar level of informal and formal  
4 complaint activity when compared to 2015, even though we have significantly  
5 reduced in organizational size. However, in the first month of this fiscal year,  
6 we've had a similar number of informal complaints comparable to the first  
7 quarter of last year.

8 As such, informal complaint activity does not necessarily correlate to  
9 organizational size, rather the environment. Viewing this chart, you can see  
10 that several years ago, when our budget began its downturn and  
11 opportunities for advancement and development became limited, we  
12 experienced an increase in complaint activity.

13 Similarly as then, we anticipate such an increase and thus far the  
14 pattern of complaint activity suggests this may be the case. We're also  
15 seeing an increase in the complexity of cases being filed, such as multiple  
16 bases and existing cases being amended with new claims. At this time, we  
17 don't have quantifiable statistics on complaint complexity, but we do continue  
18 to monitor this closely.

19 Recently, SBCR upgraded its complaint tracking system called  
20 ICOMPLAINTS. This automated system and portal for EEOC reporting  
21 requirements is used throughout the federal government. The upgrade of  
22 this system will enable us to achieve greater efficiency in reporting and  
23 tracking complaints, and we hope to provide a clearer view of the trends  
24 within the agency.

25 Next slide. Focusing on complaint activity, this chart shows the  
26 bases of alleged discrimination for EEO complaints filed in 2016. A

1 complaint may include multiple bases. The most frequent four bases are  
2 age, sex, reprisal, and race, and these are comparable to those of other  
3 federal agencies based on the data available from the EEOC's website.  
4 These bases have remained relatively consistent at the NRC over the past  
5 several years.

6 Next slide. This chart shows the issues of alleged discrimination for  
7 EEO complaints filed in 2016. The most frequently raised issues at the NRC  
8 are non-sexual harassment, assignment of duties, performance appraisals,  
9 and non-selection for promotions. These top four issues are also consistent  
10 with previous years.

11 Non-sexual harassment continues to be the most prevalent issue at  
12 the NRC. Often, this issue is coupled with others, which may increase the  
13 complexity of the case, resulting in amendments and additional investigation  
14 efforts and cost. Assignment of duties is becoming a more common issue,  
15 and we anticipate the possibility of additional complaints being filed citing  
16 reassignment of duties as we reduce FTE, transfer workload, and redefine  
17 and/or collapse positions.

18 Due to the complexity of issues, some complaints have taken longer  
19 to investigate. However, I reiterate to date we have managed to meet our  
20 regulatory time frames. In addition to the openness and flexibility of our  
21 complainants and managers, our cadre of EEO counselors, who serve as our  
22 front line, are invaluable to the process.

23 The commitment demonstrated by these employees in this collateral  
24 duty is commendable, and I now ask if any EEO counselors are in the room,  
25 that they would please rise, also in the regions, to be recognized for their  
26 service.

1 (Applause.)

2 MS. BAKER: You may be seated, and thank you. Next slide.  
3 This slide truly reflects our briefing theme of communicating safety across  
4 many cultures. Often EEO complaints result from misunderstanding or lack  
5 of communication between parties. Settlements are mutual agreements  
6 between parties, where such misunderstandings are resolved.

7 EEOC encourages parties to seek informal resolution and be  
8 creative in considering settlement terms. A settlement therefore can occur  
9 at any time during the life cycle of a case. Our employment of the agency's  
10 voluntary alternative dispute resolution program (ADR) and other empathetic  
11 listening techniques allows for employees and managers to reach mutual  
12 agreements and results in settlements that are beneficial to both parties.

13 Many reasons can motivate parties to resolve disputes, and SBCR  
14 is pleased that the agency continues to foster an environment conducive to  
15 resolving disputes amicably, expeditiously, and informally. In addition to our  
16 success in being responsive to complaints, we are committed to being  
17 proactive in fostering knowledge and encouraging an open environment,  
18 including diversity and inclusion that preempt the misunderstanding that can  
19 lead to EEO complaints.

20 Next slide, please. Often the misunderstanding that results in a  
21 complaint can be avoided by increasing the awareness of the alleged  
22 offending party. In response to the 2015 case, where the NRC was found to  
23 have engaged in age discrimination, we recently incorporated a training  
24 module into our EEO refresher training for supervisors and managers. This  
25 module helps supervisors understand and be sensitive to how single,  
26 innocuous actions can be aggregated and perceived as discriminating,

1 regardless of their actual intent.

2 We are indebted to the energy and creativity demonstrated by our  
3 EEO Advisory Committees, Employee Resource Groups, and the Affinity  
4 Groups who sponsor a myriad of special emphasis programs throughout the  
5 year. Their efforts continue to raise awareness and appreciation for the  
6 groups they represent. I know that I learn something every time I attend an  
7 event.

8 Will the members and representatives from all the groups I just  
9 mentioned please stand to be recognized?

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. BAKER: Thank you again. During our June briefing with the  
12 Commission, we shared with you our most recent initiative dialogue, diversity  
13 inclusion awareness, leading to organizational growth, understanding, and  
14 engagement. Since then, we've completed two cohorts and are poised to  
15 launch the third and fourth in January, and most recently Region III has  
16 agreed to host Cohort 5.

17 Based on a best practice used by NASA, the program allows for  
18 participants to engage respectfully and candidly on a wide spectrum of areas  
19 of difference in order to achieve greater appreciation for the value and  
20 positive impacts made by diverse groups in meeting the agency's mission.  
21 Having just completed Cohort 2, I can attest to the broadening perspective  
22 I've gained.

23 But don't take my word for it; let's listen to our diversity ambassadors.  
24 We have a film to queue.

25 [VIDEO PLAYING.]

26 MS. BAKER: Okay. We have a number of members of the two

1 cohorts in the audience, and I'd ask them to stand to be acknowledged.

2 (Applause.)

3 MS. BAKER: We appreciate them participating in the program, and  
4 their willingness to carry forward their experience as they continue to facilitate  
5 dialogue with others. Lastly, I would like to extend my appreciation and  
6 acknowledge the SBCR staff for their dedication and hard work. With that, I  
7 will turn the briefing over to Anthony Barnes, to discuss affirmative  
8 employment and diversity management. Thank you.

9 MR. BARNES: Thank you, Pam. Good morning Chairman Burns,  
10 Commissioners Svinicki and Baran. I continue to appreciate the support that  
11 each one of you give in the area of affirmative employment and diversity  
12 management. The support you show by attending and participating in the  
13 EEO Advisory Committee and Employee Resource Group events is well-  
14 recognized and greatly appreciated.

15 It's a very visible sign of your support to the volunteer members of  
16 each group, and the work they do to support their constituents, the dedicated  
17 employees of the NRC.

18 Next slide, please. Each year, we look forward to this brief of the  
19 Commission, so that we have the opportunity to look at the workforce from a  
20 demographic perspective, and additionally I'll briefly discuss the importance  
21 of understanding implicit bias and micro inequities, some of the terms you  
22 may have heard in the dialogue video and the role they play in decision-  
23 making.

24 Finally, I'll talk about the agency's commitment to the new inclusion  
25 quotient in the NRC's recent submission of the new 2016 inclusive diversity  
26 strategy plan.

1           Next slide, please. An important aspect of affirmative employment  
2 and diversity management is the agency's demographics. The NRC  
3 remains steadfast in its support for diversity management and inclusion within  
4 this organization. In FY 2016, the agency was 8.8 percent smaller than it  
5 was in fiscal year 2015, and 14 percent smaller than it was at its peak in fiscal  
6 year 2010.

7           Despite this reduction in size, the race, gender, and national origin  
8 demographic representation of the entire staff is either at or within one  
9 percent of its five year average for each demographic group. As we continue  
10 to reduce the size of the agency, SBCR will continue to closely track these  
11 relative percentages, to inform leadership if any one particular demographic  
12 group is being disparately impacted by the reductions.

13           Finally in fiscal year 2016, the agency saw the smallest number of  
14 NSPDP hires since 2012. You may remember in a previous briefing, we  
15 talked about the NSPDP program. It has been an important feeder program  
16 that has historically had a positive impact on the hiring of entry level women  
17 and minorities.

18           However, the present reality is that external hiring is at an all-time  
19 low, and is likely going to be that way in the near term. We will continue to  
20 focus on the importance of the NSPDP program though.

21           Next slide, please. The staff of the NRC is full of well-intentioned  
22 individuals deeply committed to the values of our agency and the principles  
23 of both good regulation and good diversity and inclusion management. This  
24 unwavering desire to ensure that everyone is valued, appreciated and  
25 respected is why each of us should become more aware of this concept of  
26 implicit bias and micro inequities.

1           The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, our  
2 actions and our decisions in an unconscious manner, operating outside of  
3 our conscious awareness. Implicit biases are pervasive, and they challenge  
4 even the most well-intentioned and fair-minded individual, resulting in actions  
5 and outcomes that do not necessarily align with explicit intentions and stated  
6 intentions.

7           In other words, even individuals who profess unbiased intentions and  
8 try to treat all individuals fairly can still unknowingly act in ways that reflect  
9 their implicit, rather than their explicit biases. Most importantly, everyone  
10 has implicit bias regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or age. No one is  
11 immune, and recognizing that fact is the first step to being able to address it.

12           A widely accepted test for implicit bias uses a tool established by  
13 Harvard University known as the IAT or the Implicit Association Test. I invite  
14 everyone to Google or use the link at the bottom of the slide to find this implicit  
15 bias test. It is often an eye-opening experience and it can be fun at the same  
16 time.

17           I intend to continue to introduce the IAT to even larger audiences  
18 here at the NRC, and it is presently being used in the Dialogue Project and it  
19 has been discussed during the EEO and diversity training and refresher  
20 training for managers and supervisors, and in the SES CDP.

21           Now let me shift for a second and talk about something that I know I  
22 have a very bias, strong bias towards, and that's the new inclusion quotient.

23           Next slide, please. As you may remember, the inclusion quotient is  
24 built upon the concept that individual behaviors repeated over time form the  
25 habits that create the essential building blocks of an inclusive environment.  
26 These behaviors can be learned, practiced, and developed into habits of

1 inclusiveness, and subsequently improve the inclusive intelligence of  
2 organizational members.

3 In an inclusive environment, we are smarter together and here at the  
4 NRC this communicates that we are safer together. Research confirms that  
5 workplace inclusion is a contributing factor to employee engagement and  
6 increased organizational performance. We continue to rank among the top  
7 of large agency category in the Federal Employment Viewpoint Survey.

8 Next slide, please. Speaking of organizational performance, this  
9 slide shows the five-year trending of the agency in green, as compared to the  
10 federal government as a whole in black. Now it's down slightly over the five  
11 year period, but still way ahead of the federal government as a whole. We  
12 continue to explore ways to improve the agency's diversity, inclusion, and  
13 engagement.

14 Next slide, please. Our journey to the 2016 Inclusive Diversity  
15 Strategic Plan has been comprehensive and beneficial, beginning with the  
16 2005 Comprehensive Diversity Management Plan, we were far ahead of the  
17 rest of the federal government when OPM launched a call for the first  
18 government-wide D&I strategic plan in 2012.

19 We established our Diversity Management and Inclusion Council in  
20 2013, and our focus on the new IQ began in earnest in 2013. Now that we've  
21 just launched the 2016 Inclusive Diversity Strategic Plan, we will update and  
22 align our CDMP with the actions that support the new strategy during this  
23 next fiscal year, 2017. We'll do that.

24 Next slide, please. The NRC's 2016 Inclusive Diversity Strategic  
25 Plan is the second phase of implementing Executive Order 13583, which  
26 establishes a coordinated government-wide initiative to promote diversity and

1 inclusion. The 2016 plan provides a new path or a continuing path to create  
2 and foster a workforce that's inclusive and engages all employees and draws  
3 from all segments of society.

4 Quite briefly, goal number one is diversify the federal workforce  
5 through active engagement of leadership. Leaders lead the way, and people  
6 rely on positive examples by leaders to be able to follow and direct the course.  
7 Number two, include and engage everyone in the workplace. We will  
8 enhance efforts that foster cultures, that encourage employees to feel valued  
9 for their unique qualities.

10 Finally goal number three, optimize inclusive diversity efforts using  
11 data-driven approaches. Utilizing data, optimizing policies and processes  
12 will drive inclusive diversity. This concludes my portion of the brief, and I'll  
13 now pass to Anthony Briggs, the program manager for Small Business, and  
14 the next slide, please.

15 MR. BRIGGS: All right, great. Thank you Tony. A great job with  
16 your presentation. Good morning Chairman and Commissioners. So  
17 continuing with today's theme, I will discuss what the Small Business  
18 Program does across offices, regions, agencies, and the business  
19 community, in order to maximize opportunities for small businesses in  
20 support of the NRC's mission, and to achieve the agency's small business  
21 goals.

22 Next slide, please. So the doing aspect really comes down to three  
23 primary activities, compliance, technical assistance, and outreach. First,  
24 compliance involves working with offices, OGC, the IG, and agencies to  
25 ensure that small business laws are followed, and policies supported when  
26 purchasing supplies or services.

1           Some of those activities include small business compliance review  
2 of planned acquisitions, review and comment on proposed federal regulations  
3 impacting small businesses, acting as the small business liaison to OGC  
4 regarding small business legal matters, support and assistance with IG  
5 investigations regarding violations of small business laws, and participation  
6 as a member of the Small Business Procurement Federal Advisory Council,  
7 which is comprised of federal small business officials dedicated to sharing  
8 best practices and discussing compliance issues.

9           Second, technical assistance involves working with offices and  
10 regions to identify small businesses capable of supporting agency operations,  
11 as well as assisting with the mechanics of small business set-asides.

12           Some of those activities include assisting buyers and contracting  
13 officials with acquisition planning to ensure that prime and subcontract  
14 opportunities are maximized for small businesses; conducting and supporting  
15 market research of the capability of the small business market to support  
16 agency operations; and providing guidance on the requirements and issues  
17 surrounding small business set-asides and awards.

18           Third, outreach involves working with the business community to  
19 educate them on how to conduct business with the agency. Some of those  
20 activities include providing small business counseling on how to identify and  
21 respond to the agency prime and subcontract opportunities; explaining how  
22 to use the small business toolbox to foster business development, by  
23 discussing how to locate contracts online through ADAMS, to best determine  
24 what opportunities best match their capabilities; participating in conferences  
25 to introduce the agency, what we buy and how we buy it to new businesses;  
26 and this actually included an invitation to be the keynote speaker at the

1 National Veterans Institute for Procurement, which is hosted by the  
2 Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce and it's sponsored by SBA, and  
3 it's to help veteran business owners navigate the federal marketplace.

4 If we pull up the slide, you'll actually -- go back one more please,  
5 you'll see on the slide here a picture from that event. We also partnered with  
6 Region IV on a conference in Texas, focused on increasing opportunities for  
7 service-disabled veteran owned small businesses, and we plan on  
8 collaborating with Region II next month on a similar event.

9 Next slide, please. I am pleased to announce that the agency  
10 maintained its SBA scorecard letter grade of A for FY '15 performance, and  
11 we actually improved our performance, going from four out of five goals in FY  
12 '14 to five out of five in FY '15 by achieving the one goal that we missed,  
13 which was for awarding contracts to companies located in historically under-  
14 utilized business zones.

15 We do this in an effort to economically revitalize those communities  
16 through federal contracting. We did so in part because of the action plan I  
17 mentioned at the FY '15 briefing, which worked. If you recall, the plan was  
18 to identify companies in the SBA 8(a) business development program that  
19 were also located in HUB Zone and were capable of supporting contract  
20 requirements.

21 So I'd like to take this time to thank AMD and the program offices  
22 that are here for their support, in particular the Office of Administration. So  
23 thank you very much.

24 We also received an award from SBA recognizing our small business  
25 goal achievement, as well as the small business program's performance  
26 when it comes to compliance, technical assistance, and outreach activities,

1 that led the agency to achieve five out of five of its small business goals.

2 So moving on to FY '16 performance, the agency achieved four out  
3 of five of its small business prime contract goals, and while the scorecard is  
4 currently pending, we do not expect to receive it until some time, probably  
5 spring of next year, which is the typical time frame. Now we did miss the  
6 HUB Zone goal. That was partly due to the fact that spending was reduced  
7 in the area of corporate support contracts, which are typically supported by  
8 companies located in HUB Zone, and represent most of the companies  
9 identified under the FY action plan that I mentioned earlier.

10 However, on a positive note, we awarded the largest percentage and  
11 largest dollar amount to date to service disabled veteran-owned small  
12 businesses, helping them realize the American dream they have fought so  
13 hard to protect. That's something we all should be very proud of.

14 Next slide, please. So what are we going to do about missing the  
15 HUB Zone goal? The action plan is essentially to increase engagement and  
16 outreach to companies located in a HUB Zone, in order to inform them of  
17 NRC business opportunities. We're really doing this in three ways.

18 First, identifying companies located in a HUB Zone to facilitate direct  
19 awards under the SBA's 8(a) business development program. Second,  
20 increasing local engagement of HUB Zone companies to increase the  
21 number of responses to contract opportunities, thereby increasing the  
22 likelihood of awards to HUB Zones, or the possibility to set aside those  
23 acquisitions exclusively for HUB Zone companies, and third expanding  
24 outreach to the regions, because while HUB Zones' locations have  
25 decreased locally, they have actually increased or maintained their HUB  
26 Zone status by the regions.

1           So the plan is to take the success that we've had with the NRC  
2 headquarters small business event. If we pull up the slide briefly, you'll see  
3 a picture from one of the previous events. So take that event and take it to  
4 the regions, to inform businesses not only of local regional opportunities, but  
5 also of opportunities available at headquarters, because a HUB Zone can  
6 open up a satellite office in order to support headquarters operations, or work  
7 remotely if permitted under that opportunity.

8           And we are currently in the planning stages to kick off the first event  
9 at Region IV, which we have secured support from. So Region IV, if you're  
10 watching via the webcast, thanks again. The event will be hosted by the  
11 NRC. It would also include participation from other federal agency buyers  
12 located in Texas, and include an educational seminar taught by SBA on how  
13 to open a business or relocate a business to a HUB Zone, in order to bring  
14 economic development to depressed areas.

15           So it's really a win-win not only for the NRC, but also for our federal  
16 counterparts trying to achieve their HUB Zone goal, as well as communities  
17 in need of local spending and jobs. So that concludes my briefing. I now  
18 turn it over to Margie Doane, general counsel for OGC.

19           MS. DOANE: Good morning Chairman Burns, Commissioner  
20 Svinicki, Commissioner Baran. I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak with  
21 you today about OGC's focus on EEO, diversity and inclusion. Next slide,  
22 please. OGC provides legal advice to all offices in the NRC, so we have a  
23 substantial responsibility to ensure we focus on communication across all  
24 cultures.

25           Obviously there are some differences between OGC and other  
26 offices at the NRC in that our focus is legal and the focus of other offices

1 might be technical or corporate or things like that. So I'm always looking for  
2 new ways to communicate, and ways to show our common interest.

3 I think I found a great example. A few weeks ago I was at the  
4 Nuclear Law Committee in Paris, and the representative from the United Arab  
5 Emirates explained that they had over 50 nations working on their new power  
6 plant project. The representative explained how communication is a  
7 challenge and how they have a common message. He said that their  
8 message is that we all speak one language, safety.

9 I thought this message resonated with me because it applies to our  
10 staff in OGC, the NRC as a whole, and globally for all of us with safety  
11 responsibilities. We all speak one language, safety. I think that's why the  
12 picture from our agency was -- I think that the Indians found that helpful.

13 So with this introduction, let me turn to now the Office of the General  
14 Counsel. We have a dual role with working with SBCR. We provide legal  
15 advice on EEO and personnel matters. We depend on SBCR to help foster  
16 and encourage an inclusive environment within OGC. Our demographics  
17 are generally aligned with the agency statistics. Our office is composed of  
18 103 FTEs including support staff and attorneys.

19 We're divided into seven legal divisions and we have a program  
20 support branch, and as SBCR noted in its 2015 assessment report, OGC's  
21 gender composition well exceeds the agency-wide representation, and OGC  
22 recognizes the importance of age, diversity and generational differences  
23 among the office. In Project Aim, in a Project Aim environment, OGC strives  
24 to continue to increase diversity, and we've seen gains in our most recent  
25 hires.

26 Next slide, please. Training is key to meeting our changing

1 responsibilities and staying motivated. We offer opportunities for both  
2 internal rotations and external rotations. Internal rotations include rotations  
3 for attorneys within all of the divisions, and this is also a way that we can  
4 address when workload is high in one area and not as high in others.

5 We also encourage rotations outside of OGC, so that our employees  
6 get a bigger picture of the agency. We encourage external rotations. We  
7 have someone down at the Department of Justice, an attorney at the  
8 Department of Justice right now. We also encouraged an SES CDP  
9 candidate to take a detail to the Defense Nuclear Facility Safety Board, and  
10 we also encourage overseas training assignments to the NEA and IAEA.

11 We support innovative training opportunities in a Project Aim  
12 environment, things that don't cost us much but provide a great benefit,  
13 including regular OGC seminars with important individuals like yourself, but  
14 also outside speakers. We actually have a professional development  
15 committee that chooses these speakers for us, and we have practice  
16 seminars going on almost weekly, where attorneys in one expertise will share  
17 their expertise with other attorneys in different divisions.

18 We also emphasize employee development through career planning  
19 seminars within OGC. We have how to get a 15. We have information on  
20 how to get accepted into the SES CDP program, and also opportunities for  
21 our support staff. I'm a big proponent of mentoring, the last item on the slide.  
22 I mentor OGC, within OGC and also outside of OGC, and I encourage all  
23 OGC attorneys to get mentors.

24 Next slide, please. Encouraging team work is one way to foster  
25 inclusion. OGC builds teams inside and outside the office to establish a  
26 common language and camaraderie among staff, in the most inclusive way

1 possible.

2 In addition to the pictures represented here on the slide, there are  
3 many more opportunities to get to know and celebrate our colleagues, like  
4 Law Day, Constitution Day, to foster respectful, collaborative office  
5 environment and down the slide there's our annual tournament that we have  
6 with the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, and we did a fun hike and also  
7 we had a fabulous Halloween party.

8 Next slide, please. Soliciting feedback and incorporating change.  
9 OGC is consistently striving to improve by soliciting feedback and  
10 incorporating change. In 2015, we volunteered for an SBCR diversity  
11 assessment that comprehensively evaluated our diversity management and  
12 highlighted positive efforts in all areas studied. Feedback is important to us.  
13 We place great emphasis on the OPM Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey  
14 and also the OIG Safety Climate Survey results.

15 We want our staff to know that their views count, and we have over  
16 the last few years, when we have results early on that we didn't think were --  
17 we thought presented some challenges for the office, we convened a working  
18 group. That working group then did another survey and so that we could  
19 understand the statistics as they applied to our office.

20 That group then came up with a number of different ways that we  
21 could improve in various areas that were identified and we implemented  
22 those changes, and some of them are listed on the slide. I think one of the  
23 things that's interesting about all of these areas that are highlighted on this  
24 slide is that they all have to do with communication, and since that's the  
25 theme of today, I thought that was helpful.

26 I'll highlight one of these things, which is the Open Door policy. This

1 is very important to me. It extends all the way to myself. I have an open  
2 door and people come in, speak with me from all levels of OGC but also  
3 outside of OGC, and that's a great benefit to me.

4 OGC continues its high performance. We've improved significantly  
5 since that time, since we had our first working group. We have a second  
6 group now that's convened, and that's demonstrated in our IQ rating, which  
7 Tony had discussed earlier. It's about -- it's a tiny, tiny bit statistically  
8 probably insignificant, but a tiny bit above the agency average. So we're  
9 very proud of that.

10 Next slide, please. In the area of EEO diversity and inclusion, OGC  
11 encourages attorneys to be aware of the fundamental principles that foster a  
12 safe environment. In addition to the required trainings as law changes or  
13 needs arise, we have instituted additional trainings within our office. There  
14 are two examples of more recent training, whistleblower protection and also  
15 the prevention of harassment.

16 In so doing, we are ensuring that we live up to core values of respect,  
17 cooperation and an open and collaborative work environment. So we have,  
18 in OGC we walk the talk for diversity and inclusion, and we benefit great from  
19 participating in diversity and inclusion activities and initiatives. We  
20 consistently learn new points of view, meet other staff from across the agency  
21 and take the opportunity to gain perspective from featured speakers.

22 This slide highlights a few of the areas where OGC staff participates  
23 in agency-wide diversity and inclusion initiatives, and I'll just highlight one  
24 area. For Diversity Day, we had two teams in the diversity feud, and OGC  
25 won, and that's a picture of the winning team. You can't see Sara McAndrew  
26 though, she's not on that side. But she was the champion behind all of this.

1           Next slide, please. We have some individuals. Like I said, so  
2 many of our staff demonstrate positive diversity and inclusion efforts, but I  
3 want to take a minute to highlight these individuals who really embody these  
4 ideals outside of their normal work duties. Shelbie Lewman, Beth Mizuno,  
5 and Mark Maxin, and you saw Beth and Mark on the slide, diversity inclusion  
6 slide.

7           And you can see from the slide the various things that are described.  
8 You can see how much effort they've put in and their contributions to the  
9 agency as a whole outside of their normal duties. In conclusion, because I  
10 find it helpful when Commissioner Svinicki uses excerpts from creative  
11 writers, I thought I'd try to do the same to conclude my presentation.

12           So I've chosen a quote from Maya Angelou's poem "Human Family,"  
13 that I think illustrates OGC's approach to diversity and inclusion. It goes "I  
14 note the obvious differences between each sort and type, but we are more  
15 alike, my friend, than we are unlike." This concludes my remarks. I now  
16 turn the presentation to Dan Dorman, Regional Administrator for Region I.

17           MR. DORMAN: Thanks, Margie. Good morning Chairman Burns,  
18 Commissioner Svinicki, Commissioner Baran. Thank you for the opportunity  
19 to share with you a few of the exciting happenings in Region I. This morning  
20 I would like to take you on a brief journey from diversity to inclusion.

21           Next slide, please. The dictionary on my desk defines diversity  
22 simply as an instance or point of difference. The charter for NRC's Diversity  
23 Management and Inclusion Council says diversity includes all of the ways in  
24 which people differ, including innate characteristics and acquired  
25 characteristics.

26           The Office of Personnel Management defines it as a collection of

1 individual attributes that together help agencies pursue organizational  
2 objectives efficiently and effectively. When we celebrate diversity, we  
3 recognize that each of us brings to an issue a unique perspective drawing on  
4 our life experiences, and that only through experiencing each other's  
5 perspectives can we attain a complete picture that will enable us to  
6 accomplish whole solutions.

7           Next slide, please. In Region I, the leadership have been engaging  
8 in conversations to more fully understand, appreciate and celebrate our  
9 shared diversity, and to ensure that we are taking actions now to intentionally  
10 embrace and grow our diversity. This slide shows some of the topics that  
11 we have engaged in the past year.

12           About a year ago, we worked with NRC's organizational  
13 development experts to explore emotional intelligence and how it impacts the  
14 way we engage each other and our staff. Each manager on the team  
15 responded to a survey instrument and received a report on his or her own  
16 emotional intelligence. In addition, our reports provided an assessment of  
17 our collective emotional intelligence as a team.

18           We then explored ways that we can apply what we learned to our  
19 engagements with individuals and in group settings. Over the past year and  
20 a half, we have had an intentional focus on enhancing our diversity. In our  
21 current environment, we have very limited ability to enhance our diversity  
22 through external hiring.

23           However, we want to be prepared to connect with schools in our  
24 areas when the opportunity arises. For this reason, we are intentionally  
25 engaging with several local universities, so that the relationships are already  
26 in place when we need to fill entry level positions in the future.

1           For example, one of our staff serves as an ambassador to her alma  
2 mater through their Alumni Office. We have also had several staff support  
3 STEM outreach events at a local university. We are also actively engaged  
4 in the development of our current staff, who are our pipeline of future agency  
5 leaders.

6           One of our focus areas has been mentoring. We have a strong  
7 history of pairing new employees with more experienced staff, to help ease  
8 the on boarding process and welcome new family members. We are  
9 increasing our emphasis on mentoring employees throughout their careers,  
10 and recently conducted our first flash mentoring events.

11           These events enable staff to explore their aspirations and plans with  
12 a number of different mentors in a short period, and get a broad and diverse  
13 perspective on options that have contributed to the success of current  
14 leaders, and may give the staff a new perspective on their career path.

15           Next slide, please. We are also engaged in a number of structured  
16 activities to help our staff broaden their skills, to increase our bench strength  
17 in critical skill areas such as purchasing agents, licensing assistants,  
18 independent spent fuel storage installation inspectors, in-service inspection  
19 inspectors and operator license examiners.

20           We are also fully supporting the agency's Mid-Career Leadership  
21 Development Programs, the Aspiring Leaders Program and the Leaders at  
22 All Levels Program, and have had a very impressive group of our staff receive  
23 their certificates. These activities taken together are intended to increase  
24 the organization's ability to pivot to emerging work, and to build the future  
25 leadership of the agency that is more broadly representative of our staff and  
26 the public we serve.

1           Next slide, please. I mentioned the on boarding process. Dave  
2   Lew, my deputy and I, periodically meet with employees who are new to  
3   Region I. I give them each a single sheet of paper that has our principles of  
4   good regulation on one side and our values on the other. I share with them  
5   the high value we all place on the agency's important mission, and how that  
6   gives us a share identity around what we do.

7           I discuss the Commission's principles of good regulation as the  
8   guidance we have from the Commission regarding how we fulfill our  
9   regulatory mission, and encourage them to take on more of the elaboration  
10  of the meaning of independence, clarity, openness, reliability and efficiency  
11  in the context of their work.

12           I go through the NRC values as an aspirational statement of how we  
13  expect to treat each other and our stakeholders while we do our important  
14  work. When we fully live into the principles and values, we keep the agency  
15  as a world class safety regulator and a great place to work. Finally, I give  
16  them permission and I encourage them to hold me and Dave and each other  
17  accountable to the principles and values. In this way, we establish a shared  
18  identity as we begin to foster an environment where we embrace and  
19  celebrate our points of difference while we challenge each other in a  
20  respectful manner with integrity, openness, and cooperation.

21           As we strive to build this environment, our Diversity Management  
22  Advisory Committee or DMAC, whose members are shown on this slide,  
23  plays a critical role. As you can see here, we have representatives for each  
24  of the NRC's advisory committees and actively participate in their activities.

25           In addition, DMAC is thoroughly engaged in the life of the region.  
26  Their activities help to draw us together as a community.

1           Next slide, please. This slide shows a couple of recent examples of  
2 outreach from DMAC to the region, highlighting DMAC-sponsored activities  
3 including special emphasis, observances, training and outreach. I'm  
4 extremely proud of the work that DMAC does to bring the Region I family  
5 together for a broad range of activities.

6           Here you see the results of several DMAC activities to provide  
7 support to those in need through, for example, Feds Feed Families, Homes  
8 to Housed Veterans, and Toys for Tots.

9           Next slide, please. DMAC also does a phenomenal job sponsoring  
10 our annual Take Your Child to Work Day, providing a fun-filled event that  
11 engages children of all ages and builds bonds across the organization as our  
12 families come together.

13           Next slide, please. I have been impressed with the creativity of the  
14 Committee in planning special emphasis observances. On this slide, you  
15 can see an origami instruction for Asian Pacific Heritage Month, a series of  
16 weekly lunch time movies during African American Heritage Month, and a  
17 book club discussion on moving beyond diversity while embracing differences  
18 to achieve success at work.

19           Next slide, please. DMAC along with the  
20 Employee Welfare Recreation Association also plans and sponsors  
21 a number of social events and staff celebrations, including holiday gatherings,  
22 an annual barbeque during the spring seminar, and retirement celebrations.

23           Next slide, please. Finally, they host our annual Diversity Day  
24 celebration. As you can see here, they arrange speakers, food, displays and  
25 other creative ways to explore the diversity that is present in the room. Of  
26 particular note this year, DMAC invited staff volunteers to participate in a

1 disability awareness exercise.

2           Next slide, please. In this exercise, volunteers from the Region I  
3 staff took on a disability such as blindness, deafness, or limited mobility for  
4 several hours while doing their jobs. At our Diversity Day celebration, the  
5 volunteers participated in a facilitated discussion of their experiences, and  
6 the perspective they had gained about the challenges that are experienced  
7 by others.

8           By going beyond acknowledging our differences, to understanding  
9 how those differences affect our perspectives and our actions, we open new  
10 lines of communication through which we create connections and our  
11 diversity becomes an asset.

12           Next slide, please. By fostering an environment where differences  
13 are appreciated, embraced and celebrated, we build connections among  
14 people that make us better as a whole. On our internal web page we have  
15 Region I doers profiles, similar to the It's Time to Meet feature of the NRC  
16 Reporter.

17           One of the questions many people answer is what I like about Region  
18 I. On this slide, you can see many responses over several years with a  
19 common theme around the people, friendliness, helpfulness, family and I  
20 wanted to particularly note one who said, "I have felt that every manager I  
21 have had thus far has had a genuine interest in helping their people succeed  
22 and cared about them on a personal level."

23           Next slide, please. Which brings us to inclusion. The Office of  
24 Personnel Management defined inclusion as a culture that connects each  
25 employee to the organization, encourages collaborative, flexibility and  
26 fairness, and leverages diversity throughout the organization, so that all

1 individuals are able to participate and contribute to their full potential.

2 Our own DMAC charter says that it encompasses all the ways in  
3 which the agency can utilize the unique talents, abilities and perspectives of  
4 its employees to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the agency. My  
5 old dictionary says inclusion is, "a relation between two classes that obtains  
6 when all members of the first are also members of the second."

7 Our aspiration is that every NRC employee feels that he or she is a  
8 valued member of a larger family, and is welcome to bring his or her unique  
9 perspectives to our important mission and to the challenges we face together.  
10 In that way, we move forward from celebrating diversity by embracing the  
11 uniqueness that each of us brings, to creating bonds that connect each of us  
12 to each other and to the mission. That is inclusion.

13 This concludes my remarks. I'll turn the presentation over to Lynne  
14 Finch for the EEO Advisory Committee Joint Statement.

15 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Dan. Good morning Chairman,  
16 Commissioners, and all who have joined us both here and remotely. I'd like  
17 to start by thanking each of you for your personal commitment to support  
18 diversity and inclusion here at the NRC. It is my honor to speak on behalf of  
19 the Diversity Management Advisory Committee or DMAC, which represents  
20 nine different organizations.

21 These are the Advisory Committee for African-Americans, the  
22 Advisory Committee for Employees with Disabilities, the Advisory Committee  
23 for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Employees, the Asian Pacific  
24 American Advisory Committee, the Diversity Advisory Committee on Ageism,  
25 the Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee, the Hispanic  
26 Employment Program Advisory Committee, the Native American Advisory

1 Committee, and the Veterans Employee Resource Group.

2 This year's focus was communication and communicating safety  
3 across various cultural and generational differences. Many of the  
4 committees cross diversity groups. As an example, the veteran's community  
5 has various gender, racial, aging, disabled, and LGBT constituents.

6 Throughout this year, committees have often partnered together to  
7 provide events that promote inclusion and recognition of our differences and  
8 our similarities. I'd like to highlight some of these many events. After the  
9 tragic Orlando night club shooting, ACLGBT, HEPAC, and ACAA co-  
10 sponsored a lunch and learn titled, "How to Survive in a Changing World,"  
11 that offered support and coping techniques for dealing with the stress and  
12 fear resulting from disturbing and frightening events.

13 The ACAA and VERG co-hosted a lunch and learn entitled, "The  
14 Inclusion Quotient," featuring SBCR's own Tony Barnes. Over the coming  
15 year, the IQ will be a focus area for SBCR and all of the committees because  
16 of its relevance to fostering diversity and an inclusive environment. All of the  
17 committees worked together to ensure the success of the annual Diversity  
18 Day festivities, culminating in each group hosting a table in the exhibit area,  
19 to bring awareness to and stimulate interest from the NRC staff.

20 Additionally, numerous events were hosted by individual committees  
21 to support the NRC staff with such topics as, "Your Role in Financial  
22 Management" hosted by HEPAC. DACA hosted a seminar on multi-  
23 generational workforce communications, and APAC's work on promoting the  
24 developing and use of IDPs, to list just but a few.

25 While recognition of ability is paramount, there was a recent example  
26 of implicit bias at an EWRA-sponsored book fair. A FWPAC member

1 contacted SBCR to bring the problem to their attention, and it was quickly  
2 remedied. Book displays were labeled "For Boys" and "For Girls." The  
3 offerings unfortunately fell along traditional gender themes. This also  
4 caused -- I'm sorry. Technology and sciences for boys and homemaking  
5 and beauty for the girls.

6 This also caused some discomfort for instance non-binary gender  
7 associated individuals. This is something that might not have registered to  
8 me personally, but once it was identified swift action was taken by EWRA and  
9 SBCR and the vendor to remove the signs and shuffle the reading material.  
10 This was not malicious, but it does bring to light the need for continued  
11 education and training to identify and combat implicit bias.

12 All of our committees advocate for their constituencies, but we also  
13 recognize that the NRC is in a challenging fiscal environment with few  
14 promotion or hiring opportunities. As such, we are committed to continuing  
15 to monitor our relative positions in the overall population, and work with each  
16 other to provide events that encourage understanding and personal  
17 development.

18 When the environment improves, we will once again seek to  
19 advocate for access to opportunities, and to enhance the diversity that makes  
20 the NRC strong. Thank you for your attention. I'd like to turn it back to Mr.  
21 Weber.

22 MR. WEBER: Thank you, Lynne. Although there have been  
23 changes and challenges in this past year, we continue to strive for a more  
24 diverse and inclusive work environment, as you've heard, where it's safe for  
25 each of us to be who we are and express our opinions, and communicate  
26 safety across many cultures. We look forward to your questions and

1 comments. This completes the staff's presentation.

2 CHAIRMAN BURNS: Okay. Thank you very much. We'll begin  
3 this morning with Commissioner Svinicki.

4 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Well, thank you all and good  
5 morning to everyone. Pam, you have to do a lot of talking at this meeting  
6 as you learned. But I especially want to thank you and your team in SBCR.  
7 I know that these meetings twice a year are substantial amount of work for  
8 your office. So I do appreciate the hard effort that goes in.

9 I join the Chairman and the perspective he shared at the opening,  
10 that this is always a really useful reminder of certain things that we haven't  
11 been paying attention to. It's a good dialogue back and forth and I think it  
12 brings us together to focus on something that for some of us in the crush of  
13 business it's not always front of mind.

14 So I find these engagements very valuable. I also appreciate that  
15 we specifically have recognized the EEO advisory committees and one  
16 research group who choose, in the interest of diversity, not to be called an  
17 advisory committee but a resource group. So we have to remember that  
18 nomenclature now.

19 And also the EEO counselors. I think we only had one individual  
20 in the room stand up. That doesn't mean that the others are not fully  
21 committed to their roles. It's just that it is a collateral duty, as you  
22 mentioned, so this is something that those individuals have taken on in  
23 addition to other work, and I continue over the course of these briefings with  
24 the Commission to hear such positive things about the effect that they have.

25 Frankly, I think just their presence throughout the organization I'm  
26 sure is a substantial resource to all agency employees. So I want to thank

1 them for taking that on. I did have a couple of areas. I'm not always sure  
2 who exactly might want to chime in on some of these questions, but I'm going  
3 to unite two topics.

4 First of all one is the Project Aim environment, the exceedingly rare  
5 and limited external hiring opportunities, and to my mind that makes cross-  
6 training efforts that much important as an agency, not that they weren't  
7 important. But it becomes somewhat essential to matching people to work  
8 is the cross-training efforts, and then Tony Barnes had reminded us early  
9 about the NSPDP and, you know, what we considered our feeder programs  
10 in our pipeline, in essence without the same level of external hiring, an  
11 organization is then maybe not introducing that rising generation of  
12 professionals and future leaders.

13 So you do have to have a reorientation of some approaches, maybe  
14 some different emphasis. Is there anyone who would like to talk about how  
15 are approaching those things in a kind of structured and systematic way,  
16 both the cross-training and the cultivation of both future experts and future  
17 managers and leaders?

18 MR. DORMAN: Sure Commissioner. I'll come to the first one and  
19 I'll talk about what we do in Region I with cross-training. We have an action  
20 item that we track for the division managers to look quarterly at their staffing  
21 and anticipated attrition, going beyond declared attrition, but anticipating  
22 where attrition might occur and how that would impact our critical skill sets.

23 Where historically we might have backfilled those skill sets from  
24 external to the region, we have limited opportunity to do that. So we're  
25 trying to look, in some cases, a couple of years down the road because we  
26 have to -- it takes that long to develop people in some of these areas, and

1 providing those opportunities for people to cross-qualify. So I mentioned  
2 some of them in my presentation as an example. I don't have any of my  
3 operator license examiners who have currently stated their intent to retire,  
4 but more than half of my operator license examiners can go on a moment's  
5 notice.

6 So we put an opportunity out, competed an opportunity within the  
7 region and identified two individuals to go through the process, a number of  
8 training classes, to work with the existing license examiners and ultimately  
9 to write an exam and qualify as a licensing examiner. We've done that not  
10 just in program areas like that.

11 I mentioned purchasing agents. So we've had some of our  
12 administrative staff who have spent some time with our purchasing agent in  
13 DRM, Division of Resource Management, so that we have -- if we have the  
14 need to bring new people into those areas, recognizing that those areas are  
15 also under scrutiny for reduction.

16 But that we have a pool of people ready in the region to fill into that,  
17 because we know we may not have as much opportunity to draw from  
18 outside.

19 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Thank you for that, Dan. Tony, did  
20 you want to address? You said we're keeping a watchful eye on the fever,  
21 the pipeline of incoming talent. What can we do beyond keeping a watchful  
22 eye on it?

23 MR. BARNES: I think it -- when you don't have new hires coming  
24 in, then that places a much more high emphasis on how important it is to  
25 develop the talent you do have on board. So I believe that we're seeing an  
26 active participation in the Aspiring Leaders Program, trying to get that

1 training that is available on board. I can't speak to exactly what those  
2 numbers are, but I know that a lot of folks that I speak with said that they are  
3 getting themselves involved with the Aspiring Leaders Program and utilizing  
4 the training skills that we can do while they're on board.

5 So that just puts a more important emphasis on developing what  
6 you have, since you're not getting new folks from the outside.

7 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: I agree with that, and having the  
8 attention and emphasis on it is certainly where you start, and particular  
9 measures arise out of that focus and attention. So I think that's a good  
10 place for us to be right now.

11 MR. BARNES: And I guess to finish the thought is that ensuring  
12 that people who have access to that program is a diverse pool of people  
13 while we're going, using that program.

14 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: And I appreciated your discussion of  
15 keeping an eye on some of those metrics. I thought you covered that very,  
16 very well in your presentation. I wanted to turn briefly to small business  
17 contracting, and I know that it's something that we have a lot of data related  
18 that. Maybe, and I don't know Anthony Briggs; we have to differentiate  
19 between our Anthonys here.

20 I don't know if we have good insights into the Small Business  
21 Administration, their goal-setting process. It seems that this agency -- or it  
22 doesn't seem, this agency has a very strong performance record in terms of  
23 our grades over the years. They continue, I think, to look at higher levels of  
24 what we can achieve.

25 Do you have any commentary you could give about the general  
26 philosophical approach of SBA as they go about looking at agency

1 achievement versus setting goals for the future? Is there any point at which  
2 they say that for the amount of contracting you do, you generally have the  
3 right level of achievement for the various SBA groups, or is it a constantly  
4 rising expectation?

5 MR. BRIGGS: It's a little bit of both, but recently it's been a  
6 constant level of expectation to increase. In the past, SBA has been willing  
7 to negotiate and discuss what would be a reasonable goal. Recently that  
8 was not the case. So for fiscal year '17, we have a 32 percent goal, and  
9 that was it. There was no opportunity to negotiate.

10 I have mentioned before we're a somewhat unique agency, in the  
11 fact that we send about a third of our contracting dollars to DOE labs for work  
12 that is unable to go to a small business, for the fact that they're usually  
13 managed by large business. I think those dollars should be removed. I  
14 mentioned that. Or if you keep those dollars in, then you should reduce the  
15 goal accordingly. But they have not been amenable to changing the rules  
16 for us.

17 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: I appreciate you using that example.  
18 The prior experience and awareness I have of the Department of Energy,  
19 they have that same difficulty only much more pronounced, because the bulk  
20 of their budget goes to their large management and operating contractors.  
21 So I know that's a good -- I'm not surprised arguments have been unavailing,  
22 because DOE has it in a much finer point and has not been awarded any  
23 relief on those goals.

24 But I thought your example about if there's a different proportional  
25 spending and corporate support for NRC. Just some of these things are  
26 constraining parameters, I think. I don't want to say oh, we'll put our feet up

1 and not try to do more where we can.

2 But I appreciate your, I thought, very diplomatic presentation of their  
3 -- you know, sometimes you can have some dialogue, but sometimes the  
4 SBA has a hardened view on something and we're simply going to have to  
5 try to rise to the goals they set.

6 MR. BRIGGS: I agree. Yeah, I agree. Thank you.

7 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: Again, I want to thank everyone for  
8 their presentations, and with that I'll yield. Thank you, Chairman.

9 CHAIRMAN BURNS: Thank you, Commissioner. Commissioner  
10 Baran.

11 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Well thank you all for your  
12 presentations, and more importantly really for all the work you're doing to  
13 promote diversity and inclusion at the NRC. Pam, I want to join everyone  
14 else in welcoming you to your first Commission meeting as director. It's  
15 actually hard to believe for me that this is your first time in your new role at  
16 this meeting, because I've seen you at so many events and you seem to  
17 have transitioned into this new role so naturally, but welcome.

18 At last year's meeting, we talked about the potential consequences  
19 or expected staffing reductions on the agency's diversity, and I was really  
20 happy to see that even though our workforce has declined significantly over  
21 the last couple of years, NRC's demographic ratios have remained steady.

22 Does someone want to talk a little bit about how we manage this  
23 and what strategies are we using to sustain or improve the agency's diversity  
24 in the coming years, even as we face budgetary constraints?

25 MS. BAKER: I think one of the things that we have to look at is  
26 with limited hiring, what is the hiring that we're doing, and I know where we

1 have extended grants to schools and they have an opportunity to be non-  
2 competitively selected for the few external hires that we have, that we  
3 exercise that in the limited external recruitment.

4           It is going to be challenging going forward, and particularly with the  
5 corporate support reductions, where you may have a greater representation  
6 in those ranks of staff, and as those numbers go down it is something that  
7 we've been fortunate to sustain our levels. But I think we have to be realistic  
8 as to what is the demographics of the make-up of where we're reducing staff,  
9 and that it will have an impact, and then we focus on our efforts on when  
10 things stabilize, how do we start recovering.

11           So sustaining the relationships and the connections with the limited  
12 hiring, I think Dan mentioned, and the University Champion Programs  
13 maintain a cognizance of the NRC, even though we might not be in a hiring  
14 position so --

15           COMMISSIONER BARAN: Any other thoughts?

16           MR. BARNES: So I would agree with Pam, and if you're talking  
17 about from an actionable, strategic standpoint is trying to retain the talent  
18 you have. You have no control over what's coming in. I mean that  
19 limitation is there. But we can potentially control what's going out, exception  
20 being voluntary retirement.

21           So keeping people happy with the job they're doing and the people  
22 they're doing it with through committees, constituencies, activities, family,  
23 familiar relationships. I mean that's what HEPAC uses, La Familia. When  
24 people are comfortable and happy with what they're doing, they tend to stay  
25 wanting to do it. So that's the only strategic activity that we can do, is to try  
26 and maintain the diversity that we have.

1 I think we've been extremely fortunate in losing, and the number is  
2 over 500 people since the peak in 2010. But in the future, we'll have to see  
3 if that continues to be that way, since the focus of the cuts are in corporate  
4 where there's a lot of diversity, racial and gender diversity in those areas.

5 MR. DORMAN: I would add we need to keep the focus on  
6 development, because we can move the demographics within the  
7 organization. Our diversity is stronger in the feeder pools than it is in the  
8 leadership.

9 So we need to keep that, you know, the Aspiring Leaders Program,  
10 the Leaders At All Levels, make sure that we're building strong pools for the  
11 opportunities that will come to move within the agency, and make sure that  
12 we're focused on the development of the people who are here.

13 MR. WEBER: I think what you're hearing is a common theme,  
14 which is this is not a binary function, right? It's not whether you're hiring or  
15 promoting that you can add to your diversity. We really need to also focus  
16 on the people that we already have on board, and that's the intentional  
17 actions, the deliberate actions, the proactive actions that we take on a daily  
18 basis to enhance diversity and inclusion. That's what's going to matter.

19 MS. DOANE: And I think with our -- I'm sorry.

20 COMMISSIONER BARAN: No, go ahead Margie.

21 MS. DOANE: And with our -- because we can do only limited  
22 hiring, one thing that had come to light when I was in OIP and we had this  
23 SBCR diversity audit is that it really makes a difference if you have a diverse  
24 panel that's making the selections, and so we've carried that through in  
25 OGC. We've had very good results in recent years doing that so --

26 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Well, to follow up a little bit on

1 something Dan mentioned just now, and at a prior meeting we talked about  
2 the under-representation of women in the SES Candidate Development  
3 Program, with only four women in the most recent class of 26. DMAC's joint  
4 statement provided some additional background data that I thought was  
5 pretty striking.

6           There were 211 qualified applicants for this program, of whom 69  
7 were women. So 33 percent of the qualified applicants were women. As  
8 the process proceeded, 28 percent of the individuals selected to participate  
9 in an OPM Assessment Center evaluation were women.

10           But only four women were ultimately selected for the candidate  
11 development program, that they were just 15 percent of the class. And as  
12 an agency, we've had some time to digest these outcomes and understand  
13 them a little bit, I hope. Can someone talk about what they think's  
14 contributing to this under-representation of women in this leadership  
15 program, and how we turn this around?

16           MR. WEBER: Commissioner, you may be aware that following the  
17 results from the last class selection, we actually convened a review of what  
18 contributed to that, not just for the SES candidates but also for our Nuclear  
19 Safety Professional Development Program participants, and that review  
20 identified a number of opportunities or potential barriers that may have  
21 contributed to that outcome.

22           I would remind you that that was a competitive merit-based  
23 selection process. So the people who were selected were the people who  
24 performed well not only on their day-to-day jobs, but also in the OPM  
25 Assessment Center and in the structured interviews, and we ensured that  
26 those processes were fair.

1           So the results are what they are, but now it's reflecting back on that  
2 to evaluate gee, what could we do differently, and are there any barriers there  
3 that are in fact contributing to that outcome? It gets back to Tony's point on  
4 micro biases. Is that a factor that we have to deal with?

5           We did coming out of that review convene a subcommittee of the  
6 Executive Resources Board, and we've been meeting; Dan's on there, Pam's  
7 on there, Margie's on there, since we got the results of that review, to  
8 specifically focus in on this area and identify what should we do differently  
9 and if we're going to have another class down the road, how would do it  
10 differently to enhance that process? I don't know if Miriam --

11           COMMISSIONER BARAN: What's the current thinking as you've  
12 been meeting and thinking about this? Have you identified barriers and have  
13 you identified strategies for overcoming barriers? Where are you in that  
14 process?

15           MR. WEBER: I'm going to let Miriam Cohen address that.

16           MS. COHEN: We haven't met that much. We've had two  
17 meetings. There's been a couple of things that have been consuming us.  
18 But some of the things that we're thinking about are process changes. I don't  
19 want to get into too much detail but, you know for example within the SES  
20 CDP, there's office director ranking of candidates, right, that usually, you  
21 know, comes with the package when we review people's ECQs.

22           And you know, the folks, you know, from IV who I believe provided  
23 us a report in this area said well that really may not be a best practice, right?  
24 Some agencies actually outsource the review of their ECQs to other  
25 agencies. We have our office directors do it.

26           Some things that we've been thinking about is maybe have a diverse

1 pool of SES division directors do the first cut, sort of not that we don't respect  
2 the office directors' ranking, but again to eliminate some biases that may  
3 come to play.

4 So that's just some of the things we're thinking of. Quite frankly,  
5 because we're probably not going to do a CDP at least for the next 12 plus  
6 months, we have not focused a lot on the further enhancements to this  
7 process. We're aware that we need to make changes. We're also aware  
8 that we need to make similar changes in the NSPDP.

9 But we are not, you know, devoting resources right now given that  
10 we're not expected to have a large NSPDP class or a CDP class at this time.

11 MR. WEBER: In the interim, it's through diversity and inclusion that  
12 we can expand the range of potential applicants in the future, give them the  
13 leadership opportunities and experiences so that when we do have a future  
14 program they're more competitive in those programs, and that should drive  
15 the outcome.

16 MS. DOANE: Yeah, and so I spoke earlier about that I have an  
17 open door and many other leaders in the agency do as well. So we've heard  
18 from individuals, some of whom self-selected out of the process altogether.

19 So there are barriers, and so one of the things I know that many of  
20 us are doing are encouraging staff that want to get into the program in the  
21 future, and since there is going to be some lag time, they do have time to look  
22 at the ECQs, which are the requirements, to get into the SES program, and  
23 to try to find opportunities to do the IDPs and try to find opportunities where  
24 you can enhance your skills in all of those categories.

25 We're working with them to try to find creative ways to do that, and  
26 that helps them across the board whether they do apply or not. But hopefully

1 that will help to increase the pool of applicants as well. So there's a lot of  
2 different steps that we have to do, and we have time to do it.

3 COMMISSIONER BARAN: I appreciate that you're focusing some  
4 attention on this. I think by the time we get to whenever it is, the next CDP  
5 class, it would be good to be in a better position than we are now, to really  
6 think through what the barriers are and how do we -- there's work to be done  
7 between now and then just everybody, as Mike pointed out.

8 But if there are more kind of structural, procedural things we can do  
9 there that would improve outcomes in this respect, I think that's something  
10 that is important to do. You know, I'm sure the class that we had here was  
11 terrific.

12 MALE PARTICIPANT: They are.

13 COMMISSIONER BARAN: But it's pretty stark, you know. Four  
14 out of 26, that's pretty stark. So I think there's some room for improvement  
15 there, and I appreciate that you are looking at that. Thanks.

16 CHAIRMAN BURNS: Thanks, thanks. Actually, I want to follow up  
17 on the point we've just been discussing with Commissioner Baran, and just  
18 from my -- I appreciate Miriam's comment about looking at how we're doing  
19 this. I'll just -- drawing from my past experience, being on the committee or  
20 the -- what, the Executive Resources Board, yeah, right; so I can still  
21 remember a few things.

22 But being in ERB and I know as an office director you come in and  
23 with among all the other things you're doing as an office director, keeping the  
24 Commission happy, keeping EDO happy -- I'm talking to general counsel --  
25 keeping the EDO happy, right Margie?

26 But one of the things, I mean you're sort of, you know, you've got

1 limited time to go through some of this, and I'll tell you frankly, going through  
2 it I'm looking at the office director's recommendations and, you know,  
3 sometimes maybe because I knew the person or whatever I might push back  
4 there.

5 But I don't -- if I don't have a good understanding. So I think this  
6 idea of perhaps looking more than -- I'm not, and again, I don't think we're  
7 saying we don't want to ignore the office director. But it might be a good way  
8 of getting sort of a fresh feedback on that. So I think that's -- I appreciate  
9 that Miriam. I think that's a good way to look at it. So here I'm going to have  
10 an office director push back, but that's okay. Dan.

11 MR. DORMAN: No, I agree with that point. I think going back to  
12 the statistics that Commissioner Baran cited, I think what was striking to us  
13 was it was -- the biggest drop-off was going through the Assessment Center  
14 at OPM, which was supposed to be the tool that we brought in two classes  
15 ago to help take that subjectivity out of it. But that was where we screened  
16 out a lot of our candidates.

17 So I think a lot of our focus needs to continue to be on this pipeline  
18 development, and making sure we have stronger pools prepared to go into  
19 these processes, so that we can get a more diverse class out of it.

20 MR. WEBER: And just if I could build on that, when you look at that  
21 OPM Assessment Center, without getting into the specifics, which you know,  
22 we don't -- we want to stay away from, but it really emphasizes kind of broad  
23 U.S. government leadership competencies, and frankly some of our staff who  
24 might be performing at an exceptional level, may not really get the exposure  
25 they need throughout their career here at the NRC or in other parts of the  
26 government or outside in the private sector, so that they are very competitive

1 in that Assessment Center in some of those areas.

2 That's, the evaluation is not done by the NRC. It's done by OPM  
3 experts, who are looking for those executive core qualities, qualifications.  
4 So it's interesting. We always ponder the results when they come back, and  
5 we really dig into them to try to understand what are they telling us, you know?

6 Not only what is it telling us about the candidates that we have before  
7 us, but where else might we as an agency better, in terms of developing our  
8 individuals so that they are more competitive.

9 CHAIRMAN BURNS: So how do you get at that, because I've heard  
10 that before. I know in some of our discussions, Commissioner Svinicki,  
11 Chair MacFarlane have raised that. I mean obviously I'm sort of an insular  
12 one, having sort of grown up here, went away but the prodigal came back,  
13 and it is true about getting that sort of outside perspective.

14 So and going back again, I remember one of my friends in -- when I  
15 was working at the OECD worked at our Embassy, and said well yeah, the  
16 NRC is this nice little club here. I said yeah, it's a great place to, you know,  
17 it's a great place to work.

18 But you know, the things she, you know, she said sort of resonate in  
19 terms of how do we, you know, we are going to have people. We want  
20 people to stay. We want people to enjoy the work here, to contribute. But  
21 we want these other kinds of injections. Go ahead, Commissioner.

22 COMMISSIONER SVINICKI: And no agency should be an island.

23 CHAIRMAN BURNS: Yeah, okay. Yeah. So how do we get at  
24 that?

25 MR. WEBER: So it's by starting with the end in mind, and that is if  
26 we are going through a process of developing our candidates, so that at some

1 point they can serve at a high level and in an executive position, it's to focus  
2 throughout their career, not just in that individual decision but all through the  
3 pipeline on those executive core qualifications, as well as the 28  
4 competencies.

5 And I think -- and then you tailor a development plan around those.  
6 So if you are highly steeped in coalition-building and communications, but  
7 you're a little weak on budget formulation and execution, then through your  
8 development you need to devote a little more time, and we need to be flexible  
9 to allow individuals to get the opportunities to demonstrate and to acquire  
10 those skills.

11 CHAIRMAN BURNS: One of the other things, Margie talked about  
12 it a little, touched on it in her presentation, and one thing I'll talk about  
13 internally but also externally. Internally, what I want to say, what I deeply  
14 appreciate within SAP is sort of the willingness of looking at people who are  
15 not necessarily in the discipline where they are trained or they have expertise  
16 to go elsewhere.

17 Because I'll tell you when I came into the agency in the late 70's, the  
18 idea that a lawyer would go into NRR to work as a branch chief or a section  
19 leader or something like that, you know, that would have been thrown out the  
20 Bank Building, and that will take some people back, the Bank Building window  
21 for suggesting such a thing.

22 But you know, I appreciate, and this is not just a recent phenomenon,  
23 but over the last ten plus -- ten plus years, and I can think of folks like Brook  
24 Clark, who went into NRR, and NRR is part of the development program. So  
25 I deeply appreciate that.

26 The other thing that I think is good is within OGC, in terms of there

1 is a bit of risk-taking on this, in terms of letting people go or, you know, letting  
2 people go to do development things at places like DFNSB, which I know.  
3 The person who did that basically got a new opportunity out of it, or going to  
4 the Department of Justice.

5 I remember a time when I was a junior lawyer at NRC "We're not  
6 doing that, because we might then lose them and have to hire somebody  
7 else." I don't see that as such a big problem, because it is -- again, if you're  
8 interested in the development of the careers of these folks, people go.

9 They may come back. They go out there. They're other resources  
10 for us. They're contacts for us. They may develop. So you know, just  
11 speaking on both those things from my own experience and what Margie  
12 spoke to, I think that's very good.

13 Let me just note a couple of things. I made a couple of rough notes,  
14 and I do appreciate all the presentations here, because I think what this does,  
15 as I sort of alluded to at the beginning in my remarks, is what this briefing  
16 does, in the two annual briefings, it really does give us a picture of the fabric  
17 of the organization, and that the organization, you said Mike, it's not just a  
18 binary and it's just not, you know, org charts and things like that.

19 It is about people and about organizational culture, and what we're  
20 talking about here today really pushes deep into that, and you've touched on  
21 this in a number of areas, and ways of sustaining that and improving that. I  
22 think that's again, you know, whether it was Tony talking about the Dialogue  
23 Initiative, which I may come back to if I have a chance in a moment.

24 Even our relationships with contracting and the challenges we have,  
25 how it works in an individual office, how the advisory committees support.  
26 This is all important, I think, and gives us here today I think a good picture of

1 that culture, really that shared identity within the agency that -- and what  
2 you've also touched on is this -- and that comes back to I think the Dialogue  
3 Initiative. It comes back to the Open Door. It comes back to the other types  
4 of engagements, whether formal or informal, in terms of communications with  
5 each other.

6 Again, you know, we are in challenging -- we have been in  
7 challenging times. This isn't, you know, this isn't the sort of the easy ride of  
8 the last part of the first decade of this century. At some point I want to get  
9 to be able to just say the teens and the 20's. But we know that.

10 But as I noted before, I said there are times when I can go back in  
11 the ebb and flow of it, and just being able to continue to sustain sort of this  
12 focus, and I think this is really glue or structure or framework that you all are  
13 doing, whether it's in SBCR or in the individual offices that really does  
14 contribute to that sustaining.

15 My last couple seconds here in terms of the -- with Tony or Pam, in  
16 terms of the Dialogue Initiative, what do you see going forward in terms of --  
17 maybe it missed in terms of the background. How many people are like in a  
18 cohort when you do it? Obviously it's probably relatively small, but a little  
19 more granular.

20 MR. BARNES: Yes sir. We ask for volunteers from the office  
21 directors, because it is a time commitment. Two and a half hours per  
22 session for 12 sessions. Our ideal cohort size is between 15 and 20, we  
23 have 32 combined in Cohort 1 and 2. Now the first cohort was all staff. That  
24 was kind of our first try at it, but humongous diversity. Race, gender, grade,  
25 time on board, parts of the agency. Great diversity in that.

26 The second cohort mixed with some managers and supervisors,

1 both SES and non-SES and staff. We just had the wrap-up yesterday. The  
2 results are very positive on the value of having the managers and supervisors  
3 in which the staff members. So we're hoping to continue down. We have  
4 funding for five cohorts, and that's an important part of this as well.

5 To commit to this from the financial standpoint is important, as well  
6 as the time standpoint. So we will, as we continue the cohorts, when we're  
7 done with five cohorts we'll have 70 or 80 people through.

8 But the feedback and we're getting from each individual, some of the  
9 comments on the video, and it's changing people and how they approach  
10 their co-workers, how they approach their family members, how they  
11 approach -- how they approach their job. It's personal, it's professional, it's  
12 all of those things.

13 So I think it's a positive thing that we should continue to do, and the  
14 next cohort is an all manager cohort and an all-staff cohort again, because  
15 we don't know what we don't know. Maybe managers will contribute more  
16 and feel more comfortable when they're not mixed with staff. Maybe staff  
17 will continue to not feel that I've got to hold back something because there's  
18 a manager there who knows my boss, who knows my boss, etcetera.

19 We don't know. We expect that evaluation from the contractor, the  
20 two facilitators from IV Planning Group, that will give us some of that feedback  
21 as we continue forward.

22 MS. BAKER: I think Tony has shared sort of what the process is,  
23 but what I thought I heard you also ask was what is sort of the expectation of  
24 sort of this return on this investment to the NRC? In that regard, our  
25 expectation is for this to be promulgated and that comfort to kind of expand  
26 into the agency, having participated in the cohort and looking at the energy

1 coming out of both the completion programs.

2 The folks that have participated have a desire to make a contribution  
3 and a return to the organization. We're still formulating that and we actually  
4 want to let them form what that looks like. But we've already initially  
5 committed during yesterday's completion, to bring to two cohorts that have  
6 completed together on a regular scheduled basis, to even start looking at  
7 what form does that take. Is it a project? Is it a continuing reinforcement?  
8 Is it opportunities for dialogue to occur in the normal course of events of the  
9 workday or the work week?

10 There were a lot of ideas offered yesterday, as far as how do we  
11 keep the momentum going and expand its impact on the organization. But  
12 we've charged each cohort participant to take this with them in almost  
13 anywhere they engage. If you're in a meeting and you're seeing that  
14 someone is being excluded or not heard, you know, be empowered.

15 You now have the skills through the experience that you went  
16 through to create an environment for that person to want to come forward or,  
17 you know, not feel intimidated that they can't speak. So that's -- it's not a  
18 firm, fixed vision as it is, but there's a lot of momentum and our role in SBCR  
19 is to facilitate that and, you know, nurture the ground so that we don't lose  
20 that.

21 CHAIRMAN BURNS: Okay thanks, and I encourage you and I  
22 appreciate sort of what Tony talked about in terms of experimenting with how  
23 the groups set up, but also building on the enthusiasm or what the folks who  
24 have participated come in at. So I think at both ends that's very good.  
25 Thanks very much.

26 At this point I'll call upon Maria Schwartz from the National Treasury

1 Employees Union to provide remarks from the union's perspective.

2 MS. SCHWARTZ: Good morning Chairman Burns,  
3 Commissioners, executives, managers and my fellow bargaining unit  
4 employees. I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak with you again  
5 on behalf of the National Treasury Employees Union in this forum.

6 NTEU, as you know, is the exclusive  
7 representative of our bargaining unit employees. I am joined here today  
8 Sheryl Burrows, our Chapter 208 president, as well as by several of our  
9 chapter officers and stewards. Today, like many organizations, the NRC is  
10 under intense pressures, both internal and external.

11 As a result, our employees are experiencing reorganizations and  
12 restructuring that includes reductions in FTE, directed reassignments, loss of  
13 much of our external training and lack of promotional opportunities. Two  
14 weeks ago, the agency added the potential for an involuntary reduction in  
15 force, also known as a RIF to the mix. This has cause some employees  
16 concern about losing their jobs. But it has caused even more anxiety about  
17 the process being abused or misused.

18 Employees are concerned that in spite of the declining FTE  
19 requirement, those who are favored will be protected from any harm, and  
20 those that are not will bear the brunt of the impact. They are concerned  
21 about the possibility of being reassigned to less desirable positions, and will  
22 have no control or input into the decision.

23 Not having control is their worse fear. Even a bad situation in which  
24 the employee has control is more palatable. Additionally, employees are  
25 concerned that there will be less FTE but not less work, and that they will be  
26 held to unrealistic standards. In some respects, the concerns about being

1 the ones left behind are as great as the concern about potentially being RIF'd.

2           The changes that the agency is undergoing present new challenges  
3 and demands for everyone, which extends to the issues discussed at this  
4 meeting, regarding the importance of maintaining our diverse and inclusive  
5 organization. No member of our agency will be unaffected one way or the  
6 other. We are all aware that when change is not handled well, as human  
7 beings we become demoralized. Our ability to cooperate and work as a  
8 team is diminished.

9           We are less able to engage our work effectively, and increased levels  
10 of stress, anxiety, absenteeism, illness, and mistakes can creep in. Our  
11 employees have been told to be prepared for change, to make themselves  
12 and the agency more effective, efficient, and agile. Our leadership in  
13 management has also told us that rather than fearing change, resisting it, or  
14 hoping it won't happen, we should prepare ourselves both psychologically  
15 and emotionally as we engage in our work.

16           This is a big ask. For most of our employees who prefer established  
17 routines, we like to feel secure, stable and familiar with our responsibilities.  
18 The one thing we hate most is uncertainty, uncertainty about our jobs, our  
19 future, our status in the organization, the role we are expected to play, and  
20 what other changes might be coming.

21           As NTEU as repeatedly requested from the agency since the  
22 commencement of TABS, it is critical that regardless of the underlying  
23 changes the agency envisions, our employees understand their roles and  
24 responsibilities, know the processes and procedures that are available to  
25 them to engage their work, and have the appropriate resources including  
26 training to accomplish their work.

1           So where are we in this endeavor? OCHCO is developing a  
2 Change Management Initiative. Following on the heels of Project Aim, which  
3 is now in its implementation stage, the Change Management Initiative is  
4 being developed to address the people part of change. It hopes to  
5 communicate tools that not only our managers can use to address the  
6 uncertainties of change, but also for our employees as they address these  
7 uncertainties as well.

8           Having the tools to deal with change, however, does not negate our  
9 employees' needs to understand their roles and responsibilities, the  
10 processes and procedures available to them to engage their work, and the  
11 appropriate resources including training to accomplish their work. However,  
12 the increased churn draws our attention to two key issues that continually  
13 come up when NTEU meets with our bargaining unit employees.

14           First, the continuing lack of trust in leadership, and second  
15 employees' concerns that they are not getting the information they really need  
16 to make appropriate decisions about their careers. Regardless of the high  
17 quality of the Change Management Sharesite site, employees are not for the  
18 most part going to go to a website to search for tools to deal with change,  
19 and that is not because our employees are lazy.

20           To the contrary, our employees are eager for transparent and  
21 effective communication. They are eager for dialogue with their managers,  
22 and they are eager for answers. They are also tired of what they perceive  
23 as less than forthcoming communications, buzzwords, and being told by their  
24 leaders that they should think of themselves as empowered, while it is  
25 demonstrated to them that they are not.

26           In other words, they are eager to be treated as the agency's most

1 important resource. The more uncertain and dare I say chaotic our work  
2 situation becomes, the more our employees need good lines of  
3 communication. What NTEU has witnessed over the last two weeks is that  
4 some of the additional uncertainty that has developed has been caused by  
5 ineffective communication.

6         The rumor mill is churning because when employees are nervous,  
7 worried and pressured, they have increased information needs. Our  
8 employees deserve to know what's really going on and what is being planned  
9 for the future. If our leadership and managers don't supply these answers  
10 to them, they will make up their own. Often, they will imagine the worst when  
11 in fact there may be very good reasons for hope and optimism.

12         While the EDO Update a couple of weeks ago was honest about the  
13 potential for a RIF, it left most employees wondering what that really means  
14 for them and their organization. In an environment where trust is paramount,  
15 our leadership and managers must realize how important and necessary  
16 good communication is in coping with the stress of major organizational  
17 change at the NRC, and the lines of communication must be honest, sincere  
18 and respectful.

19         I'd like to turn NTEU's comments to our bargaining unit employees.  
20 NTEU wants to remind you that one of the worst things that you can do when  
21 you're experiencing the stress of change is to pretend that everything is just  
22 fine. Even if you agree intellectually that changes are necessary,  
23 emotionally you still have some painful, negative reactions to deal with.

24         Don't ignore these. Speak with your managers. Use resources  
25 such as the Employee Assistance Program, come speak with us in the union  
26 office or send us an email. We need as an organization, as a community to

1 work together. Research indicates that acknowledging your negative  
2 feelings may actually improve your ability to remain upbeat and optimistic,  
3 excuse me.

4         When you're willing to look at all sides of your agency's changes,  
5 your ability to notice the positives as well as the negatives improves. Then  
6 you can choose to focus on the positives, rather than dwelling on the  
7 negatives. What I'm trying to say is that if you forced yourself to tell yourself  
8 the whole truth, you'll see both the positive and negative aspects of any major  
9 change.

10         This expanded perspective alone will almost always help you feel  
11 more positive and upbeat, without having to deny your feelings to the  
12 contrary. Finally, during times of change, it is common to let yourself and  
13 others be easily abused. When you see your colleagues experiencing  
14 actions that appear unfair, there is a natural tendency to wonder if you might  
15 be next.

16         NTEU has heard that this is in some instances creating a chilled  
17 environment. Our mission is too important to allow this to happen. As NRC  
18 employees, it is our sworn duty to uphold the NRC mission, to protect the  
19 public health and safety and the environment. As NRC employees, our  
20 values support the importance of a questioning attitude. At the NRC,  
21 questioning decisions, policies or personnel actions is appropriate and should  
22 be supported.

23         NTEU's focus is on your working environment. We encourage you  
24 as NRC employees to tactfully broach concerns about yourself or your  
25 colleagues with your immediate supervisors when possible. Yes, there is  
26 always a risk when you make such a move that you could be targeted as a

1 troublemaker. We have seen this in several of the grievances filed over the  
2 last year.

3 But if you truly have the agency's interest at heart, you or you with  
4 NTEU's support may be able to negotiate a more fair and humane work  
5 environment for all concerned. Finally as the holiday season approaches,  
6 don't ignore your family and friends. In addition to maintaining time for  
7 yourself, it is always important not to forget your families and friends.

8 Spouses, children, other family members and dear friends can be  
9 excellent sources of emotional support when times are tough at work. In  
10 conclusion, NTEU would like to take this opportunity to wish our NRC family  
11 a very blessed and healing holiday season, and a New Year filled with dignity  
12 and respect for all NRC employees as we engage the challenges ahead of  
13 us. Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN BURNS: Thank you, Maria. Before we close, do my  
15 colleagues have any -- no? Well again, I want to thank everyone for their  
16 presentations today, as well as thank our eight EEO advisory committees and  
17 the Veterans Employees Resource Group, that are voluntary and work in  
18 partnerships within SBCR and with the offices to make the NRC an even  
19 better place to work.

20 It's been a good overview of the programs and some of the  
21 challenges we have in terms of supporting diversity inclusion in our high-  
22 performing workforce. I want to thank you for all the ideas and perspectives  
23 presented, and for whatever holiday you celebrate, and there are a number  
24 of them, I wish you well for that and for all of us a happy New Year. Thank  
25 you, we're adjourned.

26 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 11:24

1 a.m.)