

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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

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MONDAY,

DECEMBER 3, 2018

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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 10:00 a.m., Kristine L. Svinicki, Chairman, presiding.

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

KRISTINE L. SVINICKI, Chairman

JEFF BARAN, Commissioner

STEPHEN G. BURNS, Commissioner

ANNIE CAPUTO, Commissioner

DAVID A. WRIGHT, Commissioner

NRC STAFF:

MARGARET M. DOANE, Executive Director for Operations

PAMELA BAKER, Director, Office of Small Business and

Civil Rights

TRISH GALLALEE, Chair, Advisory Committee for

Employees with Disabilities

JOHN LUBINSKI, Deputy Director, Office of Nuclear

Security and Incident Response

DARRELL ROBERTS, Deputy Regional Administrator,

Region III

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

10:00 a.m.

CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Well, good morning everyone and welcome. I call the Commission's meeting this morning to order.

The Commission convenes this morning in public session to conduct one of our semi-annual updates on the progress and opportunities related to a number of different topics, but among them are equal employment opportunity, diversity and inclusion and our work towards our goals there, and also our small business programs. And so there is a plethora of topics.

We will have a staff panel and they will represent some perspectives and progress and status on those topics followed by a Commission Q & A, and at the very close of our meeting I will recognize Ms. Serita Sanders who is Executive Vice President of the National Treasury Employee Union here and she will provide some NTEU perspectives to close our meeting.

Before we begin and hear from the staff panel would any of my colleagues like to make any opening remarks?

(No audible response.)

CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Hearing none, I think we just want to dive right into the wonderful diverse topics that we have in front of us, and leading off the staff panel will be Ms. Margaret Doane, our Executive Director for Operations.

Margie, please begin and lead off the staff's presentation.

Thank you.

1 MS. DOANE: Okay. Good morning, Chairman and
2 Commissioners. We appreciate the opportunity to provide you with an update
3 of NRC's Equal Employment Opportunity and Small Business Programs. I'm
4 particularly pleased that today we will be highlighting our diversity and inclusion
5 activities because I see these activities as having a significant relevance to our
6 recent agency efforts to transform.

7 As I start I first wanted to recognize that today, December 3rd,
8 is the United Nations' International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which since
9 1992 has aimed to promote an outstanding -- an understanding of disability
10 issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons
11 with disabilities.

12 Next slide, please? Thoughts and decisions about safety
13 issues are at the heart of NRC's mission. They are what we produce. I firmly
14 believe that the agency makes the strongest positions when a diverse range of
15 backgrounds, experiences and viewpoints are brought to bear upon those
16 decisions. Therefore, ensuring an inclusive workplace where all people feel
17 free to offer such viewpoints is absolutely essential to our mission's success,
18 today and in the future.

19 Environments where people with different backgrounds and
20 viewpoints are working together can foster a better understanding of differences
21 and a higher level of mutual respect, however, we all harbor unconscious
22 biases that we might not be aware of and how these biases can influence our
23 decisions.

24 As EDO I expect us all to make it a priority to become more

1 aware of and break down our biases as part of an effort to cultivate a more
2 respectful work environment. Doing this strengthens our ability to integrate our
3 individual talents, support diversity in our expertise and experience, and in turn
4 enhances our teamwork and collaboration, all of which will help us to transform
5 and prepare the next generation to conduct our mission in a way that keeps the
6 NRC as a great place to work with an inspiring public service mission.

7 In short, investing in our transparency -- in our diversity and
8 inclusion activities will be an accelerator for innovation at the NRC and for
9 changes we need to make to be ready for the future. Such investment will help
10 us adapt as reactors close prematurely, as advance reactor designs are
11 proposed and developed, as we invest in modernizing our information
12 technology systems, as our workforce demographics change as well as many
13 other changes that we face today.

14 These challenges are both -- these changes are both a
15 challenge and an opportunity. My vision of a transformed NRC is an
16 organization that builds on our already strong culture and embraces flexible,
17 adaptable, regulatory approaches while still maintaining our mission. Looking
18 for ways to innovate and transform need to be constantly in our thoughts across
19 the full range of the agency activities, both technical and corporate. To flourish
20 the NRC must be an organization that embraces participative decision making
21 and readily welcomes ideas and approaches.

22 You will hear today from many corners of the NRC the
23 exceptional work that is being done to ensure that we remain a collaborative
24 environment with an empowered staff. Maintaining the NRC as a great place to

1 work is a lofty goal in changing times, but great places to work inspire and
2 empower staff to do great things.

3 Ralph Waldo Emerson said; and this is what was on the slide,
4 "Trust men," and I added women, "and they will be true to you. Treat them
5 greatly and they will show themselves great." So initiatives like those you will
6 hear about today are essential to the NRC transforming.

7 Next slide, please? So at the table with me today is Pam
8 Baker, Director of the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, who will
9 provide an update on NRC's Small Business, Civil Rights and Diversity and
10 Inclusion Programs.

11 To Pam's right is John Lubinski, Deputy Director of the Office
12 of Nuclear Security and Incident Response, who will discuss current diversity
13 and inclusion activities being piloted in his -- in their office.

14 This is Darrell Roberts, who will soon be the Regional
15 Administrator for Region III, and he's going to highlight employee engagement
16 accomplishments in the region.

17 And to Darrell's left is Trish Gallalee, the Chair of the Advisory
18 Committee for Employees with Disabilities and she'll speak on behalf of the
19 Diversity Management Advisory Committees.

20 So I'll now turn the program over to Pam.

21 Next slide, please.

22 MS. BAKER: Thank you, Margie.

23 Good morning, Chairman Svinicki, Commissioners Baran,
24 Burns, Caputo and Wright, and NRC staff.

1 I am pleased to brief you this morning on the recent
2 achievements of the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, SBCR, its NRC
3 affiliates and partner offices and regions in strengthening our workforce through
4 diversity and inclusion.

5 As our briefing theme indicates and the quotes shared during
6 the EDO's introduction, we become a stronger agency when we fully leverage
7 the diversity and backgrounds, culture, perspective and thought into our
8 operations by actively welcoming, hearing and including those who may be
9 viewed as different from us.

10 Next slide, please. The NRC continues to explore the
11 diversity that small business in the commercial marketplace. Through the
12 efforts of the small business team and in partnership with the Office of
13 Administration's Division of Acquisition Management the Agency received its
14 second consecutive SBA score card grade of A-plus. Facing the challenge of
15 an eroding baseline of small business opportunities as we balance the need for
16 the economic benefit of best in class and enterprise-wide contracts we
17 employed strategies to optimize the opportunities that were available.

18 Despite our A+ grade the historically under-utilized business
19 zone goal remained elusive. The economic revitalization due to federal
20 contracting within the National Capital Region continued to challenge our ability
21 to find and sustain local certified sources.

22 By expanding on an innovative idea to explore regional
23 opportunities we partnered with Region IV and held a HUBZone event this past
24 June. We sought to increase awareness and provide transparency to the

1 HUBZone certification process, in turn improving participation of HUBZones in
2 the NRC procurement and increasing the possibility to set aside the
3 opportunities exclusively for HUBZone-based small businesses. We even held
4 the actual event in a HUBZone located in Dallas, Texas and we were able to
5 attract more than double our initial attendee goal of 100 registering in excess of
6 240 participants.

7 We included participation of tech space commercial firms,
8 Federal, state and local government agencies and included an educational
9 session on leveraging certifications for a competitive edge in Federal
10 contracting.

11 Another strategy we implemented this year was enhancing
12 our technical assistance through strategic outreach activities designed to
13 highlight certifications that streamline the acquisition process and foster
14 business development. These proactive efforts led to an outstanding FY 2018
15 performance where we surpassed our goal of 34 percent by AMD awarding
16 more than 40 percent of NRC contracts to small businesses.

17 We also accomplished a record performance in the area of
18 contract awards to women-owned firms awarding the largest percentage and
19 amount of dollars ever to women-owned small businesses, greatly exceeding
20 our five percent goal by awarding over 27 percent of contracts to women
21 business owners. This included the agency's first women-owned direct award
22 for medical terminology training.

23 In another example of our exceptional performance with
24 women-owned businesses through our HUBZone event we identified a certified

1 8(a) and HUBZone company that specialized in construction support for
2 Federal agencies. As the fiscal year drew to an end we successfully expedited
3 the vetting of the companies' capabilities with the program office and AMD
4 which ultimately led to a successful award.

5 Next slide, please. As SBCR proceeds with the orderly
6 closeout of the Minority-Serving Institutions Grant Program we continue with our
7 outreach and technical assistant elements of the Minority-Serving Institution
8 Program. In partnership with the Office of Research, SBCR conducted
9 outreach to MSIs to promote awareness of NRC's grant funding opportunity and
10 encouraged MSI participation in the Integrated University Grant Program. The
11 representation of MSIs in the IUP continues to increase with 2.4 million being
12 awarded in FY 2018.

13 As you can see on the display chart this is the highest award
14 to MSIs to date. And just for a note, the reason 2013 and 2014 seem -- that's
15 an anomaly due to sequestration, but if you balance those, you can see the
16 significant increase this past year.

17 The MSI Program components of facilitating partnerships,
18 sharing best practices, lessons learned and promoting collaboration on funding
19 opportunities is best exemplified in the work we performed in supporting the
20 White House initiative to increase the competitiveness of historically black
21 colleges and universities.

22 In preparing the NRC's FY 2018 plan, we identified the
23 agency's top priorities for HBCUs consider in their pursuit of opportunities. As
24 an active member of the working group, SBCR staff served on the White House

1 HBCU Conference Planning Committee and coordinated NRC's co-sponsorship
2 of their conference.

3 In direct response to the initiative's objectives we
4 spearheaded the development and coordination of a workshop on innovation,
5 competitiveness, and formation of partnerships that was presented by
6 representatives from the Federal, public, private and academic sectors. As we
7 continue our support of the HBCU initiative we will be working in parallel our
8 support for the recently kicked-off White House initiative on educational
9 excellence for hispanics.

10 The Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards and
11 SBCR continue to work with the Navajo Technical University, NTU, to increase
12 opportunities for sharing NRC online courseware. Last year NTU piloted an
13 offering of NRC's fundamental health physics course. The NRC courses
14 selected in the future will be those that are most appropriate for tribal colleges
15 and potential employers. Because the Navajo Nation is engaged in clean up of
16 abandoned uranium mines radiation safety is an important educational focus for
17 promoting workforce development.

18 Additionally, NRC continues to provide contract opportunities to Native
19 American and Alaskan native-owned businesses through our Small Business
20 Program. Next slide. Another recent initiative that promotes inclusion and
21 diversity is the new Section 501 rule of the Rehabilitation Act. In the new rule
22 the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, EEOC, codified many of the
23 requirements identified in existing disability-related management directives and
24 executive orders. It prohibits agencies from discriminating against individuals

1 with disabilities and requires agencies to draft an Affirmative Action Program
2 Plan for their hiring, placement and advancement.

3 Submitted as an element of our annual MD 715 report to
4 EEOC this past March, the EEOC approved NRC's plan this past September
5 and provided additional feedback on the NRC's reasonable accommodation
6 policy. NRC's plan addresses a key aspect of the new 501 rule which requires
7 agencies to increase the hiring of individuals with disabilities and individuals
8 with targeted disabilities to meet the federally-mandated benchmark goals of 12
9 and 2 percent, respectively.

10 Additional requirements include the revision of our
11 Reasonable Accommodation Plan to ensure alignment with the new provisions
12 in the rule. With respect to the policy SBCR and OCHCO have been
13 addressing EEOC feedback to ensure that it covers these additional
14 requirements.

15 The third major element of the rule is for agencies to provide
16 personal assistance services to employees who because of targeted disabilities
17 may require assistance in order to be at work or participate in work-related
18 travel. Personal assistance services are those that help individuals with
19 disabilities perform activities of daily living such as removing and putting on
20 clothing, eating and using the restrooms. SBCR is currently working with
21 OCHCO to secure a personal assistance service contract through an 8(a) small
22 business.

23 Next slide. A year ago I shared with the Commission that our
24 limited hiring and lack of control over attrition constrains our ability to effect

1 change in our overall demographics and that the opportunity to improve exists
2 in how our diversity is distributed throughout the agency.

3 In addressing this we sought to make processes more
4 objective while raising awareness of potential biases at the individual and
5 organizational level. The selection into development programs helps to fuel
6 employee career development. This past year we implemented changes in the
7 selection processes to use diverse panels, thus broadening the perspectives of
8 the entities providing recommendations or making actual selections for the
9 Corporate Executive Officer, CXO, Development Program and the White House
10 Fellows Program panels reflecting diversity reviewed and selected the
11 nominated candidates for those programs. Recently announced was
12 the next Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program class
13 where changes in the process mitigated possible unconscious bias by
14 introducing more objectivity into the selection process. A review of the
15 applicant flow data from the previous SES CDP class revealed the
16 disproportionate dropout of female and minority candidates at certain decision
17 points in the process. As a result the Executive Review Board made changes
18 to the process where office and region ranking of candidates was eliminated,
19 diverse rating panels reviewed applicants where applicant names were
20 redacted, also structured interviews were also conducted with diverse panels
21 that included a neutral OPM representative. As the highly competitive applicant
22 pool was put through the selection steps representation was sustained through
23 the entire process. The demographics of the current class reflect a significantly
24 heterogenic group where the percentages of women and minorities more than

1 doubled from the previous class.

2 The Representation and Development Program starts with
3 deliberate actions to be inclusive throughout the agency. The development of
4 the leadership model included individuals who had displayed leadership at all
5 levels through their participation in EEO Advisory Committees and the dialogue
6 pilot. The behaviors identified by this staff-level group and the resulting
7 framework stresses inclusion and diversity in our collective thinking, decision
8 making, innovation and collaboration. Our continued expansion of dialogue
9 fuels inclusion as participants further develop empathy to engage and welcome
10 participation in their respective work units and we refine the privilege and
11 organizations.

12 Acknowledging that before behavior can change there must
13 be first awareness we refined the privilege walk exercise, which is an element
14 of the Dialogue Program. This exercise challenges individuals' perceptions by
15 taking groups through a series of life experience questions that may provide an
16 advantage or disadvantage. As we continue efforts to assist staff and
17 recognizing where they may have had a previously unknown bias this past
18 October we conducted the exercise for the entire Region IV staff during their
19 Diversity Day celebration and we're on tap with several other offices in the near
20 future who hold this exercise.

21 Next slide, please. As we examine program effectiveness it's
22 difficult to directly measure success. Rather, we triangulate several measures
23 and identify areas of progress in order to assess success and determine
24 challenge areas. The Comprehensive Diversity Management Plan is

1 foundational in the narrative and telling the NRC's diversity and inclusion story
2 around the numbers and data we provide in various external reporting
3 requirements that SBCR and OCHCO collaborate on. These include the
4 Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program, FEORP, the Disabled
5 Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) and also the EEOC's
6 Management Directive MD-715 Report and Plan.

7 As a reinforcement to the NRC's Inclusive Diversity Strategic
8 Plan the CDMP serves to steer organizational activities aimed to fuel diversity
9 and inclusion objectives. We are currently reviewing and compiling the FY
10 2018 reports resulting from our revamping of the CDMP requirements to make it
11 a more meaningful and effective reporting tool and best practices sharing
12 mechanism.

13 The Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey inclusion quotient
14 comprised of five dimensions: fair, open, collaborative, supportive and
15 empowerment, allows us to annual gauge the level of employee engagement.
16 As you can see from the most recent FEVS scores on the above chart, we
17 continue to increase significantly outpacing the Federal Government. You will
18 hear later in this briefing more about the unique efforts of the EEO Advisory
19 Committees and Resource Group as they continue to set the NRC apart from
20 our federal peers in this regard.

21 Next slide. A major responsibility of the agency's EEO
22 Program is to prevent and eliminate discrimination which includes counseling
23 individuals and investigating complaints. As we examined complaint activity for
24 the past year there continues to be little change in the number of complaints

1 filed. Age, gender and retaliation remain among the top bases alleged. We
2 have had a shift this year where complaints alleging race discrimination
3 increased and the number of disability complaints decreased.

4 For FY 2018 the top three types of complaints: alleged
5 harassment, assignment of duties and performance appraisals, is consistent
6 with the 2017 data. As shared in a previous briefing the NRC's number of both
7 informal and formal complaints still remains relatively low in comparison to other
8 Federal agencies, however, there does continue to be an increase in the
9 complexity in complaints where most recently we have had to process several
10 mixed cases where those have involved the Merit System Protection Board.

11 The relatively low number of cases makes it difficult to
12 conduct any statistically significant trend analysis, however, we do monitor and
13 respond to micro-trends such as a pattern of complaints in an office or region
14 and respond as needed with proactive measures, which is what I will discuss on
15 the next slide.

16 Responding to and processing complaints is reactionary, but
17 it can fuel the proactive processes feedback to hopefully prevent and preempt
18 reoccurrence. As you'll hear in a subsequent portion of today's briefing an
19 office's account of how the internally developed anti-harassment training
20 provided in partnership with OGC and OCHCO addressed a need to educate
21 and make aware to employees behavior not only inappropriate for workplace,
22 but if left unchecked could result in serious consequences.

23 As discussed in the June Human Capital Briefing the training
24 we currently provide aligns with the EEOC's recommendations from their 2016

1 Select Task Force on the study of harassment in the workplace. Most recently
2 an update to the study shows that effective anti-harassment training has three
3 dimensions: The first is compliance training where what behavior is not allowed
4 is explained and defined. The second is pointing out how to report harassment
5 if experienced or witnessed. The training developed includes these two
6 components. The EEOC study further showed that an indicator of whether
7 training is effective is an increase in the reporting of harassment.

8 After providing the training to the two offices in a region this is
9 exactly what our partners in OCHCO have noted. There has been an increase
10 in reports of workplace harassment under the NRC policy. While on the surface
11 this may appear to be troubling, it is expected and actually a positive indicator.
12 It better to know what is happening and intervene immediately than to remain
13 ignorant and be surprised when the harassment becomes so pronounced that it
14 affects the entire workplace. By having employees better recognize what can
15 potentially be harassing behavior it can be self-corrected or reported and dealt
16 with before it escalates. You cannot treat a symptom before you can identify
17 the source. Therefore, knowing the origin allows us to inoculate against a
18 spread.

19 The third component of the EEOC study identified for effective
20 anti-harassment training bystander intervention is required. Encouraging those
21 witnessing harassing behavior to intervene or report reinforces that it will not be
22 tolerated. Going forward we are examining options to maintain the integrity of
23 effective training that will be both economical and efficient.

24 This concludes my portion of the briefing and I'll now turn it

1 over to John Lubinski who will share experiences from the Office of Nuclear
2 Security and Incident Response. Thank you.

3 MR. LUBINSKI: Thank you, Pam.

4 Good morning Chairman and Commissioners. I'd like to
5 begin by saying that I've been working with the NRC for 28 years and the
6 reason I have remained with the NRC is it's a great place to work, and for me I
7 identify it as a great place to work because of the outstanding people that work
8 here. Since coming to NSIR about a year ago I can tell you that NSIR is also a
9 great place to work and it's because of the people that work in NSIR. Their
10 security and emergency preparedness missions are very important and each
11 and every member is dedicated to NSIR's mission. Some of the folks are
12 pictured on this slide who work in NSIR.

13 One of the first briefings I received in NSIR was about its
14 culture. It was a couple of months after receiving the 2017 Federal Employee
15 Viewpoint Survey, or FEVS results. David Curtis was leading a representative
16 group of staff who volunteered and have dedicated themselves to facilitating
17 continual improvement of NSIR's culture.

18 The team evaluated multiple data points including the results
19 of the NRC Climate and Culture Survey, FEVS, and a follow-up limited scope
20 survey which they developed themselves. The team focused specific actions
21 on topics where NSIR received somewhat lower 2017 FEVS scores. For
22 example, greater than a five percent difference in positive ratings than what
23 was surveyed in the larger NRC population.

24 These specific actions are in support of a long-term, multi-year engagement

1 and are fully supported by the NSIR management team.

2 Next slide. One of the themes of the action plan is to promote
3 a professional environment for employees to elevate concerns. In the past we
4 identified that insensitive comments and conversations by both managers and
5 staff members have had negative impacts on staff engagement and inclusion
6 within our office. As we addressed this theme we expanded the concept of
7 elevating concerns to include all interactions amongst all managers and all
8 staff. That is promoting a professional environment includes 360-degree
9 interactions.

10 We noted that in the past formal training of NRC's anti-
11 harassment policy has been limited to supervisors. Over the years multiple
12 announcements, brown bag lunches, Behavior Matters cafés and other events
13 have attempted to address this theme and share NRC's anti-harassment policy
14 with staff.

15 One of the actions in support of NSIR's action plan was to go
16 the next step. NSIR piloted an innovative approach by the agency to introduce
17 small group staff training on the NRC's anti-harassment policy. In partnership
18 with OCHCO, OGC and SBCR, NSIR held mandatory branch-level sessions for
19 all NSIR branches to better understand the agency's anti-harassment policy.
20 The small group format drove discussions and questions causing many of us to
21 think about our own behaviors and insensitivities.

22 Regarding results thus far, as had been predicted by the
23 experts prior to conducting the training, the number of complaints rose during
24 this period. In contrast, the concerns being raised have demonstrated

1 increased trust by staff in the process. Also, since staff concerns are identified
2 early, they can be addressed earlier and not fester nor lead to a lack of trust.

3 Next slide. Another theme of the action plan is to promote
4 fairness, empowerment, respect and consistency between all levels of
5 management and staff. In addressing this theme the NSIR management team
6 focused on actions to build and enhance trust. The office used principles from
7 Speed of Trust training to achieve an open dialogue with individual staff
8 members. In times of uncertainty and change the demands are even greater to
9 be able to effectively manage change and lead teams that are agile,
10 collaborative, innovative and engaged. The decision to implement Franklin
11 Covey's Speed of Trust was motivated in large part by the feedback from
12 various mechanisms such as agency surveys and listening sessions.

13 From this feedback it was apparent that there were still areas
14 that NRC could improve upon that ultimately relate to trust. Accordingly, the
15 agency took a holistic view at how to incorporate trust in all its interactions, and
16 the Speed of Trust Initiative was well-suited to address the needs of the
17 agency. The Speed of Trust Initiative is designed to complement agency efforts
18 and provide opportunities for strengthening mutual trust among agency leaders,
19 supervisors and staff with the ultimate goal to approve and sustain a positive
20 work environment at both the work unit and agency level.

21 Leaders at all levels of the organization have learned new
22 ways to communicate transparently, respectfully and directly with our
23 colleagues. Supervisors have learned new ways to engage historically
24 disengaged employees. For me the biggest two learnings from this were: first,

1 to practice active listening; and second, follow through to ensure all views are
2 heard, considered and addressed.

3 With respect to this theme results have been experienced
4 through positive anecdotes. Managers and staff are referring to the Speed of
5 Trust and anti-harassment training when discussing issues and using
6 terminology from these trainings. There have been more instances of folks
7 using the open door policy, providing feedback on managers' performance and
8 expressing appreciation that their positions were heard, understood and
9 considered.

10 One more tangible example of this was the development of a
11 SECY, SECY-18-0076, which is Options and Recommendation for Physical
12 Security for Advanced Reactors. There were multiple views among staff on
13 what would be the most efficient use of resources in support of advanced
14 reactor security. The final paper provided to the Commission included
15 balanced perspectives on all options and informed the Commission that all not -
16 - not all staff agreed with the final recommended option as being the preferred
17 approach. This allowed for complete information being provided to the
18 Commission for its decision making and respected the staff's opinions.

19 Next slide. I would now like to discuss one area where we
20 focused on implementing the themes I discussed. Pictured on this slide are
21 headquarters operations officers, referred to as HOOs, and regional operational
22 officers, referred to as ROOs. These folks perform a primary incident response
23 operation for the agency. They are the front line folks who receive the initial
24 notifications to the NRC of incidents and events.

1 This is a 24/7 function including weekends, holidays and
2 snow days. These folks work 12-hour shifts. Most of the time there are only
3 two of them working together in one secure room for an entire 12-hour shift.
4 Work scheduling and the environment pose challenges. Working long shifts
5 with one other person, coordinating fair work schedules and ensuring the
6 acceptable working conditions with shared work space.

7 Next slide. This year NSIR placed special emphasis on
8 building relationships among the HOOs and ROOs including working across
9 multiple NRC locations in support of this important function. As I noted, the
10 staff who perform these functions face unique pressures and challenges.
11 Management focused on better understanding and addressing the unique
12 needs of each of the individuals who perform these functions. In addition,
13 outreach between headquarters and regions has significantly improved
14 communication and teamwork in this area. This effort is ongoing with regular
15 management alignment on multiple levels as well as staff visits between
16 headquarters and the regions.

17 The keys to success in this area were the teamwork and
18 leadership of the HOOs and ROOs themselves. We are all leaders and
19 demonstrate the good behaviors in the agency's leadership model. The HOOs
20 and ROOs demonstrated their leadership through working as a team to
21 prioritize their concerns, propose solutions and implement actions. I believe
22 their ownership has ensured effective and lasting implementation.

23 I would like to conclude my remarks by recognizing that one
24 year is a brief period to achieve significant cultural change in an organization.

1 Culture change is a continual process. While FEV survey scores are not
2 increasing at a significant rate, they increased or leveled off in specific
3 questions in 2018 that had been decreased in past years. For the key areas of
4 focus in NSIR's action plan there was a narrowing of scores between NSIR and
5 the NRC scores.

6 We consider the implementation and refining of our plan as a
7 continual, long-term, multi-year engagement that is a high priority for the NSIR
8 management team.

9 I would now like to turn the presentation to Darrell Roberts.

10 MR. ROBERTS: Thank you, John.

11 Good morning, Chairman. Good morning, Commissioners. It
12 is my pleasure to be here today to represent Region III leadership and staff and
13 share with you our initiatives as well as the critical role that diversity plays in
14 achieving our part of the mission.

15 Next slide, please. Now this is a pretty busy slide, so I don't
16 want you to focus on the details in it; I'll be covering some of those throughout
17 the presentation, but it does graphically depict Region III's journey of
18 continuous improvement or our engagement journey since 2014. That year we
19 were facing some challenges similar to those that John expressed for NSIR
20 which were reflected in our FEVS scores, which were among the lowest in the
21 Agency.

22 In response to that Region III initiated a Cultural Improvement
23 Team which examined areas in leadership, communications and workplace
24 satisfaction. We formed focus groups with employees spanning different

1 generations, experience levels and backgrounds to gain feedback and
2 recommendations. In 2015 and '16 based on the results of the team's efforts
3 and our FEVS action planning Region III instituted a number of new ideas
4 which have since been part of the organization's fabric.

5 Next slide, please. In 2015 we formed our Engagement
6 Council. This diverse group of a dozen people, including staff, supervisors and
7 senior management in both the technical and support areas, meets biweekly to
8 this day to address workplace improvement efforts. The council's main
9 objectives are to gauge the effectiveness of management's efforts to better
10 communicate with and lead staff, as well as to serve as a clearing house for
11 new workplace improvement ideas generated by the staff and/or management.

12 Next slide, please. The region's central innovation and
13 creativity vehicle is our Idea Cloud, which is an open web-based system
14 through which more than 80 innovations have been submitted either by name or
15 anonymously by Region III staff since 2015 with roughly half of those 80 being
16 implemented. This program is managed by the Engagement Council is a safe
17 and effective method for staff to submit ideas and serves as an input to broader
18 agency programs like the Agency Innovation Forum.

19 Another product of the Engagement Council is our staffing
20 resources bulletin board. It is a SharePoint-based platform where more than 40
21 non-merit promotion-based activities like special projects, team inspections,
22 working group membership and other opportunities have been advertised to
23 staff. It addressed an earlier concern where staff felt that such opportunities
24 were not being shared or advertised fairly to all eligible employees in a

1 consistent manner. The consensus is that the staffing resources bulletin board
2 has been effective in addressing that concern.

3 Next slide, please. So our initiatives directly tie to the NRC's
4 leadership model which Region III has fully embraced and is incorporating into
5 our leadership fabric. We embrace the idea that everyone is a leader at the
6 NRC. It is with that in mind that Region III had facilitated several Speed of
7 Trust classes similar to what NSIR has mentioned.

8 Two regional employees: an administrative assistant and a
9 resident inspector, were trained to become Franklin Covey-certified instructors
10 and have provided four very highly-attended and highly-praised training
11 workshops this year, 2018, with plans to facilitate four more in 2019. In fact
12 there's one such session happening as we speak in Region III. More than half
13 the Region III employees have taken that training to date.

14 Clarity Matters is another new communications endeavor for
15 the region. This initiative will help us identify and address areas where
16 expectations are not clear or are inconsistently applied across branches,
17 divisions and even across the agency while we're conducting the mission. We
18 chartered a Clarity Matters team comprised of managers and staff to spearhead
19 this process. The team's overall objectives are to identify those gaps in
20 communications or understanding regarding our expectations for the conduct of
21 the mission as well as propose ways to address those gaps or fill those gaps.
22 We're excited about this new initiative and feel that this will enhance our
23 communication efforts even further.

24 Next slide, please. We recognize the need for all our

1 employees' involvement in continuing to make Region III a better place to work.

2 The Region III Diversity Management Advisory Council, or DMAC, which I am
3 proud to say has representation on all of the agency's advisory committees,
4 promotes activities that involve partnering multiple committees and getting more
5 regional staff involved to boost diversity and inclusion.

6 The Region III DMAC sponsored and coordinated the first and
7 so far only regional office diversity dialogue cohort where a group of 15 diverse
8 employees met over several weeks and facilitated discussions. The Dialogue
9 Project, as Pam mentioned, is recognized by OPM as a best management
10 practice and have developed a deeper understanding of diversity issues among
11 staff, helped grow working relationships and fostered a climate in which
12 employees better respect, appreciate and value individual differences.

13 On another point the current Regional Administrator, Steve
14 West, meets with the DMAC regularly to receive advice and support the many
15 activities of the special emphasis committees, and I plan to continue that
16 tradition when I take over the role in a couple of weeks. In the past couple of
17 years, as the slide indicated earlier, the committee members have overseen a
18 large number of events in Region III.

19 Next slide, please. An example of our open collaborative
20 work environment is our morning events briefing which happens three times per
21 week. We invite everyone, both technical and mission support staff, to attend
22 this meeting. We cover mission-related activities, items of safety significance
23 and those items that otherwise require immediate attention in that meeting. We
24 also use that meeting as an opportunity for knowledge transfer.

1 In addition our slate of formal meetings, Region III holds
2 region-wide and divisional open forums in which senior leaders hold informal
3 town hall-style meetings for interested staff. We believe these open forums
4 have further enhanced trust and engagement.

5 We also continue to foster our open dialogue with our NTEU
6 representatives. The most recent example of those include our development of
7 the FY '19 Staffing Plan, which is an annual occurrence obviously, and the
8 region's ongoing effort to consolidate our office space.

9 Next slide, please. Exceptional job performance by Region III
10 employees and the embracing of diverse views is a credit to the region and is
11 deserving of agency recognition, and like all other offices we do so in a variety
12 of ways. Of notable mention, two employees from Region III: John Cassidy, a
13 senior health physicist, and John Ellegood, a senior resident inspector at D.C.
14 Cook, were each recently awarded the NRC's MVP Team Player Award after
15 exemplifying NRC's values and their dedication to the agency's mission.

16 Specifically, John and John both demonstrated exceptional
17 integrity and responsiveness in dealing with both the licensee and their NRC
18 colleagues during the course of pursuing a differing professional opinion. It is in
19 that way and others that Region III management encourages staff to -- with
20 diverse views to express those views openly and in an environment where they
21 feel it is safe to do so.

22 Next slide, please. Another Region III focus area is the
23 developing staff for the future. This means retaining employees with the critical
24 skills needed to fulfill NRC's mission and preparing those folks roles with

1 greater responsibility down the road. As with the rest of the agency, the past
2 couple of years have been especially challenging in that area as in this
3 changing environment that we're in.

4 Consequently we encourage our staff to expand their
5 knowledge by seeking and pursuing temporary promotions, rotational
6 assignments and double encumbering opportunities whenever possible. We've
7 more than a dozen examples in Region III over the past year where staff have
8 rotated into management roles across the agency including here in
9 headquarters as well as in leadership roles throughout the region.

10 Region III is also committed to maintaining a viable KM
11 Program, Knowledge Management Program, which includes capturing,
12 transferring and retaining mission-critical knowledge. To facilitate this Region
13 III recently refreshed its KM team consisting of staff from all the divisions and at
14 various levels of the organization. This team's mission is to champion KM
15 activities within the region which align with the agency's overall KM strategic
16 focus areas.

17 Next slide, please. In addition, with a declining budget and
18 resources we've maintained our effort to diversity our workforce with strategic
19 recruiting efforts that have resulted in the hiring and/or promotion of minorities
20 and women as well as offers to veterans. We currently have 12 university
21 champions in Region III that support our recruiting efforts including support of
22 minority-serving institutions like the University of Puerto Rico in which a Region
23 III senior manager serves as the agency's university champion.

24 Next slide. We value diverse views not only from our own

1 staff but other stakeholders as well. Region III's Outreach Program focuses on
2 strengthening relationships with licensees, the public and state and local
3 governments.

4 The highlight of our outreach has been that Region III
5 continues to support agency initiatives to better involve tribal sovereignties in
6 NRC's programs. A particular success was a presentation given by Shelley
7 Buck, the tribal council president of the Prairie Island Indian Community, at an
8 all-staff forum during the June 2018 Regional Counterpart Seminar. Region III
9 was also specifically recognized by the Prairie Island Indian Community in its
10 recent praise of the agency at the public Commission meeting on
11 transformation earlier this fall. And most recently this past week at the Native
12 American Heritage Month luncheon Shelley Buck included similar praise from
13 the Prairie Island Indian Community.

14 On the international front the Region III office also recently
15 supported the agency's initiative to help the Japanese develop their Inspection
16 Oversight Program in the wake of the accident at Fukushima. Region III
17 welcomed two groups of five JNRA representatives to the region for two year-
18 long assignments which supported the agency's efforts to assist the Japanese
19 in developing their inspection programs. The experience was met with high
20 praise from JNRA's senior officials, as well as being viewed as a valuable
21 exchange experience for the staff in the Region III office.

22 On a different external front -- external stakeholder front
23 Region III is supporting science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM
24 activities that have touched thousands of students and adults informing them of

1 the virtues of pursuing STEM-related fields.

2 During 2017 and '18 or SOAR Program, or STEM Outreach
3 Activities in Region III, supported 22 outreach events with a participation of 24
4 NRC staff members. These outreach events were for a variety of audiences
5 including kindergartners all the way to grad students and including a variety of
6 formats including classroom presentations, seminars and science fairs.

7 Next slide. Our focus on improved communications and
8 outreach and staff management interactions have resulted in a positive trend or
9 moved us in a positive direction. We've seen an improving trend in our regional
10 FEVS data since 2015. In 2017 Region III was one of only two offices within
11 the agency to score a greater than eight percent increase in each of the three
12 main indices including the new inclusion quotient. We're also encouraged by
13 our 2018 results which show that we sustained these high levels.

14 Next slide. The bottom line message is that Region III
15 continues to attract, develop and maintain a high-performing workforce by
16 valuing and respecting diversity. Diversity in skills, views, contributions and
17 experiences allows Region III to effectively carry out the agency's mission of
18 public safety and security both now and in the future.

19 In addition to focusing on regional initiatives and cultural
20 improvement we also support a number of important agency initiatives including
21 the future assessment, the development of the NRC's leadership model, the
22 NRC's transformation paper, recent backfit training efforts and risk-informed
23 decision making activities.

24 Next slide, please. While we are proud of the work we've

1 accomplished we recognize that we are in an ever-changing environment and
2 that our processes will need to evolve and continuously improve. We believe
3 the initiatives we've put in place as well as our involvement in the various
4 agency initiatives I mentioned earlier would help us continue down that path.

5 In conclusion it has been my pleasure to share with you
6 Region III's ongoing journey to enhance and engage workforce with a focus on
7 diversity and inclusion. Thank you and I will now turn to over to Trish Gallalee,
8 the Vice Chair of the Advisory Committee on Employees with Disabilities.

9 MS. GALLALEE: Thank you, Darrell. Good morning,
10 Chairman and Commissions. I would like to recognize and thank you for your
11 continued participation and support in the various diversity and inclusion efforts
12 throughout the agency.

13 It's my honor to speak to you today on the behalf of the
14 Diversity Management Advisory Committee, DMAC, who represent the
15 collective voice of the volunteer committees, including the Advisory Committee
16 for African Americans; Advisory Committee for Employees with Disabilities;
17 Advisory Committee for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Employees;
18 Asian, Pacific; American Advisory Committee; Diversity Advisory Committee on
19 Ageism; Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee ;Hispanic employment
20 program Advisory Committee; Native American Advisory Committee and finally,
21 veterans employee resource group.

22 DMAC with SBCR to support recruitment and professional
23 development retention and diversity, as stated in the agency's comprehensive
24 diversity management plan and the inclusive diversity strategic plan.

1 This statement communicates the joint perspectives of the
2 DMAC members on three matters of great interests to our constituencies in the
3 NRC, and the NRC staff at large. navigating transformation, career
4 development and hiring and workplace behavior and culture.

5 Next slide please. As we've discussed today, in many ways
6 over the past several years, have brought tremendous and constant change to
7 the agency in the undertaking of initiatives including Project Aim, transformation
8 and now the future's assessment.

9 The need for change and the actions to reduce our workforce
10 size have bene challenging to the committees and our volunteers in multiple
11 ways.

12 Many members of the committees and volunteers have retired
13 or left the agency. Remaining employees are often taking on new job
14 responsibilities or have greater day-to-day workloads making it difficult to give
15 their time, and also different to recruit new members.

16 In the past, newly hired employees would often join and
17 support the committee's activities, but shirking size in the staff has left some
18 committees to function at less than full capacity. With reductions in staffing in
19 SBCR and OCHCO, they have organized fewer events and have turned to the
20 committees to do more.

21 I'm proud to say the committees have responded to these
22 challenges by being transformative in our own right. Focused on increasing
23 collaborative efforts to provide diversity and inclusion related speakers,
24 workshops and other programs.

1 The highlight of the past year was to bring back diversity day
2 with the theme, strengthening our workplace through diversity and inclusion.

3 The committees are dedicated to bringing unique
4 perspectives to all changes and transformation initiatives going on throughout
5 the agency and look forward to continuing engagement with leadership, to
6 ensure that principles of diversity and inclusion remain ingrained in our culture.

7 Next slide. The committees are well aware of the factors
8 presently limiting promotions and external hiring.

9 In this environment, we remain focused on the contributing to
10 the agency's broader efforts to promote relevant training and skills development
11 to ensure that we remain an effective and agile organization.

12 We seek to ensure everyone, including women, persons with
13 disabilities and minorities are receiving the development opportunities to
14 become future leaders of the agency.

15 Finally, we encourage NRC to maintain and build
16 relationships with minority serving institutions, and those representing persons
17 with disabilities, to ensure that there is a diverse pathway of professionals to
18 make up future generations of the agency.

19 Next slide. This slide lists just a few examples of the many
20 opportunities we have organized to present professional development seminars
21 and workshops on a broad variety of topics for the staff, such as panel
22 discussions and presentations on preparing for Senior Executive Services,
23 service, challenging context action results, or the CCAR model writing
24 workshop, the art of the possible and understand reasonable accommodation

1 process.

2 Next slide please. The committees remain focused on our
3 workplace and diversity workplace and culture. Recent media focus and the
4 society conversations around issues related to bullying, racism, harassment
5 and the #MeToo movement, have heightened everyone's awareness that
6 diverse perspectives can contribute to interpersonal tensions in the workplace.

7 The committees are making efforts to foster discussions on
8 these issues to promote a safe and respectful work environment. Raising
9 awareness of insensitivities and disrespectful behavior is the first step in
10 fostering a positive dialogue.

11 Issues of harassment and bullying are not new and we need
12 to contribute to work towards, we need to continue to work towards ways to
13 resolve these matters and behaviors.

14 Next slide please. As I said, the committees have stepped up
15 to address these issues. And these are just a few examples of the many
16 events that we have held over the past year.

17 Domestic violence awareness, a tour of the national museum
18 of the American Indian, tools and tips to transform your unconscious biases,
19 and of course, the month-long recognition events to celebrate, educate and
20 highlight employment challenges presented by each of the advisory committees
21 and resource groups.

22 Next slide please. This collage represents the many
23 volunteers that give their time to strengthen diversity and inclusion in the
24 workplace.

1 We look forward to continuing to support change efforts,
2 maintaining a diverse and inclusive workforce and providing a forum for
3 continuing conversations on issues that are contrary to the principles of
4 diversity and inclusion. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today
5 about these unfortunate issues.

6 MS. DOANE: Okay, thanks, Trish. I'd like to extend my
7 thanks to all of the many volunteers who give their time to support those
8 committees and all of these important efforts.

9 And I also appreciate the Commission's ongoing support of
10 diversity and inclusion programs and the work of our volunteer advisory
11 committees. And I would also like to thank the offices that help us in these
12 efforts to contribute who are not at this, at the table. Like OCHCO and OGC
13 who provide a tremendous support to these programs.

14 And, I guess as I'm giving the thank you's, I'd also like to
15 thank all of the employees that helped us put these presentations together
16 today. There's a lot of information that they gathered for us, and they did a
17 really great job, so I'm appreciative of that.

18 In closing, we remained committed to our Commission of
19 protecting public health and safety, security and the environment. People and
20 their ideas are the NRCs most valuable resource. And whether we're facing a
21 program or corporate issues, free and respectful sharing of perspectives will
22 better enable us to achieve our mission, because the best decisions come from
23 consideration of diverse perspectives.

24 Innovation thrives in this kind of an environment. You heard

1 today about several of our efforts for continuous improvement to strengthen our
2 workforce and diversity, and inclusion.

3 And we're working together today to enable and prepare the
4 next generation to carry on the stewardship of the NRC's important mission.
5 And that way we will keep the NRC a great place to work. Fueled by our
6 inspiring public health and safety mission.

7 This concludes our remarks and I look forward to your
8 questions.

9 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Well, thank you, thank you very
10 much, Margie. And let me add my thanks.

11 I know for each of our presenters today you had support and
12 assistance in great ready to present at today's meeting. And I want to
13 recognize, I think we likely have many volunteer members of the advisory
14 committees here today.

15 I want to thank you all for balancing your participation in those
16 events with the other work you do. As Trish has outlined, many of the
17 challenges of our current environment, where we're all trying to do as much as
18 we can as quickly as we can. Thank you for your continued participation or
19 your new interests in serving on the volunteer committees.

20 With that, we will begin questions and answers. And begin
21 today with Commissioner Wright. Please proceed.

22 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you. Good morning to
23 each of you. And thank you for your presentations. I know you had a lot of
24 support from staff too, and I don't want to pass them up. They work hard.

1 It's been kind of a, I guess during my short time here, I've
2 been very impressed. I'm continually impressed by the passion that I see
3 everybody have and they're very professional in what they do and what they
4 bring to their work.

5 And also, I want to, I appreciate the efforts being made to
6 improve communication, trust and just overall engagement. And there's a lot
7 more that we can do too, so, look forward to working with you on that.

8 So I'm going to start, Margie, with you. So, thank you for
9 providing the background and the information, including the information
10 regarding the demographics and the agency.

11 I notice that the background information stated that the
12 agency's demographic ratios have been consistent across this workforce since
13 2014 with a slight increase in the minority representation among managers and
14 supervisors. I guess in '17 and '18.

15 So, regarding the Senior Executive's Service candidate
16 development program, which I was impressed by the make-up of that group that
17 was amazing. It's a very diverse, very talented group. And I've only known
18 some of them but just a few months.

19 Does the agency plan to take the lessons learned from the
20 changes in the SES program process and apply these to hiring at all levels
21 throughout the agency?

22 MS. DOANE: Yes. Thank you for that question. So we are, I
23 just want to say, we are very excited about the SES, the new SES class. We
24 think it's a group of exceptional leaders and so we're looking forward to the

1 development and carrying them through for our future. So thanks for
2 mentioning that.

3 And then, we haven't, I want to be honest with you, we
4 haven't thought of exactly how to move that backward toward other areas
5 where we're developing leaders because, I think we were actually trying to take
6 things that we've learned from our successes with those groups and brought it
7 into the SES program.

8 Especially with respect to putting more objectivity into the
9 selection of SES. And trying to provide clarity, fairness, making it more
10 transparent.

11 So, we really took some of the things that were very
12 successful in those programs. But, necessarily, we will definitely look at
13 creating an improved, continuing to encourage individuals to apply for senior
14 level positions in the agency because we had recognized before that the key is
15 the pipeline, and we've recognized that.

16 And if we don't increase the number, the diversity in the
17 pipeline to make sure we have a real view of all qualified candidates, then you
18 can't get to hiring them.

19 And so, that's what we did with the SES. We learned some,
20 like I said, some lessons learned and we'll continue to go back and forth. So,
21 yes, we will.

22 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Pam, do you have anything you
23 might, could add?

24 MS. BAKER: I would offer that there is a lot of flexibilities in

1 the merit process. And I'm not going to speak for OCHCO, but I think where we
2 can encourage the use of panels, which we did use in the other two
3 development programs that also showed increased diversity in the selections
4 this year, the CXO and the White House, those were done with diverse panels.

5 So, we have to balance the experience of filling positions
6 because it does take time when you can make a single selection. But I really
7 see a benefit in employing those kind of flexibilities where we can use panels to
8 get a broader perspective and challenge what may be a bias that you're not
9 aware of.

10 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Right. Yes, I was kind of
11 interested in the question, just how that process might look like if you did do
12 that, so thank you for that. Yes.

13 John. So, on your slide, Slide 16 of your presentation, just to
14 be specific about it, you discussed NSIR's efforts to promote fairness,
15 empowerment, respect and consistency between all levels of management and
16 the staff. As part of that effort you talked about building and enhancing trust
17 and engaging, by engaging with disenfranchised staff members. Or
18 disengaged.

19 I agree with you that active listening and following through to
20 ensure that all of these are considered and addressed are really key to good
21 management, good leadership and good communication. I also agree with
22 Pam's statement that you can't treat a symptom until you identify the source.

23 So, in your experience, what are the symptoms of this
24 engagement and how do you identify them, identify the source of that issue

1 and, on top of that, the second question, so you can think through it, in your
2 view, can the practices that NSIR managers have used to engage staff
3 members be applied in other offices?

4 MR. LUBINSKI: Thanks for the question. And, just quickly on
5 the second part.

6 We're starting to learn from managers and other offices how
7 to actually bring practices in as well. So, across the agency with we've been
8 working with SBCR and OCHCO to share the common practices across the
9 agency.

10 When you talk about symptoms and getting the root causes,
11 some of the root causes go back to real experiences that people have had.
12 Speaking in my own experience and in positions I've had where there has been
13 a, I'll say a lack of trust between me as a manager and someone in the staff
14 level, it goes back to a lack of trust they had with someone else who was in my
15 position previously.

16 And then, when I use some of the same terminology that that
17 person may have used, they instantly go back to a lack of trust position of, well,
18 I'm just going through this again. So, that gets a little bit to the root causes. It's
19 actually a reality that these folks have had relationships, have high trust levels.

20 So then, how do you address this in moving? Communication
21 and over communication.

22 We've talked about, we're in a low trust environment, we've
23 had this communication among the management team that, when you're in this
24 environment where you've identified that there may be a lower level of trust

1 between you and folks, whether it's your peers, whether it's folks in the
2 organization, over communicating on what you're trying to achieve, practicing
3 the act of listening from the standpoint of only seeking to understand with your
4 questions, not predetermining an outcome.

5 And then, at the end of the discussion, being able to repeat
6 back to the individuals exactly what they're concern was, what their position is
7 and appropriately capturing that. I think that builds that you were actually
8 listening to them, that you can articulate back to them.

9 Quick anecdote on that. I was in a meeting recently where
10 there was not a lot of alignment amongst staff on an issue and one of the staff
11 members felt that I may have disagreed with them on what would be the best
12 option moving forward.

13 Later on they were surprised, I was in another meeting and I
14 was able to very accurately articulate their position and the pros and cons of
15 that position. And heard afterwards, wow, you must have been listening to me,
16 you got it right. So that was a good example of how you do you get to the root
17 cause in the symptoms.

18 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you for your answer.
19 And I've only got two minutes left, Darrell, I'm coming to you.

20 (Laughter)

21 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: You've got quite a voice. I'm
22 very impressed.

23 MR. ROBERTS: Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: You're welcome. So, on slide,

1 your slide that you had was 21, by the way. You mentioned Region III's
2 engagement council and its role in engaging the staff response to
3 management's efforts to improve its communication and leadership.

4 Can you describe a little bit more in detail how the
5 engagement council monitors the Region III staff response to management
6 initiatives and innovation?

7 MR. ROBERTS: Sure. Thank you for the question and
8 thanks for the compliment on the voice as well --

9 (Laughter)

10 MR. ROBERTS: -- Commissioner Wright.

11 Yes, the engagement council consists of people who
12 represent all four of the major divisions in Region III. In fact, five of you include
13 the front office.

14 So, by that way, the employees who are in the engagement
15 council sort of pulse what's happening within their own divisions, in terms of
16 monitoring any potential concerns or complaints that are coming out of those
17 divisions and then bringing them to a forum where they can collectively discuss
18 those and identify gaps or recommend fixes to address some of those
19 concerns.

20 It's a council that was inaugurated as result of our FEVS
21 action planning in 2014, 2015 time frame. And we've institutionalized it
22 because we intended to keep that to maintain some persistence in the
23 corrective actions that we put in place as a result of the 2014 FEVS.

24 And we refresh that council annually. So we have new

1 members coming in and out of it all the time. With the goal there being to get a
2 good cross representation of regional staff involved.

3 So, I think by that way, just by the multiple, the numbers of
4 people that are in the engagement council who have different perspectives on
5 how things are going in the workplace, how they're being affected by decisions
6 that management makes for example, they can bring that to bear in a forum
7 such as that.

8 COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you.

9 MR. ROBERTS: Yes.

10 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Well, thank you all again for the
11 presentations. I will begin by complimenting, not just Pam, but the agency as a
12 whole for its second A+ grade from the Small Business Administration.

13 This is something here that maybe we don't take a lot of
14 notice of but throughout the federal government is a substantial achievement to
15 get this kind of grade. And many departments and agencies very much
16 struggle with meeting the goals that the Small Business Administration sets for
17 them.

18 So, I think we get a little casual or immune to our own
19 success here. And I thought about this as well when there were comments at
20 times about NRC's FEVS surveys and surveys on various metrics across the
21 government.

22 We focus a lot as an agency on improving something that
23 anywhere else in the government is at least a good score, if not a really good
24 score. So, I'm very proud of that attitude that we have out, that we're not

1 content.

2 And as Commissioner Wright said, there is always things that
3 we can be doing better. But I did want to note, I didn't want the staff as a whole
4 to think that the Commission wasn't aware of the fact that many of these scores
5 would be welcomed by our peers at other departments and agencies. So I
6 wanted to start out with that.

7 I also want to join in saying that I'm very pleased with the
8 increase in diversity of the candidate development program class that was just
9 announced, I think late last week.

10 I will say at the risk of sounding, that I'm not having the
11 requisite humility that the Commission has taken a strong interest in, and
12 encouraged the executive resource board and others, to look at possible
13 changes to the selection process that would maybe at least wide the aperture
14 for the consideration of certain more diverse experiences and backgrounds
15 amongst the candidates.

16 And I'm encouraged to see the composition of the class that
17 was just announced, and selected of course. This is just the beginning element
18 of success. We will have to monitor whether or not these individuals have the
19 kind of constructive and positive experience throughout their development
20 program.

21 And then of course, we'll want to be monitoring and looking at
22 ultimate placement of individuals within the SES.

23 And I would note that the reason that the Commission is
24 taking such a strong interest and been encouraging of the consideration of

1 possible changes to the selection process, is our awareness, or perhaps I'll
2 speak only for myself, of individuals here at NRC who have very strong
3 resumes and backgrounds, but had tried repeatedly to be selected for the
4 program and not succeed.

5 So, I will remain very helpful that these changes that have
6 been made, the more diverse class that has resulted from the changes, we'll
7 continue to see success throughout.

8 I do continue to believe that an important element of strong
9 selection process is the opportunity for those who are not selected, to receive
10 feedback on areas that they may need to supplement their skills or experience,
11 so that we can, if we're able to, we can work with them on opportunities to have
12 development and other training that might help them to be more competitive for
13 the program in the future.

14 And I know that opportunities for those who applied and were
15 not selected, to reach out and get that feedback. I know that those
16 opportunities exist.

17 Something that has been on my mind lately is, we want to
18 have a lot of cross talk and cross fertilization of good ideas across the agency.
19 Both John and Darrell's presentation reminded me that innovation is going on
20 all the time here and it is not some extraordinary thing that people are waiting to
21 get permission or to proceed where we can solicit for and receive good ideas
22 and implement those, it's happening.

23 Something, again, though that's been on my mind is making
24 certain that our regional offices feel like they are true participants in what is

1 going on. A lot of the themes that we might be talking about in programs offices
2 here at headquarters is, I've sometimes reminded people, I began my federal
3 career in a field element of a department and so maybe I feel a special interest
4 in what are the mechanisms through which we keep our field elements, in our
5 case, our regional office is really a part of an plugged into what's happening
6 agency wide and how does headquarters best tap into getting access to the
7 good ideas that are originating out in the regions.

8 I don't know if John or Darrell, if you'd like to say anything
9 about how it is, the means and methods through which we're doing that.

10 MR. ROBERTS: I can start off and then, John, you can chime
11 in. One of the means by which we do that is just by participation in the various
12 working groups that the program offices sponsor.

13 There are multitudes of those. I couldn't even begin to begin
14 naming all of them or a large portion of them.

15 So, by that inclusion, if you will, in those working groups, the
16 region has a voice in some very important initiatives that are coming out of
17 those program offices.

18 Another means by which that happens is routine meetings
19 between regional office, management, division director level management, and
20 their counterparts in the program office. They have routinely biweekly, or even
21 more frequent than that in some cases, discussions where they talk about
22 program initiatives that are coming out, for example, NRR or NSIR. And our
23 participation in those forums continues to foster our involvement in those.

24 We recently, as I pointed out in some of the examples that I

1 mentioned in the presentation, have had significant involvement in those in
2 Region III. We were part of the risk informed decision-making effort that's
3 coming out of NRR.

4 In fact, one of our senior managers is leading the risk
5 informed decision-making regional office effort for the four regions. And so, just
6 by exposure to those things through normal interactions with the program
7 offices and then stepping up and volunteering for some of those more
8 significant activities, I think, has maintained our involvement in the regions.

9 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Thank you. John, did you want to
10 add?

11 MR. LUBINSKI: Just a couple. Darrell mentioned the
12 biweekly meetings, we have at our division level. We appreciate that the
13 deputy regional administrators have monthly meetings.

14 And they've invited headquarter, Deputy Office Directors to
15 participate in those, so we're sharing ideas during those meetings, whether it's
16 the technical work going on or more of the things we're talking about today,
17 from a development standpoint openness and how are we doing sharing that
18 area.

19 We have routine branch meetings. The regions have reached
20 out, when they have their inspector counterpart meetings, to invite the program
21 offices to send representatives. Sometimes it's at the division level, sometimes
22 branch or staff level, either participating VTC or attending those meetings.

23 And then when we develop steering committees for certain
24 activities we have, whether it's role making or actions that we're developing, we

1 reach out to the regions to get a regional representative. One of the four who
2 will help coordinate among the regions and share those ideas as well.

3 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Well, thank you for that. And, Darrell,
4 I would like also to congratulate you on the important responsibility that you will
5 take on here a few weeks from now, in serving as a regional administrator.

6 And at the end of the day, we are one NRC and we are
7 administering one program for nuclear safety and security across the country
8 for the American people. And so, I think that Darrell, your recent presence here
9 at headquarters, the flow of opportunities for people to rotate or take temporary
10 assignments between NRC headquarters and the regions, I think just reinforces
11 the strength of our implementation of that one coherent national program.

12 And I know that mobility issues, at times, can make it difficult
13 for people to kind of uproot themselves and temporarily come to headquarters,
14 or someone from headquarters, to take an assignment in the region. But I do
15 think that the more of that flow back and forth of people having an opportunity
16 to sit in someone else's desk and kind of walk in their shoes, I think it
17 strengthens the implementation of that program.

18 And I know that with our limited hiring, the investment that we
19 make in developing the people we have now is going to be absolutely pivotal to
20 our basic success, but also our ability to transform and innovate. And I think
21 when people can get that broader perspective, it's very helpful.

22 So, to the extent you are able, within budgets, to work with
23 individuals, if they want to identify those types of opportunities in their individual
24 development plan as they get their performance appraisals and supplement

1 their experience to the extent that resources allow, I think if we can allow
2 people not just to rotate to different opportunities within their current
3 organization but to go back and forth, I think we're looking at strengthening that
4 within the SES candidate development program to make certain that people
5 have a diversity of experiences. Which is also a part of bringing transformative
6 and innovative ideas forward.

7 So, with that, again, I thank everyone for the presentations
8 and for the hard work their doing that was represented here today. And I will
9 now turnover for questions to Commissioner Baran.

10 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Thank you. Well, thank you all
11 for your presentations and for all of your work.

12 I want to continue the discussion about the SES Candidate
13 Development Program. In prior meetings we've talked about the striking under
14 representation of women in the program.

15 The prior class of 26 included only four women. They made
16 up just 15 percent of the class.

17 Pam discussed the changes made to the program with the
18 most recent class, and we've seen, as several of you have noted, a dramatic
19 improvement in the diversity of the class with women representing slightly more
20 than half of the perspective senior executive. I agree with the chairman, I think
21 that's terrific progress.

22 Margie, the agency just completed the selection process,
23 which was significantly revamped. Can you talk a little bit about how the
24 process went overall and whether you think the selection system is not working

1 well or you envision additional changes down the road?

2 MS. DOANE: Yes, thank you. Thank you for the question.
3 So, like I was saying before, the key is really, you have to have the pipeline
4 because no matter what you do later, you can have a great process that you put
5 in place and you can have diverse panels, but none of that is going to be, get
6 you the objective that you wanted to meet your goals if you don't, for the best
7 most qualified class if you don't have a good pipeline.

8 And we learned many things. Not just with the process that
9 we had in place but also that there was self-selection out, partly because of the
10 process, but also because we, I think we could have done a better job with
11 mentoring and other ways of encouraging qualified candidates to get into the
12 process. And working with them on IDPs, like the Chairman mentioned.

13 And so, we made a concerted effort in that regard as well.
14 Not just with the process, but also in getting employees ready and trying to
15 make sure that anyone who was interested felt like this was going to be a good
16 process.

17 The second thing we did is, when we made changes to the
18 process, we made sure that we communicated those broadly throughout the
19 agency. And really took that on to make sure that the staff knew that these
20 changes were in response to feedback that we had received.

21 So, I think that's why we did have this very good pipeline.
22 And then like Pam described, how it went through the process. And we have a
23 very well qualified class so we're very happy about that. So, I think the lessons
24 learned from that.

1 And I want to just backtrack a little bit to say, and what I was
2 talking about before, about learning from other processes, it's like you said, we
3 had the diversity in the class. We could see these statistics and we said, we
4 can use some of the objectivity in the way that we look at the applications and
5 some things that we use in other hiring selections that could make this process
6 better. And indeed, I think that it did.

7 So, now, what we will do, as we've done every year, is we will
8 take feedback from individuals who participated, selectees, non-selectees, we
9 take feedback in. And the executive resource board, which is the top
10 executives in the agency, we'll get together, look at the process and see
11 whether we can make further changes and continue to improve upon the
12 process.

13 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Okay, great. John talked about a
14 recent voting paper on physical security for non-light water reactors and the
15 effort to discuss and present the differing views among the staff, in the paper
16 itself.

17 I want to encourage the staff to continue that practice. As a
18 decision maker, I find it very helpful to hear the full range of views among the
19 staff and stakeholders. I really think it improves the quality of our decisions.

20 Margie, is this approach something that you're encouraging
21 for all voting papers coming to the Commission when there are different
22 perspectives within the staff?

23 MS. DOANE: Yes. And I'm trying to make it even broader
24 than just papers coming to the Commission. Because these germs of thought

1 that you want to encourage and get into the decision-making will come through
2 a lot of different ways that we, a lot the different decisions that we make every
3 day because a lot of things don't come to the Commission.

4 So, yes, I am. And I have encouraged the staff to, I think that
5 the staff does a great job hearing from many corners of the agency, but what
6 we can do a better job of is making sure that those voices get into the decision-
7 making earlier and that it, that our written products include these differing views
8 at the very beginning so that when it's moving its way through the agency
9 anyone who isn't in front of the whole working group will know what the differing
10 views where.

11 And I really, I feel very strongly, and I know I said this in my
12 opening remarks, that if you were going to challenge the way you're doing
13 things, you need to encourage people to speak up. They have to have trust.

14 And then you have to listen to them. They have to know that
15 they're views were considered. So, yes.

16 And it was a very good job that, it was an impressive task that
17 NSIR took on. And they did, I thought, presented a much better paper. And it
18 had better options. And I think it also talked about the options.

19 So, yes, I am encouraging this, I've issued a number of
20 different things, including EDO notes, as you know, trying to include, trying to
21 encourage diverse decisions, taking views from different places.

22 COMMISSIONER BARAN: John.

23 MR. LUBINSKI: Just one more sentence I did. As Margie
24 was completing NSIR, I want to complement across the agency. It was a

1 collaborative effort between NSIR and NRO on that paper, so it had the views
2 of both organizations as well, so I appreciate that collaborative effort.

3 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Great. Well, thank you. I want to
4 talk a little bit about a broader workforce issue that's come up some today,
5 which is, the number of NRC employees dropped by six percent last year, and
6 that is a very rapid shrinking of our workforce. And the agency has been doing
7 very limited external hiring for a while now.

8 I'm growing concerned about that. I think we're at a point
9 where we need to bring in new hires, both to fill critical skill gaps but also to
10 ensure future succession planning at the agency. For the agency's long-term
11 health, I think we need a stable pipeline of new talents. One of those pipelines
12 that Margie was talking about.

13 If we have several years of little to no hiring, we're going to
14 have a significant gap in our workforce for those years. Margie, how are you
15 approaching this issue, do you agree this is a concern and what do you think
16 the agency should do to address it?

17 MS. DOANE: Yes, I do agree it's a concern because
18 whenever you're, the agency is continuing to decline in numbers, you have to
19 make sure that you have the right workforce for the future. And especially with
20 our very important safety mission, you have to ensure that you have the
21 workforce that you need with the right skills.

22 And we have had very limited hiring. And I think we
23 absolutely need to keep a very close eye on this. Because we're not doing, for
24 example, a lot of entry level hiring like we used to so there is a continuing

1 widening gap.

2 And we absolutely think that there would be, that these
3 attrition numbers will continue and maybe even get slightly higher as years go
4 on and we look at demographics. So this is challenging us.

5 So, we're doing a number of different things. The first thing
6 that I would point out is that we're doing strategic workforce planning in a
7 different way and it is producing very good information for us.

8 And it's, we have a process where we're going to, going
9 office-by-office. It's a number of different steps. We're identifying gaps, we're
10 identifying where we have the skills, where the future skills are and then
11 whether we have any gaps and how we'll hire.

12 And one thing that will feed into that process that will be very
13 useful is the futures assessment that we are doing, that I think you've heard
14 maybe Trish mentioned, that this is hard for the staff to understand because we
15 have a number of initiatives going on. But this initiative is very positive because
16 it's going to help us look at our future, all the different future scenarios and
17 make sure that we identify gaps and then do things now to ensure that we have
18 the right workforce.

19 But yes, this is a continuing issue of pressure for the agency
20 and we need to keep a very close eye on it.

21 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Thanks. John, you talked about
22 the increased focused on the headquarters operations office and regional
23 operations office. There's the HOOs and the ROOs.

24 These are critical safety positions, obviously, and they're

1 unique at NRC because they involve shift work, as you pointed out. The
2 Inspector General raised concerns about inadequate staffing levels in the OPs
3 center and the strain that placed on the functioning of the OP center and on the
4 individual headquarters operations officers.

5 Has the staff fully resolved the issues identified by the IG, are
6 staffing levels where they need to be for the OPs center to function well and
7 for operations officers to have reasonable work schedules?

8 MR. LUBINSKI: The short answer is yes, we believe we
9 resolved it but we're still in process of making some additional process
10 improvements. The IG report looked at where we were, had less OP officers
11 than we were actually staffed for. So that was a problem.

12 Once we're fully staffed, which we are today, there's no
13 concerns with staff in the OP center in making sure that we're ready to go 24/7.
14 And the HOOs and ROOs are working together to make sure they get the
15 appropriate work schedules in place.

16 The intention now is making sure that we keep the OP center
17 fully staffed. There's a total of 11 HOOs. Recent example on hiring is, we hired
18 three new HOOs into the organization because of losing three people. That's a
19 lot of people to lose in a short time frame.

20 We've worked with OCHCO on ways to keep a prioritization
21 on what. Right after that process of hiring three HOOs, we had another HOO to
22 lead the organization to go to another part of NRC.

23 We worked with OCHCO to extend the SRP because we
24 knew we had already gone through the interview processes and had well

1 qualified candidates on that list. And we were able to make an offer to
2 someone else on that list without having to go through the hiring process again.

3 We've made changes to the training processes that when we
4 bring them onboard to get them trained more quickly. We started using
5 rotational assignments as well when we have those little gaps in between
6 where someone may leave and we may not hire as quickly.

7 We're looking towards building a cadre of people. One of the
8 difficulties now is, you can go back ten, 15 years ago, many of the HOOs
9 worked there for a very long time in their career. We're getting people now that
10 are going through two, three years working as a HOO and wanting to move
11 somewhere else in the agency.

12 The downside of that is, you need to bring more HOOs in.
13 The up side is, now we have a cadre of people in the agency who can fill in at
14 special times as well. So, we're looking at whether or not we can take
15 advantage of that.

16 Plus, we're training additional headquarters emergency
17 response officers who can fill the second shift of the HOO during those time
18 frames as well.

19 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Great. Thank you very much.

20 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Thank you, Commissioner Baran.

21 Commissioner Burns, please proceed.

22 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Well, thanks again for all your
23 presentations. I'm going to start off with Trish.

24 As the representative of the various committees, I want to

1 express my appreciation for what the committees do. And I encourage those
2 who have some interest to join one and help out.

3 Because I think what they really do, I think through the
4 various programs you describe career development, sort of employee
5 engagement type activities but I also, I think, the cultural activities that the
6 committees provide in perspective.

7 The recent, I don't want to single one out, but I know earlier
8 this year at the African American history month, actually I guess dinner, we had
9 a professor from Harvard University who spoke on African American service in
10 the Military over the years. And it was a very powerful presentation for me.

11 And most recently I sort of took that with me. I was in France
12 a couple weeks ago, or last week, and one of the things I've been wanting to do
13 is really sort of pilgrimage the World War I sites. Which I did.

14 And keeping that in mind, what I'd like also to see is that
15 through the American Battlefield Monuments Commission, now we're sort of
16 focusing on the contribution of African American, Native Americans, women, in
17 this context.

18 And although I didn't have the chance to see his grave, I was
19 the Musee Argonne Cemetery where the first African American who received
20 the Medal of Honor and incidentally, posthumously by George Herbert Walker
21 Bush, but he was a well decorated at the end of World War I, but because of
22 racism didn't receive the Medal of Honor at that time until President Bush
23 awarded it to him in, I think, in 1991 posthumously.

24 But, I just say that as a personal story because that's the kind

1 of impact some of the programs that we have it has, it had one me. And I think
2 undoubtedly on others, in terms of opening of our perspectives and the lenses
3 through which we see things.

4 So, I want to thank you, on behalf of, as representatives of the
5 committees here today, for all that.

6 Darrell, I appreciated your discussion of the efforts to try and
7 widen the aperture for opportunities, special assignments, things like that, in the
8 region. I think that's a great way of, basically not only developing staff but also
9 assuring that there is a wide opportunity for people to do it.

10 I know in terms of my own career here at NRC, which began
11 40 years ago, the thing that kept me at NRC for a longtime, was the opportunity
12 to work on varied things that we're sort of not like processing this enforcement
13 action or processing that Federal Register Notice and all that, but it was getting
14 the opportunity to do some special assignments, things like how to collate all
15 the Staff responses to the Three Mile Island critics and the Presidents
16 Commission and doing things like that.

17 But those are the things that keep people engaged. And
18 speaking, again, personally, keep you engaged and keep you wanting to work
19 here.

20 So, I think that's a great approach and I encourage that in
21 terms of how you're making that opportunity, letting people know about those
22 kinds of opportunities because I think that can really help to develop the
23 workforce.

24 And, John, again, I think the approach, and I know I've talked

1 to Margie about it and Commissioner Baran saying, in terms of our paper,
2 talking about diversity, the diversity of views, because there are very few things
3 in this agency where there is a single answer. And we're going to have different
4 approaches to doing it.

5 And one of the things I think I saw when I came out, actually,
6 it mystified me when I came back from the OECD in 2014, is why there was
7 such a turn on some of these things where we seem to have been hung up in
8 our processes and not worn the, seen them through or suddenly they turn in the
9 process, the people on the other end who raise the concerns don't hear
10 anything and all a sudden, oh, it's time, we got to get that paper up to the
11 commission, where do I do it.

12 So, focusing, I think, on assuring that we have the different
13 viewpoints and making sure that the decision-making process continues, those
14 are, I think that's a valuable, and I think a laudable way, for us to continue to go.

15 One of the things, Pam, I want to ask you a question about.
16 In terms of, I was interested in the presentation with respect to the anti-
17 harassment training and what we're seeing in terms of complaints and all that.
18 Could you give me a picture or sort of a general feel for what the source are?

19 Because I get the impression, and we have both supervisory
20 and non-supervisory, what I'll call the, and lose terms, the offenders or those
21 who are seen as acting inappropriately or in a harassing type manner. Is there
22 sort of a general percentage where it comes from?

23 MS. BAKER: So, OCHCO administers the harassment --

24 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Okay.

1 MS. BAKER: -- program.

2 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Okay.

3 MS. BAKER: What we're seeing is, if it comes into SBCR
4 space, it's usually coming with an accouplement to something of an alleged
5 discrimination in one of the seven --

6 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Oh, okay.

7 MS. BAKER: -- different areas under Title 7.

8 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Yes.

9 MS. BAKER: And then we make a referral. So, I don't have
10 an indication of the specifics on what the increase reporting is. And I'm looking
11 for an --

12 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Yes. Because you may --

13 MS. BAKER: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER BURNS: -- probably see it where there is a
15 supervisory catch --

16 MS. BAKER: Yes. It's usually a management --

17 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Yes, okay.

18 MS. BAKER: -- that is named.

19 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Okay. That's some helpful --

20 MS. BAKER: I see my lifeline approaching so.

21 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Yes, no problem.

22 (Laughter)

23 MS. SANFORD: Good morning. I'm Barbara Sanford, I'm the
24 Branch Chief for the Policy, Labor and Employee Relations Branch in OCHCO

1 and we also oversee the anti-harassment program.

2 I would say we don't specifically track it that way, but just kind
3 of looking at trends, because we do look for that, we have seen increases in
4 both categories. I wouldn't say it's more one category over another.

5 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Okay.

6 MS. SANFORD: I would say, around this time of year we
7 tend to see a little bit of a supervisory bump in anti-harassment complaints but
8 typically that corresponds with the increasing grievances on the performance
9 appraisal process.

10 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Okay. But so, what you're saying
11 is that there, what we do have is, what I'll call non-supervisory employee issues.

12 MS. SANFORD: Correct.

13 COMMISSIONER BURNS: And I don't know if there's a
14 characterization of what there are just basically some people, I can't use the
15 word here, some people are just jerks, right?

16 (Laughter)

17 COMMISSIONER BURNS: There's a stronger word than that.

18 MS. SANFORD: So, we do have some of that. The anti-
19 harassment program though, under the program itself, has a protected category
20 component that's associated with it.

21 So it's not usually people coming in and saying, my supervisor
22 is a jerk, it's usually my supervisor is a jerk based on NSIR --

23 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Yes.

24 MS. SANFORD: -- protected category claim.

1 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Yes. But in terms of the co-
2 worker --

3 MS. SANFORD: Okay.

4 COMMISSIONER BURNS: -- because that's what I've heard,
5 I mean, apocryphally heard the stories of, in terms of, you know, quite honestly
6 certain employees in terms of how they interact with people and all that. So are
7 you getting --

8 MS. SANFORD: So we do get that sometimes as well.

9 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Okay.

10 MS. SANFORD: Usually it's around the nature of the
11 interactions that employees have at work so it might be that perhaps the
12 employee felt they weren't invited to a meeting or weren't included in a
13 particular discussion they needed to be included in or maybe weren't invited to
14 a meal or a lunch, et cetera. It runs the gambit.

15 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Okay. Okay.

16 MR. LUBINSKI: If I can, Commissioner?

17 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Yes.

18 MR. LUBINSKI: Anecdotally, as Barbara said, we don't have
19 statistics on that and track it that way. I can say, from both informal, and I'm
20 saying informal from the standpoint of issues like that from staff to staff issues
21 that may rise to our level as well as what may go to OCHCO.

22 We don't always see it's, somebody is a jerk okay, it really is,
23 it's poor communication between the individuals, maybe a disagreement about
24 a professional opinion and people felt very strongly so you find the

1 communications break down on both sides along the way, because a
2 relationship issue along that way.

3 Sometimes where they let it fester themselves and the
4 supervisor may not identify it, see it, and then it starts to fester where these two
5 employees continue to butt heads. And we're starting to hear some of those
6 discussions and stories come out of the anti-harassment training we're having
7 with staff where they're starting to identify it.

8 When you're dealing with one or two bad apples along the
9 way, you can deal with those individuals through performance issues where, as
10 when you're dealing with the relationship issues, that's bringing people back
11 together them. Having them understand that the insensitivities that they had
12 they may not have recognized.

13 And once they start to recognize it, they can start to build a
14 relationship, getting back to the root cause of, we've had these poor
15 relationships to begin with because I didn't like what you said, and you can start
16 to build a movement forward.

17 COMMISSIONER BURNS: Yes. Okay, thanks. And just last
18 thing, I won't align myself with the comments that the Chairman made with
19 respect to the SES Candidate Development Program.

20 I do hope we will evaluate, and not declare victory, but
21 evaluate where it is because there a number of things that I think, and I'll be
22 happy to discuss them with you further, Margie, where in our search for
23 objectivity and to certain other areas where I think we can make further
24 improvements. Thank you, Chairman.

1 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Thank you very much. Commissioner
2 Caputo, please proceed.

3 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Good morning. First, I'd like to
4 add my thank you for all the efforts that the offices put into this meeting today.
5 It does cover a lot of ground.

6 There is a lot of support that goes on behind the development
7 of the remarks you make here. And so, I do very much appreciate that wealth
8 of information and all the efforts that go into it.

9 Margie, in your opening remarks, I want to specifically
10 recognize how you communicated that the vision of transformation is agency
11 wide. Great focuses on the technical issues and it's lost on me that corporate
12 activities should also be part of a transfer and vision for the agency.

13 So, as we continue to focus on activities and innovative ways
14 to meet our mission or recognize that employee employment and agency
15 culture are key to success. So, thank you for your continued efforts to keep us
16 focused.

17 Ms. Baker, I also want to add my congratulations for the A+
18 score for the SBA work. Obviously, there is a lot of hard work, diligence and
19 focus that goes into receiving a grade like that. So, my congratulations to you
20 and all those who contributed to those results, it's very impressive.

21 And, Trish, in my short time here I've had the opportunity to
22 participate in several activities, including diversity day, the recent Native
23 American lunch, it was wonderful. Hispanic lunch.

24 I do truly enjoy these interactions and I find them rewarding.

1 I'm glad to see they are continuing.

2 I know it takes a lot of effort on the part of the staff to
3 contribute and organize those events but I think it's a wonderful opportunity to
4 learn and recognize and appreciate diversity. And also establish comradery in
5 the workforce. And I do truly find those very, very rewarding.

6 So, Darrell, got a couple questions for you. In keeping with
7 questions and remarks made about diverse views, I want to turn back to Mr.
8 Cassidy, Mr. Ellegood, who received the MVP Team Player Awards.

9 So, you cited exceptional integrity and responsiveness. I
10 know comments were made earlier about needing perhaps to handle diverse
11 views earlier in the decision-making to ensure that they are considered early.

12 Is there anything else you can describe about the nature of
13 how they're participating was particularly exceptional?

14 Any actions that they took that should be emulated or sort of
15 captured and used throughout the agency?

16 MR. ROBERTS: Thanks. Thanks, Commissioner Caputo,
17 that's a pretty good question. And I would say that there are some behaviors
18 that they exhibited, both gentlemen exhibited that I would uphold and
19 recommend that others embody.

20 They were very professional, first and foremost. You don't
21 always have to be professional to express your views, I understand that. But
22 they were indeed very respectful of the fact that there were other views out
23 there as they continue to pursue theirs.

24 And they were very persistent. They believed that they had a

1 strong position on the matter. It involved a containment shield block that was
2 removed from one of the units at one plant and the opposite unit could be
3 impacted by radiation if there were an accident in the opposite unit as a result
4 of that removal of a shield block.

5 And they were very persistent in pursuing the technical issue,
6 which they believe they had a firm basis for. They represented their views to
7 management and to the program office as well. And ultimately, a decision was
8 rendered that supported their view.

9 So, I would offer that just the professionalism that they
10 exhibited. They did engage early in the process. They were involved
11 throughout the process.

12 So, it does, I believe, reflect this goal of having people with
13 diverse views express those views and embrace those views early in the
14 process. But I would just say their professionalism in there and their demeanor
15 throughout.

16 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Well, I really, I like the idea that
17 you recognize them for their contribution because I do feel like, obviously
18 diverse views and differing opinions are incredibly important to the nature of the
19 work that we do.

20 And that it's important that the process, whether it's DPO or
21 nonconcurrency, is a healthy process that people feel comfortable contributing
22 to and participating in and making sure that we are getting the benefit of those
23 diverse views. So, I also like the fact that you recognize them for their
24 contribution.

1 I have another question for you on the idea cloud. One thing I
2 think that's important, as we look at transformation, is innovation. How can we
3 do things better as we work to transfer ourselves.

4 And obviously a huge opportunity exists to capture ideas and
5 innovation from within the staff. The trick is to make sure that we don't more or
6 less just have an idea box where good ideas go to die.

7 And staff might feel frustrated that they spent time in
8 intellectual energy trying to make a contribution which was, you know, more or
9 less ignored and not brought to fruition. So, I think it's very, very important that
10 we harvest these ideas, that employees see these ideas being put to work and
11 that they see the benefit of improvement and how the agency operates based
12 on their ideas and suggestions.

13 So, can you tell me a little bit about how idea cloud really
14 worked --

15 MR. ROBERTS: Sure.

16 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: -- and how did you sort of
17 cultivate these ideas to improve the agency's work and recognize people for
18 their contribution?

19 MR. ROBERTS: Sure. Thanks. First and foremost, we
20 placed, we developed the idea cloud. We replaced what was the previous
21 suggestion box concept where people drop things in suggestion boxes.

22 And although they received attention, appropriate
23 management attention, they didn't always, or at least it wasn't viewed by staff
24 that those things always got the appropriate level of attention or priority.

1 So this online web based process allows them to, one, be
2 visible to everyone. And then the entire Region III staff gets a chance to see
3 those as their deposit in the idea cloud and vote on those using a five-star
4 process. Which, people can just vote.

5 And typically, about 40 or 50 votes are received per idea.
6 And if those ideas receive three or more average star votes, then they're
7 addressed by the engagement council, the council I mentioned earlier, how
8 actually manages this process.

9 And those are given higher priority than the ones that don't
10 receive that requisite number of stars for votes. And then those either get
11 addressed by the engagement council or they're elevated to management.

12 One of the things that we also did was to recognize that
13 merely having a web based program alone is not sufficient to encourage the
14 innovation and creativity that you mentioned. It also requires that management
15 buys into the notion of being or allowing innovation and creativity.

16 So that's one thing that we've talked to all of our senior
17 managers about in the region, and the branch chiefs, that it's one thing to have
18 staff take the time to develop these ideas and place them in a forum such as
19 that, but that they also have to feel that management's going to be behind them
20 and embrace these ideas.

21 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: And so, how do you build that
22 environment where people recognize that it's worth the time to put in the
23 contribution because they are seeing change taking place and they are hearing
24 the leadership talk about and value the ideas that are contributed?

1 MR. ROBERTS: You just have to reinforce the expectation at
2 my and Steve's level and push that down throughout the organization that, hey,
3 we need to be supportive of these, we can't let them languish. We're not
4 perfect in that regard. There are some that actually do languish and we have to
5 pick those up and move them through the process.

6 But, you just have to reinforce that expectation with your
7 senior management team. And I think that we've made strides in doing that in
8 the last few years.

9 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: So it comes back to leadership,
10 so, I will say thank you for your leadership.

11 MR. ROBERTS: Oh, thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: I have no further questions.

13 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Well, thank you all again. And as I
14 remarked at the beginning of the meeting, I will now recognize Ms. Serita
15 Sanders.

16 She is the Executive Vice President of the National Treasury
17 Employees Union, Chapter 208. And she will present some NTEU
18 perspectives. Please proceed.

19 MS. SANDERS: Thank you. Good morning, Chairman
20 Svinicki, Commissioner Burns, Baran and Caputo and Wright. Good morning to
21 EDO Doane and our leadership and managers as well.

22 And from my perspective, as the Executive Vice President of
23 Chapter 208, our most important audience this morning is our bargaining unit
24 employees. And our secret is resources. Good morning to you too.

1 Let me start out by acknowledging the agency's current
2 dynamic state, including initiatives such as transformation, innovation, speed of
3 trusts, the NRC leadership model, office merges and realignments of a
4 seemingly large number of both small and large reorganizations and a variety of
5 other small changes. For example, changing the CAC codes which impact our
6 employees every day.

7 Where and how does the best interest of the bargaining unit
8 employees factored into decision-makings as we become a leaner NRC. If we
9 step outside of our agency circumstances for a moment, we will see that we too
10 are in tandem with this country on change and perhaps uncertainly.

11 A couple of relatable examples are the new tax codes in the
12 auto industry. The 2019 tax filing seasons will implement the largest overhaul
13 to the tax code in 30 years. This will significant impact Americans the itemize
14 deductions.

15 Take a look at what's going on with General Motors. They
16 have announced that they are reshaping its focus to electric and automated
17 cars. The sedan no longer has the appeal and dominance and the market it
18 once did. Since currently 65 percent of their market is SUVs and trucks, this
19 line of vehicle now dominates their market.

20 The consequence is that there will be some 14,700 jobs cut in
21 North America. Including several thousand in Ohio and Michigan. That's on
22 top of the thousands of jobs that the company had already trimmed over the
23 past two years.

24 Plants are projected to close, the mid-west will be devastated.

1 In Youngstown, Ohio alone, this change will wipe out the last major corporate,
2 or industry, which provided an economic anchor for the town. Auto industry
3 analysts call this downsizing.

4 Here at the NRC we are moving through a kinematic
5 environment. There is an uptick in nuclear plant closures to the point that it is
6 causing us to change. The FY22 budget is a major driver in shaping the
7 agency through these reorganizations, mergers, realignments, et cetera.

8 The bargaining unit employee sees only the downsizing and
9 streamlining in reductions. However, with good communications from agency
10 leaders, employees can see the glass half full instead of half empty. Or at least
11 refillable.

12 It's an opportunity for the agency to take this setback and
13 make a comeback. It's an opportunity for the employee to retool. It's past time
14 to change the culture here.

15 NTEU would like to see this agency's initiatives transform the
16 NRC back to the best place to work in the federal government once again. The
17 solution is so easy yet such a challenge to achieve. It comes down to
18 communication and trust.

19 Are agency leaders communicating effectively with the staff,
20 does the staff have trust in their management, are they being treated with
21 dignity and respect? Respect must be earned, it cannot be demanded or
22 forced.

23 I'm going to make this simple. Maybe not so sweet, but
24 simple. Such that it will be easy to walk away with a clear message.

1 While we do have some good managers here at the NRC, it's
2 the bad ones that cancel the positive efforts and poison the whale. A good
3 leader shows respect and appreciation to the staff.

4 This manager actively listens to the staff and acts on
5 meaningful feedback. The good manager shows respect to our highly
6 intelligent and trained staff.

7 Remember, for the most part our staff knows a lot more about
8 their technical subject and/or subject area than a manager. If employees don't
9 believe their opinion matters, they will stop contributing. If they can't win they
10 won't try, they will simply disengage.

11 However, this does not mean that the staff will disrespect the
12 manager and insist that the technical or agency position be that solely of the
13 technical staff or subject matter expert.

14 Dealing with any technical issue here at the NRC, no matter
15 how complex, the engineering analysis is almost always right. It is the human
16 side of it that sometimes get overlooked and undervalued.

17 And this transforming environment, let's transform
18 management. Let's move away from selecting managers that are yes men and
19 women and start choosing those that will pause and earnestly consider other's
20 opinions before it becomes a nonconurrence or a DPO.

21 Leaders lead. And that doesn't just mean acquiesce or yes or
22 because I'm in charge. Again, there are good managers here, but it only takes
23 one or two not so good ones to foil a cohesive culture.

24 I would be remiss if I did not recognize the measures that are

1 being taken by management thus far to address some of the cultural and
2 collateral waste products of change. The Union has witnessed noteworthy,
3 unscripted improvements taken by management within recent selection of
4 senior managers. It is the path in the right direction and success.

5 This is true but let's face it, senior managers see what
6 managers at a level below them want them to see, the Union sees what the
7 employees truly experience. If you want your greatest resources to be the very
8 best they can be.

9 And there's change coming for the 21st Century. Transform
10 your management, insist on paradigm shifts and remove the bad apples, ensure
11 diversity and organization, diversity in the pipelines.

12 When making decisions for promotions and granting awards,
13 make sure they are fair and equitable to all. This will certainly yield positive
14 results.

15 In closing, I would like to say that I believe that we all want the
16 same thing. The very best outcomes for our agencies and all its endeavors.

17 The Union has pointed out two areas that we see over and
18 over and over again. And if improved, would absolutely improve the culture and
19 relationships with management and staff at a time when the nuclear industry
20 has such uncertainties, we also see much hope and promise with this agency to
21 embody strong leadership transforming the agency and making it current to the
22 21st Century and adopting much needed changes with the staff as a unified
23 team to retaining this world class regulatory status.

24 I deliberately use the example of General Motors because

1 their numbers were dwindling long before today's situation. The reduction in
2 sales in sedans did not just start.

3 Granite, a billion-dollar loss due to the current tariffs has had
4 an economic impact on GM situation, but the really culprit is its leaders. Its
5 failure to have better position, accompany for a competitive market, we have to
6 change if we don't want to become a statistic, or General Motor.

7 Let's move in front of the curve and not behind it. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Thank you very much, Ms. Sanders.

9 And with that, we are adjourned.

10 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record

11 11:58 a.m.)

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