

UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

+ + + + +

BRIEFING ON HUMAN CAPITAL AND EQUAL  
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

+ + + + +

WEDNESDAY,  
OCTOBER 21, 2020

+ + + + +

The Commission met via Videoconference, at 9:33 a.m.

EDT, Kristine L. Svinicki, Chairman, presiding.

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

KRISTINE L. SVINICKI, Chairman

JEFF BARAN, Commissioner

ANNIE CAPUTO, Commissioner

CHRISTOPHER T. HANSON, Commissioner

DAVID A. WRIGHT, Commissioner

ALSO PRESENT:

ANNETTE VIETTI-COOK, Secretary of the Commission

MARIAN ZOBLER, General Counsel

NRC STAFF:

MIRIAM L. COHEN, Chief Human Capital Officer

MARGARET DOANE, Executive Director for Operations

BRENDAN CAIN, Senior Program Administration Specialist, Office of the  
Chief Human Capital Officer

LAURA DUDES, Regional Administrator, Region II

BRIAN GREEN, Reactor Operations Engineer (Human Factors), Office of  
Nuclear Reactor Regulation

STEPHEN SMITH, Civil Rights Program Manager, Office of Small Business  
and Civil Rights

ALSO PRESENT:

SHERYL SANCHEZ, National Treasury Employees Union

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

9:33 a.m. EDT

1  
2  
3 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: It is nice to see people. Good  
4 morning, everyone. I'm confident we have, in addition to external viewers, a  
5 large contingent of NRC staff who cannot be waved at by us but who are  
6 watching remotely. And a special good morning to all of them.

7 Wish you were here. And someday you will be again. And  
8 we're confident of that. But it is good to see those who are gathered here  
9 today.

10 So, the Commission convenes this morning in public  
11 session for the Commission to conduct a meeting that I know we all find very  
12 meaningful and important. Twice a year we convene to look at a set of issues  
13 that are similar, but today we will be receiving an update on significant human  
14 capital initiatives and equal employment opportunity.

15 And I have, as a member of the Commission, had a chance  
16 to see a little bit of a preview of the richness and full content that the staff is  
17 presenting here today. And I'm excited to hear it, and excited that we were  
18 able to kind of catch up to some of our public meetings that got deferred and  
19 postponed earlier in the year.

20

21 So, my thanks to all my colleagues, so collegially we worked  
22 together on getting the meetings caught up and reestablished. This one was  
23 important, and I know mattered a lot to every single member of the  
24 Commission that we have this opportunity virtually and in a hybrid format. But  
25 we're excited to be here today.

26 And before I turn it over to our Executive Director for

1 Operations to lead off the staff presentations that I've been teasing you all  
2 about, I will ask if any member of the Commission. Commissioner Baran.

3 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Thanks, Chairman.

4 I'll have some thoughts to share during my Q&A time, but I  
5 wanted to, just to emphasize up front this is a very important meeting. As the  
6 Chairman mentioned, it's been delayed a few months because of the  
7 pandemic, but we made it a priority to hold it today.

8 During this time of national soul searching on issues of racial  
9 inequality, diversity and inclusion efforts have never been more valuable. So,  
10 I look forward to a good discussion this morning and later this afternoon at the  
11 All Employees Meeting.

12 Thanks.

13 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Thank you, Commissioner Baran.

14 Anyone else?

15 (No response.)

16 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Okay, no. I know we're all eager to  
17 dive right in. So, Margie, the floor is yours. Thank you.

18 MS. DOANE: Okay. Good morning, Chairman and  
19 Commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity to share the agency's  
20 progress in areas of human capital and equal employment opportunity. We  
21 are pleased to have this opportunity to update you on our program  
22 achievements, including reaffirming our commitment to ensuring the NRC is  
23 an organization that welcomes and appreciates diversity and inclusion.

24 We have done this while remaining engaged in a highly  
25 productive, in an unprecedented and continuously evolving COVID-19 public  
26 health emergency environment, while simultaneously experiencing periods of

1 marked civil unrest occurring throughout our country.

2 Next slide, please.

3 One thing that has remained steadfast in this dynamic  
4 environment is the agency's continued focus on its greatest and most valuable  
5 resource -- its employees. In fact, the NRC's ability to fulfill its important  
6 safety and security mission depends on the ability of each and every employee  
7 being able to fully engage and bring their whole selves to work.

8 Essentially, it was this realization that informed our actions  
9 to implement maximum telework and allow flexible work schedules to protect  
10 the health and well-being of our employees, and support them as they balance  
11 work with home/life responsibilities.

12 We also made it a priority to engage regularly with  
13 employees through various communication mediums that focused on  
14 encouraging employees and ways to enhance our NRC community. We did  
15 this by ensuring regular EDO updates, publishing the weekly Staying  
16 Connected feature, airing agency-wide contests, and sponsoring agency-wide  
17 forums to promote open and respectful discussion.

18 Additionally, we made it a top priority to ensure employee  
19 assistance program services were available and easily accessible to all  
20 employees in the remote environment.

21 Despite the numerous challenges NRC employees have  
22 faced over the last months, they have consistently demonstrated their  
23 resilience and adaptability. They have identified innovative solutions to the  
24 challenges of working remotely, adopted new technologies to facilitate  
25 collaboration, implemented new processes to ensure NRC remain productive  
26 in its new virtual environment, and openly shared their ideas and perspectives.

1                   We've learned from these experiences and we are making  
2                   sure to capture and draw on these valuable lessons to inform and focus our  
3                   future efforts.

4                   Outside of the COVID-19 public health emergency, the  
5                   Office of Chief Human Capital Officer has also achieved many significant  
6                   successes over the past year. And I'd like to take a moment to highlight just  
7                   a few of them.

8                   OCHCO has played a central role in helping ensure the  
9                   NRC has a pipeline of talent to draw on well into the future. It has focused its  
10                  efforts on redefining NRC's approach to hiring, retaining, and developing  
11                  talent by applying innovative strategies to attract, engage, and support  
12                  employees at all stages of their career.

13                  For example, OCHCO has experienced remarkable  
14                  success in bringing new talent to the agency, resulting from a structured new  
15                  hire program that has supported transformation through the Career  
16                  Enhancement Initiative.

17                  NRC is also committed to fostering an environment that  
18                  recognizes the importance of diversity and inclusion that is welcoming of all  
19                  employees.

20                  The Office of Small Business and Civil Rights has taken  
21                  constructive measures in reaffirming this commitment.

22                  First, it's recently launched the Initiative on Civility,  
23                  Awareness, Respect, and Engagement, or iCARE, which you will hear more  
24                  about later during the presentation.

25                  Secondly, in September, the Office of Small Business and  
26                  Civil Rights held a virtual, agency-wide equal employment opportunity summit

1 embracing diversity and inclusion in the workplace. I would like to thank  
2 everyone involved for their dedication and hard work in planning and  
3 facilitating the summit. There are simply too many to recognize here.

4 The examples I noted above, as well as numerous others,  
5 demonstrates how we are continuing to improve the work experience and  
6 environment for the NRC employees and contributing to the NRC remaining a  
7 great place to work.

8 To say that I am proud of what we accomplished as an  
9 agency over the last year is an understatement. I believe this success is due  
10 in part to the diligence, foresight, and hard work of staff and management in  
11 OCHCO and SBCR who work tirelessly to provide opportunities, services, and  
12 support for all employees, while striving to take meaningful actions to enhance  
13 NRC's work environment.

14 Next slide, please.

15 And, with that, I'd like to introduce my fellow speakers.

16 First is Mr. Stephen Smith from the Office of Small Business  
17 and Civil Rights who will discuss equal employment opportunity activities and  
18 trends at the agency.

19 Followed by Miriam Cohen, Chief Human Capital Officer,  
20 who will be discussing the programmatic aspects of the recent successes of  
21 the agency's Human Capital Program.

22 Next is Mr. Brendan Cain from OCHCO, who will discuss  
23 our agency's workforce trends and analysis, followed by Mr. Brian Green from  
24 the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, who will discuss the Employee  
25 Journey initiatives to obtain and develop talent needed to drive transformation.

26 And, finally, Ms. Laura Dudes from Region II, Regional

1 Administrator, who will provide Region II's perspective on talent management.

2 Next slide, please.

3 So, before I turn it over to my fellow presenters, I would like  
4 to take a moment to recognize someone who has been a driving force and  
5 influential inspiration behind NRC's success in the areas of human -- in the  
6 area of human capital.

7 Ms. Miriam Cohen has been with the NRC since 2004, the  
8 last 10 years serving as the Chief Human Capital Officer. I don't know if you  
9 saw it, but I think it was in the Federal Executive this week, she was captured  
10 for this length of service that really is throughout the Federal Government quite  
11 impressive.

12 Her unparalleled experience and forthright manner, coupled  
13 with her people-centric approach, has helped successfully guide our  
14 organization through many transitions. She has tackled many complex  
15 challenges over the years.

16 And so, with much gratitude on behalf of the staff, and on  
17 behalf of me personally, I offer her my very best wishes as she departs NRC  
18 at the end of the month to begin a new journey. And I know that we remain  
19 in her very capable hands with Ms. Mary Lamary to guide us into the future.

20 This concludes my introductory remarks. And I would like  
21 to now --

22 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Before you turn it over can I just ask  
23 again, and Miriam has got this wonderful position right behind Margie's which  
24 is kind of --

25 MS. COHEN: I've got her back.

26 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: You've got her back in every sense



1 of the word.

2 (Laughter.)

3 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: But it is just a reminder of how the  
4 years go by. Feel like you just got here. But I'm sure it doesn't feel that way  
5 to you when I say that, for good, bad. But, you know, we appealed to you,  
6 we got you. You stayed beyond to help us with COVID and everything. So,  
7 you have in every sense of the word gone above and beyond. And I know  
8 we all wish you well.

9 And across the virtual sphere we're going to hear a  
10 thunderous applause joining the small applause in this room, but let's just,  
11 please, wish Miriam well.

12 (Applause.)

13 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Okay. With that, we will all  
14 probably engage you in the Q&A and other fun things, and wish you well  
15 individually, but I just wanted to interrupt.

16 And, Margie, I think you were about to turn over to the next  
17 presenter. Thank you.

18 MS. DOANE: Right. To Mr. Stephen Smith.

19 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Thank you.

20 MS. DOANE: Thanks, Chairman.

21 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Margie.

22 Good morning, Chairman Svinicki, Commissioners, and to  
23 the entire NRC family. And a special thanks to Margie, to Vonna, and Jeanne  
24 for their unmatched leadership.

25 My name is Stephen Smith. I'm the Civil Rights Program  
26 Manager for the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights. And I'm deeply

1 honored and humbled to brief you this morning on the progress and the status  
2 of the agency's EEO and diversity inclusion program efforts as it's  
3 administered and managed by SBCR and its NRC partners, which includes  
4 our collateral duty counselors, our advisory committee members and  
5 executive sponsors, our dialog ambassadors, and the NRC culture team and  
6 champions.

7 I was elated to join NRC Office of Small Business and Civil  
8 Rights in January of this year where I have the responsibility for administering,  
9 managing, and ensuring compliance and oversight of NRC's internal civil  
10 rights program. Prior to that assignment I served as the Director for the Equal  
11 Employment Opportunity Division at the U.S. Department of Housing and  
12 Urban Development.

13 In addition, I also served as an associate director for the  
14 Office of Minority and Women Inclusion at the U.S. Department of Treasury,  
15 at headquarters, where I was responsible for carrying out all matters related  
16 to diversity in management, employment, and business activities.

17 Next slide, please.

18 For today's briefing I would like to provide you a status and  
19 highlight the accomplishments of the agency through its collaborative efforts  
20 with the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, commonly known as  
21 OCHCO.

22 SBCR programs continue to provide leadership for the  
23 agency's efforts to carry out the obligations under various civil rights and small  
24 business statutes. And touching so many areas of their daily life here at the  
25 NRC, SBCR continues to support the agency's mission, and protecting public  
26 health and safety and the environment by cultivating the agency's diverse and

1 inclusive workplace to advance equal employment opportunity; to afford  
2 maximum practical prime and subcontracting opportunities for small  
3 businesses; to provide fair and impartial complaint processing of  
4 discrimination complaints; and to allow for meaningful, fair, and equal access  
5 to the agency's conducted and financially assisted and conducted programs  
6 and activities.

7 I would like to detail for you today three vital areas of  
8 SBCR's civil rights and diversity inclusion efforts that provides an example of  
9 the contribution and shared responsibility that we have with OCHCO in  
10 advancing equality and opportunity. I will touch on EEO complaint activities  
11 and trends, our framework to diversity and inclusion.

12 Care about iCARE, an Initiative on Civility, Awareness,  
13 Respect, and Engagement.

14 Next slide, please.

15 Moving into the areas of EEO and over the past two years,  
16 our EEO complaint activity has increased slightly where we are now averaging  
17 about 33 complaints, and 20 formal complaints per year. Although the source  
18 of this uptick is unknown at this point, the agency remains committed to the  
19 principles of EEO and to eliminating unlawful discrimination in the workplace.

20 In this chart, our EEO complaint activity is trending slightly  
21 upward even as our agency staffing levels continue to decline. But it should  
22 be duly noted that our agency is still only averaging about 1 percent of its  
23 workforce with pre-complaints and less than 1 percent of its workforce with  
24 formal complaints.

25 Next slide, please.

26 In analyzing the basis of our formal complaints, reprisal,

1 race, age, and sex are the most commonly citing -- cited, constituting  
2 approximately 82 percent of the formal complaint filings. While reprisal is our  
3 most asserted basis, generally those having prior EEO activity or opposition  
4 to a policy, to employment policy or practice, it should be noted that reprisal is  
5 also the basis most raised throughout the federal sector.

6 This chart reflects all bases cited in a formal complaint,  
7 which may include multiple bases.

8 Next slide, please.

9 Workplace harassment remains a persistent problem in the  
10 Federal Government, as reported by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity  
11 Commission, and continues to be one of our top three issues alleged.

12 In the EEOC Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment  
13 in the Workplace they reported that the workplace harassment too often goes  
14 unaddressed, where employees experience harassment, fail to report the  
15 harassing behavior, or file a complaint because they fear disbelief of their  
16 claim, inaction on their claim, blame, or social or professional retaliation.

17 However, we continue to work with our collaborative  
18 partners in OCHCO and the Office of General Counsel to cultivate a civil  
19 workplace that is free from all forms of harassing behavior and misconduct,  
20 discrimination, and retaliation.

21 Next slide, please.

22 The objectives of diversity and inclusion are fundamental to  
23 ensuring that all levels of our organization, including managers and  
24 employees, are equipped with the skills for treating others fairly, and creating  
25 a healthy workplace culture. The agency's overarching strategy and  
26 framework underscores the business imperatives associated with diversity

1 and inclusion, and offers insights for maximizing the benefits of a workforce  
2 made up of many cultural backgrounds, personal characteristics, and unique  
3 experiences.

4                   Please note that this is in keeping with the Executive Order  
5 13583, establishing a coordinated, government-wide initiative to promote  
6 diversity and inclusion in the federal workforce, which informs our Inclusive  
7 Diversity Strategic Plan, and remains as a valid and important part of our  
8 guidance.

9                   Our Inclusive Diversity Strategic Plan is made to increase  
10 the transparency of human capital processes for the many initiatives and  
11 efforts that are currently underway, and it includes a focus on data-driven  
12 decision making through the strategic use of applicant flow data; emphasizing  
13 and identifying potential areas of implicit bias; training on the new inclusion  
14 quotient, the new IQ; creating a more interactive federal equal opportunity  
15 recruitment program, FEORP; and intensifying and accelerating the agency's  
16 communication techniques.

17                   To show our agency's commitment to diversity and  
18 inclusion, this link that you see on the slide provides our very first diversity  
19 inclusion policy statement that was signed by Chairman Svinicki on May 18<sup>th</sup>  
20 of this year.

21                   Next slide, please.

22                   We continue to foster inclusion and engagement in the  
23 agency through the dialog project and many other initiatives. However, we  
24 have currently suspended some diversity and inclusion initiatives, including  
25 trainings, forums, and other similar programs and activities consistent with the  
26 Executive Order 13950 and its implementing guidance. We hope to get our

1 programs to the Office of Personnel Management soon to obtain approval and  
2 re-start these important initiatives.

3 Over the first few months, in a fully virtual environment  
4 Vonna and Margie had several discussions on how to best provide an  
5 immediate and unified approach to supporting the agency during a time when  
6 injustice and unrest weighed heavily on us all. Upon reflection, and realizing  
7 the events would have a lasting effect on the NRC community, SBCR  
8 established the Initiative on Civility, Awareness, Respect, and Engagement,  
9 known as iCARE.

10 The purpose of iCARE is to assist with the agency's efforts  
11 and facilitating deeper understandings and appreciation of cultural and  
12 diversity and inclusion-related issues among agency employees, and promote  
13 individual, personal, and professional growth and effectiveness through the  
14 processes of listening, introspection, and building acceptance for differing  
15 perspectives.

16 iCARE was built on the dialog model of creating a safe  
17 space, encouraging individuals to meet with open minds and hold  
18 conversations where questions can be asked of those who are thought to be  
19 different, and experiences could be shared without judgment or hostility.

20 The ultimate goal of iCARE is for us to overcome  
21 communication gaps and learn about one another so we feel more  
22 comfortable bringing our whole selves to work, feeling respected for being  
23 engaged in the workplace.

24 As we look ahead, the progress and successes described  
25 are encouraging, an ultimate reminder that results are achieved only through  
26 taking seriously our commitment to civil rights and diversity and inclusion.

1 I want to thank you. And I would like to now turn it over to  
2 Miriam Cohen, who I want to personally thank on behalf of SBCR for your  
3 longstanding leadership and invaluable support to our organization.

4 Thank you, Miriam.

5 MS. COHEN: Thank you, Stephen.

6 Good morning, Chairman, Commissioners, and NRC staff.

7 I am pleased and honored to be here for my tenth and final appearance at the  
8 agency's human capital briefing. Believe it or not, I spent some time over the  
9 pandemic reading through the transcripts from all the prior human capital  
10 meetings and was quite amazed at how much change the agency has gone  
11 through, and how successful we have been as an agency to what was through  
12 some pretty turbulent times.

13 When I became the CHCO almost 10 years ago, the NRC  
14 was rated among the best places to work. But, starting in 2011 we  
15 experienced the beginning of a lengthy period of downsizing. It was not  
16 always easy to be the CHCO during those times, but the ability to help guide  
17 our people activities was truly a privilege for me.

18 Over the years we briefed the Commission on significant  
19 and substantive topics, including maintaining critical skills, transforming  
20 business assets into solutions, Project AIM, learning transformation,  
21 competency modeling, change management, sustaining employee  
22 engagement, corporate support reductions, strategic workforce planning, and  
23 preparing for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century workforce.

24 Many of these topics are still relevant today and will likely  
25 guide our human capital programs into the future. During today's briefing  
26 you're going to hear about some initiatives that address our continued focus

1 on data analytics, career enhancement and development, regional insights on  
2 strategic workforce planning, and agency investments in developing future  
3 talent.

4 I want to take a few minutes to say thank you to current and  
5 former chairmen, commissioners, executive directors, deputy executive  
6 directors, deputy CHCOs, and all my current and former OCHCO staff that  
7 have supported me and the human capital programs over the years.

8 When I came to the Office of Human Resources in 2008 as  
9 the deputy to Jim McDermott, I always felt that we had a seat at the table, that  
10 our views and concerns were heard, and that we could advance the many  
11 positive human capital programs that made the NRC such a great place to  
12 work. It's not like that across all agencies, and it is truly a gift that we have  
13 here.

14 We care about people, their development, their careers, and  
15 actively promoted work/life balance way before it was popular to embrace it.  
16 Our technical training programs are widely regarded, and our robust rotational  
17 programs provide employees an opportunity to work in a new area to develop  
18 new skill sets.

19 We are also modernizing HR systems to improve customer  
20 service and eliminate manual processes. It's an exciting time to work in the  
21 human capital arena, both within our agency and across the Federal  
22 Government.

23 Despite some recent downturns in employee survey results,  
24 we should be proud of our enduring commitment to NRC values, diversity and  
25 inclusion, and our continuous improvement focus. We are at unique period  
26 in our agency, in our history as an agency, and we have a bright future.





1 Well, it informs management about what's going on with the  
2 workforce;

3 It provides a basis for setting human capital goals;

4 Shows progress toward those goals;

5 Identifies areas of concerns;

6 And, potentially, can suggest a course of action, for  
7 example, by informing the strategic workforce planning process.

8 Next slide, please.

9 Among the goals of analytics tools are to provide meaningful  
10 information in an easy-to-understand format; to provide information that's  
11 relevant to the audience; and to provide actionable information that's useful to  
12 managers and leadership.

13 Visualizations are a newer tool for workforce analytics for  
14 presenting data. What do they offer?

15 They enhance the way that information is conveyed;

16 They allow for some degree of user interaction, for example,  
17 by filtering sets within visualizations for a fiscal year or a specific population,  
18 or highlighting a subset of data across multiple visualizations on a page.

19 They also offer the potential for sophisticated analysis of  
20 data from multiple sources.

21 OCHCO was among the first to adopt a visualization tool at  
22 the agency with our new Human Capital Dashboard. In preparing for that, we  
23 researched available software to see what would meet our needs and found  
24 Power BI. We partnered with OCIO's Enterprise Platforms Team to get  
25 approval for its use at NRC.

26 Being part of the Office 365 suite makes it easily accessible

1 to the NRC community. And internally, version of the dashboard is used  
2 across the agency by managers, part of which, excerpt of which I'll be showing  
3 you later. And there are even plans to incorporate some of our visuals from  
4 our dashboards into the agency mission analytics portal.

5 The Commission will be hearing a little bit later from Laura  
6 Dudes of Region II about how offices are actually using data to inform their  
7 human capital decisions.

8 In looking at the workforce data there are certain items that  
9 I'm only going to touch on to show that there is no need for concern in those  
10 areas, but looking more closely at what is significant, examining some recent  
11 trends, the current state of the workforce, and some implications for the future.

12 Now I'd like to provide a demonstration of the Human  
13 Capital Dashboard and discuss current trends.

14 As we can see -- where is my cursor? There it is. Sorry.

15 As we can see in the workforce data, employees onboard  
16 by fiscal year, the agency continues to get smaller over the last few years,  
17 from 3,383 in 2016, to 2,728 in 2020, a net reduction of 655 employees over  
18 four years.

19 All of these reductions have been through attrition, and  
20 primarily through retirement. This has allowed us to reach our budget and  
21 staffing size goals without the need for adverse actions.

22 However, the composition of the agency in terms of gender,  
23 ethnicity, and race has not been negatively affected. In fact, there is slight  
24 improvement in both areas.

25 Looking at the gender progression over time, we can see  
26 that the percentage of females has actually increased from just over 39

1 percent to just over 40 percent over the last five years.

2                   Likewise, the total representation of minorities in the agency  
3 has increased from just over 34 percent to about 36.5 percent in 2020.

4                   Looking at separations, we see that the attrition rate for  
5 2020 is comparable to that of recent years: between 6 and 7 percent, with  
6 engineers and scientists somewhat lower. Though attrition bodes well for  
7 both retention and stability of the workforce -- as I mentioned, most  
8 separations are due to retirement, and we'll see those details a little bit later -  
9 - this confirms the need for knowledge capture tools in the agency.

10                   Looking at employees onboard by retirement eligibility, in  
11 the upper corner, we can see that percentages are increasing as retention --  
12 as attrition remains low, approximately 44 percent of the staff eligible within  
13 the next five years currently. However, the actual numbers have decreased  
14 from 1,350 in 2016 to 1,210 this year. The percentages are increasing as the  
15 size of the agency overall has decreased.

16                   This may serve to temper concerns about the retirement  
17 tsunami we've heard about over time.

18                   Looking at employees onboard by fiscal year and age group,  
19 this ribbon chart shows the change in relative position of various age groups  
20 through the agency over time. For example, this purple ribbon shows that the  
21 number and position of employees in the 30 to 39 age group has gone from  
22 the second most populous to the second least populous.

23                   Likewise, the group age 60 and over has gone from the  
24 second least populous to the second most populous in the agency. This  
25 reflects an overall growing trend in the age demographic upward.

26                   Even though the majority of separations, as shown in the

1 bottom chart here, are in the higher age groups, as we know, everyone's a  
2 year older than you were last year, so there are natural shifts from one age  
3 group to the next.

4           However, as the size of the agency has leveled off,  
5 opportunities for external hiring have actually increased in 2020, and will  
6 increase again next year as replacement hiring resumes. This makes it  
7 easier to recruit to fill positions with growth potential, as well as those critical  
8 positions which we've filled all along.

9           Because of these increased hiring opportunities, the age  
10 demographic of external hires is beginning to trend toward a better balance.

11           As we can see in this graphic, along with the overall  
12 increase in hiring in general, we see a more even mix of age groups in 2020.  
13 A more balanced age group demographic enhances the diversity of  
14 perspective and thought in the agency, and the long-term stability of a  
15 technical knowledge basis of the agency.

16           As Miriam mentioned, the agency long had a consistent  
17 focus on entry level hiring, but especially in fiscal year 2020 with the new  
18 Nuclear Regulator Apprenticeship Network Program. In fact, NRAN program  
19 hires in 2020 have actually increased the number of staff onboard who are  
20 under 30 by 50 percent in this year alone.

21           These will eventually become our mid and senior level  
22 professionals.

23           The summer program has also grown steadily in the last few  
24 years, giving students an opportunity to experience firsthand. And I believe  
25 this will continue in future years.

26           Although I don't have a graphic to represent this, retention

1 rates also remain high since 2016, with 44 out of 55 hires of our professional  
2 staff in 2016 and greater than 17 staying at least until their third anniversary.  
3 This represents an 80 percent attrition rate -- retention rate, excuse me,  
4 another indication that NRC remains a great place to work in the Federal  
5 Government.

6 Resignations and transfers combined have remained  
7 steady at about 60 per year. Looking at the attrition rates by type, about 60  
8 per year, as I said, between 2017 and 2020, a combined rate of about 2.1  
9 percent, with a shift toward transfers to other agencies in the last year.

10 There's hope that increased opportunities going forward will  
11 stem voluntary separations of those seeking advancement.

12 In summary, the agency is poised to offer opportunities for  
13 balanced external hiring and for internal advancement. This will allow  
14 managers and supervisors to recruit the talent that they need from both  
15 internal and external sources, to meet the human capital needs of the  
16 respective programs by the agency. As we develop new and better ways to  
17 share analytics information and tools, we will share them with the agency and  
18 will solicit feedback so that we can continually improve our human capital  
19 analytic support to the agency.

20 I will now turn it over to Brian Green who will provide a  
21 presentation and demo on the Employee Journey Initiative regarding retaining  
22 and developing talent to drive transformation.

23 Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

24 MR. GREEN: Good morning, Chairman, Commissioners,  
25 and staff. I am excited to be back in the office today to show you some of the  
26 progress the staff has made and is continuing to make to develop and retain

1 staff, and to ensure that we have the talent and skills necessary to meet our  
2 mission in the years to come.

3 Next slide, please.

4 This is my first time speaking to the Commission, so I'd like  
5 to begin by introducing myself. My name is Brian Green. I earned my Ph.D.  
6 in industrial engineering and human factors from the University of Buffalo in  
7 2010.

8 After graduation I entered the NRC through the NSPDP, or  
9 the Nuclear Safety Professional Development Program. Since then I have  
10 worked primarily in the offices of NRO and NRR as a human factors engineer.  
11 I recently became the team lead for the Human Factors Team.

12 About a year ago I volunteered to support the Futures  
13 Initiatives, and I was selected to be part of the Horizon 1 Career Enhancement  
14 Team. I will tell you a little bit about this initiative in a few moments.

15 As a result of my efforts on that team, I was selected for a  
16 developmental rotation as the Acting Chief for the Workforce Management  
17 and Benefits Branch in OCHCO.

18 I'd like to take a moment to thank Miriam Cohen, Mary  
19 Lamary, Susan Salter, and Dafna Silberfeld for providing me with this unique  
20 development opportunity. I also want to thank my management in NRR,  
21 Chris Cowdery and Chris Miller, for supporting this rotation and continuing to  
22 support it once the pandemic hit and changed so many things about the way  
23 we do work.

24 They could have recalled me but, instead, they worked  
25 together to help find the creative ways to get the work done without truncating  
26 the opportunity. Commitment from all of these people, as well as my peers

1 in NRR and the staff in OCHCO, were necessary to make this rotation work.

2 Thank you to all of you for your commitment to help me develop new skills.

3 Now I'd like to take a few moments to show you how two  
4 staff initiatives are helping to improve career development tools at NRC. Our  
5 hope is that we can use these tools to better support staff in making career  
6 decisions and, in doing so, we will help increase job satisfaction and we will  
7 ultimately help support retention.

8 Next slide, please.

9 The greatest asset that the NRC has is its people. It would  
10 not be possible for the NRC to complete its safety and security mission without  
11 the knowledge, expertise, and dedication of the staff. In 2019, the Future  
12 Core Team created a series of initiatives to drive improvements at the NRC.  
13 I'm going to describe the efforts associated with these two initiatives dedicated  
14 to improving our focus on our people.

15 Next slide, please.

16 The first initiative is called Horizon 1 or Career  
17 Enhancement. The mission for this initiative included two key points.

18 The first part of our mission was to perform a human capital  
19 assessment to better understand the connections between human capital  
20 programs. We reviewed nearly 60 programs and policies and mapped the  
21 connections between various sources of data and tools and methods that are  
22 used to support these programs. I'll show an example of this in a  
23 moment. The second part of our mission was to develop a tool to help  
24 communicate the many human capital programs available to staff so that they  
25 can be well-informed while performing career planning activities. In the end,  
26 we developed an infographic called the NRC Guide to Career Enhancement



1 that serves as a one-stop shop directory to human capital resources.

2 Now I'd like to give a brief demonstration of the features in  
3 the NRC Guide to Human -- I'm sorry -- the NRC Guide to Career  
4 Enhancement.

5 Recognizing you probably won't be able to see the details  
6 on the screen, but that's okay, I'll give a real high-level overview here. This  
7 is the home page for it, for the guide. On this slide you'll see in the center  
8 here there's kind of an icon, and around it are links to six high-level career  
9 planning steps that staff can click on and find more information.

10 The bottom of the page there are links to Microsoft Stream  
11 videos. We've created a Microsoft Stream channel, and on that channel staff  
12 will find testimonials from former senior executives, different career planning  
13 videos that we've created, and some that we found in the knowledge  
14 management that's been going on for years, we've been able to link and sync  
15 in them.

16 When staff click on one of the links -- I'll click on here here.  
17 You can't see it, but it says, AI identify where future work is expected. It takes  
18 them to the next page. On pages like this we'll have a brief description about  
19 what we intend here. And in this case, we don't want staff planning for a job  
20 that isn't going to be necessary in five years, so we want to point them in a  
21 good direction towards where we think there will be opportunity.

22 Give a brief description in the center.

23 At the bottom of the page you'll see frequently asked  
24 question. These are direct responses to questions and comments we've  
25 collected through the 2019 Jam data. Clicking on any one of these links will  
26 take you to a description of the response and the answer to those questions

1 directly.

2                   Perhaps the most important feature on this page is on the  
3 right side. These are real difficult to see on these screens. But these are  
4 icons to our staircase pages. And these are essentially the description of the  
5 human capital assessment we performed.

6                   In this case, this, this diagram shows how the NRC tries to  
7 anticipate future workload.

8                   On the left, left-most, the left-most step or the lowest step is  
9 a link to the plan that is used to identify future workload, in this case strategic  
10 workforce planning.

11                   The second step describes different data sources that are  
12 used to inform the strategic workforce planning process.

13                   And the third step are different activities that the NRC uses  
14 when we need to make an adjustment to the size of the staff based on  
15 workload. For instance, here we say hiring, training, reassignment, re-skilling  
16 or up-skilling, contracting out for services, and interagency details.

17                   And what this really shows is the connection between  
18 planned data sources and the activities we do to make adjustments.

19                   This in and of itself is not of particular use to somebody  
20 trying to plan their career. However, at the bottom of the page we've written  
21 a series of essays that describe how information in the strategic workforce  
22 plan, strategic workforce plan reports, and the different data sources are  
23 accessible to staff so that they can inform themselves about where the  
24 opportunities of the future may ultimately be and use that in their career  
25 planning process.

26                   We use links to these documents and to various SharePoint

1 sites.

2                   And what we're really trying to do is paint the big picture  
3 about the resources that are available to them to help inform their decisions.

4                   And I'd like to return to the slides, please.

5                   The Guide to Career Enhancement is built in SharePoint.  
6 And, as such, there are some automated statistics that are gathered about  
7 staff use of the system which we use to gauge our success. Since the site  
8 was made available on April 1<sup>st</sup>, more than 19 percent of staff have visited the  
9 guide at least one time.

10                  And I actually just looked at the information this morning,  
11 and we have more than 5,200 hits on the site as of this morning.

12                  The Microsoft Stream channel that hosts the career  
13 development videos has had more than 684 views. And we believe these  
14 numbers are indicative that this has been a helpful tool for the staff.

15                  Next slide, please.

16                  The second initiative I'd like to describe is known as Horizon  
17 2, or Employee Journey. We believe one thing we can do to help improve  
18 job satisfaction and, ultimately, retention is to help staff find the best possible  
19 fit between their interests, experience, and the needs of the agency. We  
20 used the strategic workforce planning results to identify positions where we  
21 expect there to be gaps in the workforce in the next five years. And now we're  
22 using this information, along with the information in the various career levels,  
23 and it will include video testimonials from staff to describe the job, and explain  
24 how they found success in the position.

25                  Next slide, please.

26                  In summary, the NRC human capital resources are evolving

1 because we have learned from the various assessments, like the Jam and the  
2 Futures Initiatives. We're trying to help staff identify fulfilling and appropriate  
3 career opportunities and are hoping by doing so staff will find greater job  
4 satisfaction, and this will ultimately support retention and recruitment.

5 Horizon 1 NRC Guide to Career Enhancement focuses on  
6 ensuring staff readiness for future opportunities by providing a one-stop shop  
7 for career planning tools and is currently available to staff.

8 Horizon 2 Employee Journey Initiative is creating an online  
9 explore career platform that focuses on finding a good fit between the staff  
10 and agency needs. It's currently under development, and we expect it to be  
11 ready in December of this year.

12 Before I conclude, I'd just like to thank the members of both  
13 the Horizon 1 and Horizon 2 teams for their support in this. There were many  
14 staff involved, and I'd like to give them credit.

15 I will now turn it over to Laura Dudes, who will provide a  
16 regional perspective on talent management.

17 Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

18 MS. DUDES: Hi. Good morning, Chairman,  
19 Commissioners, and NRC staff. Thank you, Brian.

20 So, before I start, I do want to take the opportunity to thank  
21 Miriam and wish her well in her retirement. She's a great mentor and friend.

22 The human capital tools and usability that I'm going to talk  
23 about today, and that I've experienced over the past 10 years, are really  
24 reflective of Miriam's leadership and commitment to transforming this agency.  
25 So, thank you very much. I appreciate it.

26 And on behalf of Region II, we will miss you. But we look

1 forward to working with Mary as well.

2                   Okay. So, today you've heard about some of the  
3 processes and the system that OCHCO has delivered to support a modern  
4 approach to human capital management. I'm going to share some insights  
5 on behalf of the leadership that uses these tools and processes to maximize  
6 organizational capacity.

7                   Specifically, I plan to talk about the Power BI human capital  
8 dashboard, -- I love your dashboard, Brendan. Very nice. I'm so glad you're  
9 up here today. -- strategic workforce planning, competency modeling,  
10 individual talent development, and the Nuclear Regulator Apprentice Network,  
11 or NRAN.

12                   Slide 24, please.

13                   So, first I'm just going to give you a brief introduction to  
14 Region II. I was going to put the map up there, but I like seeing the faces a  
15 little bit more.

16                   So, we have responsibility in Region II for the oversight of  
17 33 operating nuclear reactors, 7 fuel cycle facilities, and the responsibility for  
18 the construction oversight of the first AP1000 reactor at the Vogtle site.

19                   We have 222 employees, the largest staff in any region, and  
20 the most diverse regional staff with nearly 40 percent African American, Native  
21 American, Hispanic, and Asian Pacific.

22                   We also have a 35 percent veteran population in Region II.

23                   So, some of our staff are pictured here working remotely and  
24 continuing to create opportunities throughout this pandemic to celebrate  
25 diversity and inclusion and support our mission.

26                   Slide 25, please.

1 I would like to acknowledge the great work by OCHCO to  
2 deliver modern management tools. As noted in the Power BI's dashboard on  
3 the upper corner of this slide, we now have real-time data at our fingertips to  
4 monitor and adjust human capital strategy, guided by data analytics.

5 One area we would like to see advance, and my ask for  
6 OCHCO and NRR, is to see, you know, next generation human capital data  
7 and more information on our resident inspectors and their work experiences  
8 so that we can report data-driven decisions not only for the current program  
9 and its development but the future of the resident inspector program.

10 So, moving to strategic workforce planning.

11 In 2017, Region II was part of the strategic workforce  
12 planning pilot effort to enable data-driven solutions to inform our hiring,  
13 training, and development strategy for the workforce of today and the  
14 workforce of tomorrow.

15 This was of importance to us because in 2017 we had to  
16 make a significant workforce adjustment due to the cessation of the V.C.  
17 Summer construction project, and still remain focused on retaining our highly-  
18 skilled workforce to complete the Vogtle project.

19 By building data through the strategic workforce planning 1-  
20 and 5-year workload projects, which are based on agency-wide environmental  
21 scans, by matching those, our specific skill sets to those workload projects,  
22 and identifying skill gaps, the region is far better positioned to make hiring and  
23 training decisions in a timely manner.

24 Since 2017, continued annual assessments using strategic  
25 workforce planning has resulted in a 6-year agency-validated workload project  
26 that, again, promotes hiring and cross-training strategies and decisions to

1 support mission, and to keep the critical skill pipeline moving.

2 This 6 years of data, the data-drive visualization, has really  
3 changed the way the leadership in Region II looks at human capital strategies.

4 And I would say mainly that because of the different  
5 workloads that we anticipated changing in the future, when we look at the data  
6 in total, after building 2, 2 years' worth of data, our first line supervisors  
7 immediately, you know, got engaged and said, we need to be part of this.  
8 And they created a branch chief council to proactively work across the  
9 boundaries in the organization to assure that we can maintain the critical skill  
10 sets to complete our Vogtle construction oversight, but also to plan and be  
11 proactive in terms of transitioning credible construction talent into other  
12 business line work activities.

13 This council has developed a number of strategies to  
14 address this large changing workload, most notably the hire now, place later,  
15 and also a hybrid business line inspector position. These will allow the  
16 construction staff to compete and get placed in a position in the agency but  
17 remain in their construction support role until they are no longer needed for  
18 that work.

19 Slide 26, please.

20 So, in addition to workload management tools, OCHCO has  
21 also transformed our approach to staff development through the  
22 implementation of the talent management system.

23 Intentional individual talent development is a Region II focus  
24 area, and one that is really dear to my heart because it emphasizes a leader's  
25 role to be engaged in the development of all staff, and recognize the  
26 individual's capabilities, the individual's need and desired career path, and to

1 prioritize that as part of our daily work as leaders.

2                   Region II is a leader in working with OCHCO to develop and  
3 implement competency modeling or competency models. A competency  
4 model is a collection of tasks and behaviors that define an employee's ability  
5 to do their job successfully. A competency model describes what people  
6 need to know and be able to do in order execute their responsibilities  
7 effectively.

8                   Region II has a 100 percent participation in the competency  
9 modeling process, which involves the employee and the supervisor having  
10 very specific discussions on skills and ability and the best way to address or  
11 close any gaps identified.

12                   A great example of how this works in practice -- and I heard  
13 this story about a year ago, maybe 6 months ago -- a senior resident inspector  
14 used his own competency modeling to help prepare his resident inspector to  
15 close any gaps or perceived gaps such that that person would be more  
16 competitive when applying for a senior resident inspector job. Well, having  
17 that consistent set of skills and behaviors described made that interaction  
18 more specific, and it made the resident more competitive for a senior resident  
19 inspector job for which he was selected a few months later. So, it was a really  
20 good news story.

21                   So, competency modeling identifies gaps and helps staff  
22 develop more informed individual development plans.

23                   Our next goal in the region is to have 100 percent staff  
24 participation in creating their own individual development plans to facilitate the  
25 employee journey in a more systematic way.

26                   Competency modeling begins the dialog, and the individual



1 development plan then becomes the roadmap for clear and specific actions  
2 needed, such that employee growth is nurtured in a very intentional way.

3 Slide 27, please.

4 So, as a former NRC intern, and over the years we've  
5 created more and more complicated titles for them, and now we have the --  
6 although I think this one's better than the last -- the Nuclear Regulator  
7 Apprenticeship Network. But I was an intern in a similar program. And my  
8 experience with the NRC's training, mentoring, and on-the-job learning has  
9 been so invaluable in my career. And so I'm so proud to be part of this next  
10 generation nuclear professionals as their senior executive champion, and  
11 even more proud of the program that the agency and OCHCO have developed  
12 to support this effort.

13 And rather than me telling you about the program and the  
14 information on this slide, the participants have created a video that they  
15 wanted to share this morning.

16 So, I would like to introduce you to this, the new class of  
17 Nuclear Regulator Apprenticeship Network.

18 (Video Played.)

19 MS. DUDES: Thank you so much. I, like, smile ear-to-ear  
20 when I'm watching that.

21 I just want to thank Susan Abraham, Diane Jackson, and  
22 Brian Doane for their leadership on this program and for bringing these folks  
23 onboard in extraordinary times and doing such a great job.

24 So, this concludes my remarks. And I will turn it over to  
25 Margie.

26 MS. DOANE: Okay, thanks, Laura. That video just tells it

1 all, doesn't it? It's really very, it's an enthusiastic and great way, I think, for  
2 the staff to end its presentation.

3 So, let me just say a few additional words.

4 I'd like to thank the staff and management in the office of  
5 OCHCO and SBCR -- we've done a lot of that, but we should conclude with it  
6 -- who played a central role in helping to realize the achievement we've  
7 discussed during the briefing.

8 I'm appreciative of the efforts of my fellow presenters here,  
9 and the numerous staff who helped prepare for today's briefing, and all the  
10 staff that really support these programs. Obviously, this is just a few people  
11 out of this enormous program that makes this program a success.

12 We've achieved so much over the past year that directly  
13 contributed to NRC's ability to meet its mission now and well into the future,  
14 and we're committed to building off this success to further enhance our  
15 support of NRC staff and management to attract, develop, and retain high-  
16 performing, diverse, inclusive, and an agile workforce in support of their  
17 missions.

18 This concludes our presentation. And I'll turn it over to you,  
19 Chairman.

20 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Thank you so much, Margie. And  
21 those were excellent presentations. And it's clear you all have been  
22 supported by others.

23 But I just to note and comment on the fact that when I joined  
24 our Commission there seemed to be somewhat of a default for the  
25 composition of staff panels. And I just want to complement the Staff.

26 I think in recent months you've really been bringing forward

1 really kind of creative ways of thinking about what the topic is, who from the  
2 Staff should present.

3 And the opportunity, I think, to hear from managers using  
4 tools, from developers, from analysts who are compiling things, I think is really  
5 enriching these meetings. And I just wanted to take a moment to comment  
6 on that.

7 So thank you, as the Staff, for really taking that extra time to  
8 think about, how can we really get to a good dialogue with our Commission  
9 about these topics. I wanted to compliment you on that.

10 And with that, we will begin our questioning, as we do, by  
11 rotating the order. And hopefully Commissioner Hanson is aware that he is  
12 first today. I hand it over to you. Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER HANSON: Thank you, Chairman  
14 Svinicki. And thank you for your remarks about the presentations of the staff,  
15 I completely agree.

16 Thank you all for being here this morning. Let me add my  
17 voice among what I know will be many rounds of thank you's and  
18 congratulations to Miriam for her long career in public service.

19 Like Margie, I recommend the Government Executive to  
20 interview for something that really encompasses the breadth of your career  
21 and all the things you've achieved. The NRC, and really the country, have  
22 been better off for it. And I want to add my thanks to you.

23 And also, congratulations to Mary Lamary on her new role.  
24 And I look forward. I know along with all my colleagues, look forward to  
25 working with Mary going forward.

26 2020 has put a lot of pressure on the NRC workforce.

1 Pandemic, working from home, personal and family health anxiety, the lack of  
2 school and childcare on many cases, with social justice questions looming  
3 over it all and the pandemic highlight and exasperating inequities and  
4 divisions.

5                   And I appreciate the ongoing efforts to stabilize the agency's  
6 workforce with hiring and planning. But it's also extremely important to  
7 ensure the current workforce is able to fully engage in its work and fulfill the  
8 mission.

9                   My impression is that the efforts to hold virtual meetings, the  
10 Staying Connected at a Distance, hold seminars to bring people together have  
11 been pretty successful.

12                   I want to talk about something this morning I wish I didn't  
13 have to talk about and something that's hard to believe is a topic of  
14 conversation given all the Agency's good work on diversity and inclusion.  
15 Particularly given Stephen's presentation this morning.

16                   The Administration recently issued Executive Order 13950  
17 Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping on diversity and inclusion training.  
18 Which requires that agencies, federal employees and contractors do not  
19 provide training workshops, forums or similar programming where certain  
20 concepts are discussed.

21                   It further requires that the Office of Personnel Management  
22 review and approve all diversity and inclusion training before it can take place.

23                   As a result, all diversity and inclusion training at the NRC  
24 has been postponed pending OPM review. Potentially cancelled.

25                   And an IG hotline has been established to report so called  
26 un-American or devise training activities. I understand we're required to

1 comply with the executive order, but I have serious concerns with it and what  
2 we're doing to comply.

3                   Namely that I worry we might be inadvertently silencing Staff  
4 and indicating that they can't speak freely at work. That's essentially the  
5 definition of a chilled work environment, which we must guard against. We  
6 wouldn't tolerate that from our licensees.

7                   Central tenants of the culture at the NRC include an open  
8 and collaborative work environment, which necessarily includes employees  
9 bringing their whole selves to work and being able to raise concerns without  
10 fear of reprisal.

11                   Diversity is a critical element to our safety mission.  
12 Particularly in the area of risk-informing our decisions. We will be affecting  
13 our safety mission if we don't allow a diverse set of views to contribute to our  
14 decisions.

15                   The executive order and the OMB and OPM guidance are  
16 so broad as to create ambiguity about what's permitted and what isn't. This  
17 ambiguity has exactly the effect that we don't want, leaving many employees  
18 with the sense that while we may say we want people to bring their whole  
19 selves to work, in fact, our policies point in the other direction.

20                   If I were staff running diversity inclusion programs, I'd worry  
21 about what kind of trouble I'd be in if I discussed my perspectives based on  
22 race or proposed a training course that was later determined by OPM to be  
23 "un-American."

24                   Many Staff are upset and understandably so. I am upset  
25 too. I don't like the idea that we have to think for more than a nanosecond  
26 about whether or not groups like Blacks and Government are allowed to meet.

1 I'm frustrated that the organizers at the Hispanic Heritage  
2 luncheon felt they had to postpone their event rather than censor it. Although  
3 I understand that this is still on schedule pending review.

4 And I'm deeply dismayed that we're asked to accept the  
5 premise that any event, where anyone might learn anything about what it's like  
6 to be someone different from ourselves is suddenly on hold because it might  
7 be divisive.

8 I recognize that this direction is coming from outside the  
9 Agency. But where we do have flexibility, we should do what we can to foster  
10 diversity and inclusion efforts.

11 At the NRC we've been encouraging Staff for some time to  
12 have tough conversations with each other. And now those efforts seem to  
13 have been thrown into limbo, and it's a shame. It's a shame, certainly, for the  
14 organization at large, and for me personally it's a shame.

15 I try to be aware of my own blind spots and biases based on  
16 my background and experience, but I know it's not possible all the time to do  
17 so. As a Commissioner, how can I listen and learn if people don't feel like  
18 they're allowed to talk.

19 When these kinds of trainings are put on hold, when people  
20 feel like they can't raise certain topics with regard to race and gender, I know  
21 I am missing valuable feedback about the organization or policy matters.

22 And just as important to me, I am missing human  
23 connection. The NRC's greatest asset is its people after all, and as we  
24 recognized this morning.

25 So I'd like to ask some questions to help assure the Staff  
26 that they are free to speak up without fear.

1 Mr. Smith, if one person in a meeting says something that  
2 makes another person uncomfortable, should that person speak-up about  
3 being uncomfortable and explain why, even if they might raise issues like  
4 stereotypes, privilege or bias?

5 Will they get in trouble for raising their concerns?

6 MR. SMITH: Thank you for your question, Commissioner.  
7 We want employees to speak-up. We want to have those conversations.  
8 We want to know what they're experiencing, what's on their mind. And so,  
9 they will not get in trouble if that should occur.

10 We also have mechanisms in place to address when those  
11 employees do raise concerns. Where they can go.

12 They can come to SBCR, they can go to OCHCO under the  
13 anti-harassment policies and procedures. There's options there.

14 If they're experiencing some type of challenge, coping  
15 mechanism that they need to have addressed. We want to stay encouraged.  
16 Despite the executive order, we want to continue to encourage our workforce.

17 As you mentioned earlier, the greatest asset that we have is  
18 our people. And I mentioned earlier in my presentation, in my intro, that we  
19 are a family. And that's true. NRC is a family.

20 Families stick together. Families encourage one another.  
21 Families help one another. So we don't want to silence our employees or  
22 have them believe that they have to be silenced because of the executive  
23 order.

24 COMMISSIONER HANSON: Thank you, I appreciate that  
25 very much. Are affinity groups and advisory committees, such as the  
26 Advisory Committee for African American Employees or Advisory Committee

1 for Employees with Disabilities going to be allowed to meet under the auspices  
2 of the scriptures of the executive order?

3 MR. SMITH: Yes. The advisory committees, groups,  
4 employee resource groups, they are able to meet. Yes, sir.

5 COMMISSIONER HANSON: Okay. If someone says or  
6 brings up Black Lives Matter in a conversation, will they get in trouble for that?

7 MR. SMITH: They will not get in trouble. No, sir.

8 COMMISSIONER HANSON: If someone asks to be called  
9 a pronoun that differs from their assigned gender or birth, will they get in  
10 trouble?

11 MR. SMITH: Absolutely not, sir.

12 COMMISSIONER HANSON: Okay. So, one of the big  
13 issues that we've had as part of ongoing diversity efforts is the Diversity  
14 Dialogue Project. I've gotten emails from the staff that have the email  
15 signature line that says, Diversity Dialogue Project, engage me in dialogue.

16 If someone has that signature line, will they get in trouble?  
17 And what if someone sees the signature line and engages them?

18 MR. SMITH: Absolutely not. In fact, sir, I have the  
19 dialogue as a part of my signature blocks.

20 (Laughter.)

21 COMMISSIONER HANSON: Okay. Well, that's good to  
22 know. You have firsthand experience.

23 MR. SMITH: Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER HANSON: And what about iCARE  
25 activities? You touched on those, and I appreciated your comments about  
26 that very much.



1 I think that iCARE, particularly in these difficult times, is  
2 exactly the kind of thing we should be doing. Can you speak about those  
3 activities and how they fit under the auspices of what we're facing here?

4 MR. SMITH: Yes. So while we're excited, we're truly  
5 excited about the iCARE initiative, as well as many other initiatives, we have  
6 paused those initiatives for such time. Until we receive review and approval  
7 from the Office of Personnel Management.

8 COMMISSIONER HANSON: But people can engage each  
9 other, right?

10 So, there's the distinction here, right, between formally  
11 organized trainings that are used, that are performed with taxpayer dollars,  
12 maybe done with contractors or whatever, and employees interacting with  
13 each other. Can you, I think there's a distinction there, can you talk about  
14 that for just a second?

15 MR. SMITH: Yes. Well, we want, again, we want to stay  
16 encouraged. We want employees to bring their whole selves to work.

17 And so, if they feel that they want to engage with their  
18 colleagues, we want that. We don't want that to cease and desist. We want  
19 to continue with those. Those efforts.

20 It's not formalized training that the conversations are taking  
21 place, it's having a conversation. And so, we see it as quite different. It's  
22 not formal training, it's not forums, it's not activities that's being conducted at  
23 this time, it's conversations amongst colleagues and stakeholders.

24 COMMISSIONER HANSON: So it's people who see  
25 themselves as ambassadors for those kinds of efforts, they can still start  
26 playing those, keep playing those informal roles within the organization?

1 MR. SMITH: We would like them to.

2 COMMISSIONER HANSON: Okay.

3 MR. SMITH: Yes.

4 COMMISSIONER HANSON: Thank you very much.

5 Thank you, Madam Chairman.

6 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Thank you. Thank you very much  
7 for that, Commissioner Hanson, I think that those were very important  
8 clarifications. And I appreciate you using your time today to cover that. And  
9 our powerful statement as well.

10 Maybe I will build off that with Mr. Smith and just ask you, I  
11 appreciate the, we typically hear a status on complaint activity, you've  
12 provided that today. Thank you for that.

13 But we also know that we're working in a very distributed  
14 capacity. So you may have individuals whose most routine day-to-day  
15 contact with any NRC employee is their supervisor. They may have concerns  
16 with that individual or concerns about an action. Or you've mentioned  
17 concerns about reprisal.

1                   As an expert in this area, is there discussion or a look to say,  
2 do we need adaptive approaches to make certain that employees avail  
3 themselves of opportunities to bring forward informal complaints or proceed  
4 to formal mechanisms?

5                   They may feel very isolated and cut off. Could you talk  
6 about that a little bit?

7                   MR. SMITH: Yes. One of the things that we recently did,  
8 my director, Vonna Ordaz, we provided an announcement, and this will  
9 become an annual announcement to all of NRC, reiterating their rights under  
10 the No FEAR Act. We did this a few weeks ago.

11                   And that's to, again, communicate what the rights of  
12 employees are. And we feel very strongly about continuing to educate and  
13 bring about greater awareness to the rights and responsibilities of our  
14 workforce. And so we will continue to do so.

15                   We will continue to have trainings once we sort of do the  
16 restart. And it's because, I will just add this real quick, because our trainings,  
17 our EEO and diversity trainings are somewhat intertwined, the diversity and  
18 inclusion in the EEO statutory and regulatory piece. Which it kind of feeds,  
19 it's a great message.

20                   We could continue with just the statutory and regulatory  
21 requirements of the EEO program and its process, but we feel that it's a  
22 disservice to some of our employees when we do that because of just how  
23 things are interwoven. And we want that message, that story, to be so  
24 profound as we deliver that.

25                   And so, we will continue to find innovative ways to continue  
26 to make our employees, our workforce, aware of their rights and

1 responsibilities. How the process is being administered and the NRC, with  
2 respect to the EEO complaint process, our policies and procedures, the anti-  
3 harassment policies and procedures, our EEO complaint process, the  
4 diversity and inclusion policy statement, the EEO policy statement, that we  
5 have promptly displayed on our web page, we will continue to communicate  
6 that.

7 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Thank you for that. And I just  
8 want to say that with your statement, maybe it sounded very organic and very  
9 natural from you when you mentioned in response to Commissioner Hanson  
10 that we're a family here, I say that a lot.

11 I think people think maybe it's become like a little trite, but I,  
12 like you, Mr. Smith, I have experiences with other government agencies in  
13 other parts of government. I've had a long, it's so grateful to work with  
14 different parts of the federal government in a very long career. It's been a  
15 great privilege.

16 But I really find NRC's culture unique. And Miriam was  
17 mentioning all the changes in her time here, and I've witnessed that same  
18 thing. But there is something very unique and real.

19 I would tell people who don't know NRC about the fact that  
20 people really care about each other. It's just, it's a unique atmosphere.

21 And I'm not saying that other places, they might be different  
22 and have, emphasize other points of culture. But I think that has been my  
23 enduring experience here. So, there will be events that originate, as  
24 Commissioner Hanson said, from outside of the NRC.

25 And what I've so enjoyed experiencing here is people kind  
26 of adapting. Or occasionally just kind of closing inwardly and going, well, that

1 is happening there, but we still have our culture that we value. So, I see the  
2 same thing happening here.

3 But again, thank you. And thank you for your presentation  
4 and for the important clarifications that Commissioner Hanson's Q&A with you  
5 made clear for us.

6 I do need to just spend just a few minutes on a topic that is  
7 so important to kind of continuing on with our culture, with our important work,  
8 which is the discussion of workforce composition between Brendan's tools that  
9 he presented, Laura's commentary on how managers have fundamentally  
10 reoriented how they go about creating the workforce that we need to do the  
11 work today and building into the future with the demographics that were  
12 presented.

13 We have attrited, in a very noteworthy and substantial  
14 amount, the NRAN class, as wonderful as they are. And I have previously  
15 watched the video, and I thought of a really bad pun which is, we can count  
16 on none of them to drop the ball. That was my bad pun about the NRAN  
17 class --

18 (Laughter.)

19 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: -- because there might have been  
20 some flubs but I'm betting they got to have retakes. But what a great group  
21 of people.

22 And each of them, I assume, got to emphasize in their brief  
23 message what they really wanted to say. So it was a great insight into each  
24 of them.

25 But even with that and targeted to external or mid-career  
26 hiring, we're not at any kind of a replacement rate. But I say that knowing

1 that that may not actually be the objective because the objective is to have the  
2 competencies and the workforce that allow us to do, not what we historically  
3 did, but whatever is coming next.

4                   And we know it's different, we're keeping an eye on that.  
5 And we are developing workload projections. And they'll be as good as we  
6 can make them, but they won't be perfect.

7                   And we also have an element of surprise, so we don't want  
8 to plan so thinly that it has to turn out exactly like we thought or we're not going  
9 to be anywhere close.

10                   But I'm glad to hear that we're reanimating. Well of course,  
11 wonderful to add the NRAN cohort onboard, but I'm glad that we are  
12 reanimating kind of mid-career.

13                   And external hiring either from other government agencies  
14 or from just outside government entirely, but to compliment all of that.  
15 Something that we heard, only about at a high-level, because there was so  
16 many topics today.

17                   I'm firmly convinced though that often the most effective and  
18 efficient thing to do will be to substantially kind of train someone for additional  
19 competencies, who already works here, because we are not starting at the  
20 entry level of, I don't understand regulatory frameworks. I need to understand  
21 how we operate and what we do when it is the retraining and re-scaling of a  
22 current member of the workforce.

23                   We already get the benefit of them knowing all of that. So  
24 I'm wondering who particularly may, maybe Miriam can talk a little bit about,  
25 how are we thinking about that.

26                   But I also would be interesting to hear maybe from Laura

1 really quickly about, you lose a person of substantial expertise, they're not the  
2 most senior person, but are we looking at an entire range of approaches to  
3 go, how could we get that competency back in this group as quickly as  
4 possible, so, Laura, do you want to start?

5 MS. DUDES: Yes. So thank you for that. Yes.

6 And I think it's, what you're describing is absolutely, it's  
7 necessary. It's not as difficult to do.

8 I think in our own minds sometimes we create barriers that  
9 don't exist. I mean, when you have Staff, we're looking at cross-training, I  
10 think we've completed a full cross-training on all of our construction staff and  
11 gave them time to complete the qualification for the operating reactors.

12 We are training people, a radiation professional who  
13 understands fuel facilities can also understand radiation in the context of a  
14 operating reactor or a materials licensee.

15 So I think one of the things that we do, which is what I really  
16 like about the competency model, and I think they're moving towards  
17 competency based qualifications versus these long qual cards that have been  
18 built over the years for various reasons.

19 So you're engaging the individual. What do they know,  
20 what can they do. The regulatory piece is huge.

21 And so, if they've already got that and they understand how  
22 to adapt the enforcement policy, I mean, what they're looking at, the beauty of  
23 the NRC, and you can see it with the folks there, we hire great people, super  
24 smart, with the capacity to train them for a specific technical activity. I think  
25 they have the full capacity to do that in most of our work effort.

26 And we need to unleash our leadership thinking about how

1 do we do that most effectively. And I'm not sure if I've answered that or not.

2 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: You have. But you also reminded  
3 me of something that you had mentioned, and I scribbled a note about.

4 It was your example about competency modeling. Helping  
5 a resident inspector be extremely competitive, so much so that he or she was  
6 selected for the senior resident inspector.

7 I want to though add to that and broaden it really  
8 substantially. Is that the history of my experience here is that senior  
9 managers often begin, not just as resident inspectors but the inspection cohort  
10 in this Agency has such a body of experience and real-world application of the  
11 regulatory framework.

12 Whether it be enforcement, interpreting licensing bases and  
13 things like that. And I think that it strengths NRC, and has strengthened it  
14 historically, that those who begin, or choose to begin their careers in resident  
15 inspectors or inspectors broadly, that functionality here, I have seen the most  
16 senior executives here in a moment, a strategic decision making at an  
17 executive level, draw on that early career experience of being an inspector at  
18 the U.S. NRC.

19 And so, I think beyond the example you have given, we  
20 need to also be challenging ourselves to say, how do we get a smooth and  
21 functional flow, breakdown the barriers we put for ourselves, as you said, by  
22 very stovepipe thinking, how do we move folks between programs and  
23 inspection and back and forth because I just think that that brings an incredible  
24 rigor and strength to decision making in the Agency as a whole.

25 And I have run out of time so I will now turn it over to  
26 Commissioner Baran. Thank you for your patience.



1                   COMMISSIONER BARAN: Thank you. And I wanted to  
2 echo the Chairman's remarks about appreciating the Staff, making an effort to  
3 mix up the panels a little bit. The panelists we hear from, hear from some  
4 Staff that we otherwise normally wouldn't hear from.

5                   We had three first time presenters today, I think. Stephen  
6 and Brendan and Brian. You all were terrific. Thank you.

7                   We held our last Human Capital and Equal Employment  
8 Commission meeting last December. It has only been ten months, but in that  
9 time the discussion of race in this country has changed dramatically.

10                  George Floyd's death, after a White police officer knelt on  
11 his neck for nearly nine minutes, launched protests and new discussions about  
12 racial and equality. Those protests and discussions continue today across  
13 the country.

14                  George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and so many other Black  
15 men, women and children who are killed as a result of violence fueled by racial  
16 injustice expanded the Black Lives Matter movement in a way that was  
17 previously unimaginable.

18                  Some say that the phrase, Black Lives Matter, is an insult  
19 to everyone else. A statement that only some lives matter.

20                  I think that reaction misses the point. No one needs a  
21 reminder that White Lives Matter. But the sad reality is that America actually  
22 does need to be reminded that the lives of Black American's matter. It should  
23 be obvious.

24                  Yet we find ourselves at a point in history where we need to  
25 reaffirm that Black lives have, and deserve to have, the same worth and  
26 human dignity afforded to all others.

1                   Why does this matter for NRC? What does it have to do  
2 with us?

3                   The answer is that we are all Americans, and our need Black  
4 colleagues need our support now more than ever. They should know that we  
5 see their pain and want them to feel comfortable bringing their whole selves  
6 to work.

7                   This isn't a partisan issue or extraneous social commentary.  
8 It goes to the heart of our Agency's effectiveness and the health of our  
9 workplace.

10                  NRC can only achieve its vital public health and safety  
11 mission if we are able to work together as a team, value in our diversity and  
12 different life experiences.

13                  Margie, I'd like to ask you, how is your leadership team  
14 approached discussing these issues in our workplace over the last several  
15 months?

16                  MS. DOANE: Thanks, Commissioner. So we have had a  
17 number of forums, and you know that we, and you participated in, I believe,  
18 the Diversity Summit. So we've had a number of opportunities to really look  
19 hard at the various issues that have been so apparent with the country over  
20 the last several months and how they have had an impact on our employees.

21                  And we provided our employees with the opportunities to  
22 share those perspectives so that we can understand and learn how to support  
23 them better in our work at NRC. So that's the first thing.

24                  And while we've talked about here that we can't do training,  
25 we can certainly continue to provide opportunities to share good behavior.  
26 We can make sure that our forums are, I'm sorry, that our processes for

1 reporting those types of issues that run afoul of these behaviors that we have,  
2 that we insist upon, we have those mechanisms for employees to still report.

3 So we're having forums. We have mechanisms for them to  
4 still report. And we're also encouraging affinity groups to continue to meet.

5 There is, I will be honest, there is a lot of confusion, as there  
6 always is, when something first comes out about how to meet it. And that  
7 really says something about our employees.

8 We are, as a whole, we are rule followers. And we get very  
9 worried when we know there is a bar and we don't quite understand it. So  
10 that's just what this agency does.

11 We're regulators, it's understandable. So we are out there  
12 talking about, as best we can. And this forum has really been very useful.  
13 I'm so appreciative to all of you for commenting, to make sure the Staff  
14 understand. That these mechanisms are still available, and we want to  
15 continue these discussions.

16 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Well, thanks for that. These  
17 aren't easy issues, but I appreciate that the Agency, and the leadership of the  
18 Agency, is trying to create safe spaces to discuss them. It's important.

19 I also want to ask about hiring. We had about 100 new  
20 external hires this past fiscal year, which is definitely an increase from the last  
21 few years.

22 On the other hand, the Agency has had over six percent  
23 staff attrition during the fiscal year. I think that's about 185 from Brendan's  
24 conversation.

25 And that's not an unusually high level of attrition, but what it  
26 means is that our workforce is still shrinking pretty rapidly. Margie or Miriam,

1 what more do you think we should be doing to offset our staff attrition to  
2 stabilize our staffing levels?

3 MS. COHEN: So thanks for raising how many hires we had  
4 last year because for a number of years we were like in the single digits, so it  
5 wasn't a whole lot of activity.

6 So, I think when we were in a period of downsizing we didn't  
7 have a lot of choice but to sort of regulate the amount of hiring that we've done.  
8 But then about 12 to 18 months ago we kind of said, hey, we really need to  
9 build the pipeline up. And as you know, it takes a while to bring new hires  
10 into the organization.

11 And so, I think if you look at what we've done last year, even  
12 moving into this year, we have about 200 actions in the system right now.  
13 You know, probably half of them will be externally hired. The rest of them  
14 might be internal. And some of those will actually wind up being on merit  
15 promotions for people in the Agency.

16 So, when I was speaking earlier about a time of opportunity,  
17 I actually think that's really what we're going to experience. Because even  
18 when we hit whatever the bottom is going to be, people leave. Right? And  
19 that creates opportunities.

20 And it may not be a one-for-one, but the reality is, is that we  
21 now are posting supervisory positions. Before we were just reassigning  
22 people at that level.

23 There actually, I looked, in preparation for this meeting, I  
24 looked at the amount of 14s and 15s since about 2010. And believe it or not,  
25 it's about the same percentage wise.

26 So even though we weren't replacing people one-for-one,

1 we still have a high percentage of 14s and 15s. And as more people  
2 matriculate out, primarily due to retirements, there will be opportunities for  
3 people. And that, coupled with all the actions that we have I think will help  
4 replenish the pipeline.

5 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Well, it's great to hear that.  
6 And I think it's really an important message for the Staff to hear because it's  
7 an optimistic message. And it's different really, then it has been for the last  
8 few years, so that's important.

9 I saw in one of the pie charts, three percent of our  
10 employees are now age 29 or younger. That's a very low percentage. But  
11 it's actually an improvement over the previous year.

12 (Laughter.)

13 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Is there a view about what  
14 demographic balance is healthy for an organization like ours in the long-term?

15 MS. COHEN: Not what it was. So, I mean, I think that's  
16 not, I mean, Brendan might have more scientific information that we could get  
17 back to you about what it was when we were actually not in a downsizing  
18 mode.

19 But I think if you look at the current NRAN cohort that we  
20 have now and the likelihood that they'll have a new cohort in a couple of years,  
21 I think that percentage in the entry level is really going to help balance things  
22 out.

23 COMMISSIONER BARAN: I was going to ask about that  
24 kind of, how long do, how many cohorts of NRAN will we need to really kind  
25 of increase those numbers substantially. We saw an increase right away with  
26 even just the first cohort, but if we have a sense of where that's going.

1                   And I guess it kind of goes to one of the discussions we're  
2                   having which is, how much do you retrain people within the Agency, how much  
3                   we bring in people externally, and then of the folks we bring in externally, how  
4                   many of those are lateral versus entry level.

5                   And so I guess I'm just kind of wondering, do we have a  
6                   sense of, if we kind of think about demographic pie chart in the pipeline going  
7                   forward, is there some sense of what an organization should look like if it's  
8                   going to be healthy going forward and how does that inform how much entry  
9                   level hiring we do versus other ways in which to make up for a gap we might  
10                  have?

11                  MS. COHEN: Well, the only thing I would add, and  
12                  Brendan is very close to the data, but people come here and they generally  
13                  stay here. So when you look at an organization that is skewed to the upper  
14                  age range, it's because people come here and they're here for 20, 30 years.

15                  So that's actually a testament to how well the Agency does  
16                  in terms of developing its employees. But at the same time, we need to be  
17                  prepared for the replacement of people through knowledge, management and  
18                  in our other programs for development.

19                  COMMISSIONER BARAN: The, I don't know if anyone  
20                  else wanted to chime in on, okay.

21                  The enhanced strategic workforce planning efforts have  
22                  identified anticipated high priority skill gaps at NRCs various offices. So for  
23                  example, NRR and research will need more risk and reliability analysts while  
24                  several other offices will need more health physicists.

25                  Different offices have different strategies for addressing  
26                  these gaps, but most seem to contemplate a mix of external and internal

1 hiring. Are there certain skill gaps or positions where we expect to see a  
2 significant amount of external hiring in the coming years?

3 MS. SULLIVAN: So, on the external versus internal, I think  
4 it's going to be a combination. So for example, we know we need some folks  
5 in materials, engineering. We know we need some more folks in HP.

6 So what's happening is, is that we are posting  
7 announcements internally that provide people merit promotions. And then  
8 that results in the need to go external for those replacements at the 13 level.

9 And then also, we would expect in the areas of IT, data  
10 analytics, data visualization. Those folks will likely come from the outside to  
11 enhance the skill sets in OCIO.

12 COMMISSIONER BARAN: Okay. Well thank you very  
13 much. We will definitely miss you, Miriam. Thanks for everything you've  
14 done.

15 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Thank you, Commissioner Baran.  
16 Next we will turn to Commission Caputo.

17 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Good morning. I'd like to  
18 start by just saying I really appreciate Commissioner Hanson's questions,  
19 Chairman's statements, Margie's answers to Commissioner Baran. I think  
20 this is a really good discussion for us to be having in spite of the confusion  
21 and uncertainty created by the executive order at this point.

22 I also want to reach out to Stephen and just say, thank you  
23 to you and your team. I hope more than anything your team brings their  
24 whole selves to work every day. Because the work that they do to cultivate  
25 civility and diversity and inclusion here in our family, is an incredibly important  
26 role.

1                   And I hope that they feel free to use their creativity. Even  
2 though we're seeing an uptick in complaints.

3                   Obviously the desire would be zero, which may not be  
4 practical, but I hope your team feels like they can use their creativity to find  
5 perhaps new ways for us to just improve the welcoming nature of our  
6 workforce and work environment in trying to bring those numbers down.

7                   Considering your experiences outside the NRC, this may  
8 not necessarily be a fair question to somebody who started in January and  
9 two months later was in a pandemic working from remotely, I would like to just  
10 ask you a question. Aside from the uncertainty created by the executive  
11 order, do you have any thoughts or views about sort of our portfolio training in  
12 this area?

13                   Are there things that are perhaps dated in atrophy that are  
14 not used and as valued by or utilized by the Staff?

15                   Are there other new trainings that we should perhaps  
16 consider?

17                   Do you have any thoughts about how to sort of maybe  
18 update our portfolio of training?

19                   MR. SMITH: So, thank you, Commissioner, for that. First  
20 off, let me start by saying, I have worked at several agencies. But there is no  
21 question that NRC is the best place to work. Let me just say that.

22                   There are some other trainings that we, SBCR, are  
23 considering adding to our portfolio. We have not rolled that out, but we have  
24 included that on our lists that will go to the Office of Personnel Management  
25 for review and approval.

26                   And so, once that happens, we will start to incorporate that



1 and implement that in some of our trainings and offerings to the workforce.

2 As I mentioned earlier, the iCARE that Margie and Vonna,  
3 during the social unrest and injustices that we were experiencing throughout  
4 the country, came up with the initiative, the iCARE initiative that really hit  
5 home. And I think it covers and it shows the Agency's compassion and  
6 empathy to start these type of trainings and initiatives.

7 And so we're excited about that. We're excited about  
8 receiving approval from OPM on that. In addition to some of the other  
9 trainings as well.

10 I don't want to kind of add or share some of those things at  
11 this time, but we have really gotten outside of the box here to think about other  
12 trainings that would be hugely beneficial to the NRC workforce. And we look  
13 forward to launching those soon.

14 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Wonderful. Thank you very  
15 much.

16 One thing in some of my travels, albeit not recently for  
17 obvious reasons, one of the things that comes up when I'm able to talk with  
18 NRC Staff, whether it's at the plants or in the regions, is sometimes an error  
19 frustration that we have surveys, they're not necessarily clear what  
20 management does to address concerns that gets raised in some of these  
21 surveys.

22 And so, one of these I think that's sort of is aligned with  
23 some of Commissioner Baran's questioning has to do with attention, attrition  
24 retention career development. And I think one of the things that jumped out  
25 to me in our safety culture survey is how, whether it's an age group of 30 to  
26 39 or maybe grade levels 13 and 14, there seems to be a fair amount of

1 frustration in human capital and concerns about attrition, retention and career  
2 development.

3                   So, I guess, Miriam, I'd like to ask you, I haven't seen a chart  
4 of attrition rates by age group for a while. The last time I saw one I noticed  
5 that certainly the youngest band actually had an attrition rate that exceeded  
6 the retirement eligible band. Which I think raises concerns.

7                   I'd also be curious about sort of those mid-career bands  
8 because, obviously, as our more experienced employees leave and take their  
9 expertise with them, we need those mid-career folks to be ready to step into  
10 their shoes.

11                   What can you tell me about the attrition rates that we're  
12 seeing in that level, because I look at those people and I think there is a fair  
13 amount of expertise there already and if they are not yet seeing the  
14 opportunities that Miriam is talking about, they may find it quite attractive to  
15 leave and go somewhere else. And that would be horrible to lose those  
16 valuable people.

17                   So what can you tell me about what you see in those attrition  
18 rates?

19                   MS. COHEN: Thank you, Commissioner, for the question.  
20 So we look really at retirements and transfers as the things that would be the  
21 warning signs. Because the bulk of our attrition is through retirements.

22                   And so, we looked at the data for the past three years for  
23 people that have resigned or have transferred. And there is, in Fiscal Year  
24 '20 there was a slight uptick in people at the GG-13 level that have gone to  
25 other agencies.

26                   And I don't have the data in front of me to say of which

1 positions by person, but it's not a number yet that I'm alarmed about, but it's  
2 also something to keep our eyes on.

3 And so, one of the things that we did see at the age group  
4 that you talked about, the Ages 30 to 39, is that there has been attrition  
5 through transfers to other agencies, and it's been a little bit more prevalent in  
6 the regions versus headquarters.

7 I would remind folks that a few years ago, when we had the  
8 corporate support reductions, we had a fair number of people in the corporate  
9 office transfer to other agencies. So at the time we didn't view that as  
10 problematic because we were looking to place people because we had to hit  
11 certain FTE numbers.

12 I think now what we're seeing at the age group that you talk  
13 about, is that's the prime age group where people are looking for opportunities.  
14 So I do believe, and we can probably follow-up when we had data moving in  
15 from this year into next year, about the people that receive the internal merit  
16 promotions to the 14s that in years past were not able to get those promotions.  
17 And then they move to the next level, and then we have new positions for  
18 other people to aspire to.

19 So, I think the data now doesn't indicate that we have a big  
20 problem, I think it's something that we have to be mindful of. But again, with  
21 a hundred actions in the system now that will likely result in internal  
22 opportunities for people at some level, I think time will tell.

23 So I think we just have to be patient but be mindful.

24 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Okay, thank you. I have  
25 another question, sort of in that flavor.

26 Brendan, I'm really impressed with the analysis and the

1 dashboard. Really, I think modernizing the way we look at human capital,  
2 and I thank you for that.

3 But one of the comments you made, I have to admit, I'm  
4 pretty curious about. I think you said 44 percent are eligible to retire in five  
5 years. And our age demographic is still trending upward.

6 But the Agency's decrease in the size may temper concerns  
7 about a retirement wave. So, until those numbers, I feel like decrease to a  
8 more balanced and sustainable profile, I would still be cautious about a  
9 retirement wave.

10 So, if these are percentages but the overall size goes down,  
11 why do we still might have to worry about having a retirement wave because  
12 we still have work that we need these very valuable people doing and we still  
13 have mid-level folks that we need to develop and bring along, so, why should  
14 we not be as concerned?

15 MR. CAIN: So, thank you, Commissioner. So the  
16 percentage is going up because the number of staff total is going down faster  
17 than the number of retirement eligibles is dropping.

18 So as I mentioned, the total number of retirement eligibles  
19 has gone down as well, just not as quickly as the total staff numbers has.  
20 This is why the percentages are rising.

21 So, as Miriam said, it's something we want to watch, but I'm  
22 not sure we should be to, to concerned about it.

23 Several years ago we did a study of the percent of  
24 retirement eligibles who actually did retire in a given year. And it's probably  
25 time to redo that study and see where we're falling.

26 At the time, this was five, six years ago, we saw a pretty

1 consistent rate of 16 percent of eligibles who actually retired in a given year.  
2 So I think it would be a good time to redo that study and see where we fall.

3 COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: Well, I agree. I think that it's  
4 a hugely important thing for us to keep our eyes on because it's this, I don't  
5 want to say no man's land, but we're struggling to balance the fact that we  
6 have a lot of expertise that could leave if they choose to. Which is a little hard  
7 to predict.

8 And we have people who may or may not have felt like there  
9 is adequate opportunity because we have this substantial cohort of very  
10 experienced, very capable people. So it's, we're straddling this line.

1                   And I guess the need to maintain a measure of balance and  
2 try to predict these changes as best we can, I think is a huge HR challenge.  
3 And I'm really glad that you're bringing this level of analysis to it. But I do  
4 think you're right, we probably need to reassess and execute that survey  
5 again.

6                   MR. CAIN: Thank you.

7                   COMMISSIONER CAPUTO: So, thank you.

8                   CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Thank you, Commissioner Caputo.  
9 And now we will hear from Commissioner Wright.

10                  COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Thank you, Chairman. So  
11 good morning and thank all of you for your presentations.

12                  It's really good, Laura, to see everybody in person. I agree  
13 with you. I've missed that a lot. So, when we talk about bringing our whole  
14 selves to work, I can't wait for that to be not virtual anymore, right?

15                  (Laughter.)

16                  COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: And, Chris, I appreciate your  
17 statement and your comments and the questions earlier in response to the  
18 executive order. And also appreciate the responses, just like the rest of the  
19 people here at this table.

20                  I would like really to tie this into Miriam a little bit. So,  
21 Miriam, congratulations on your retirement. I hate to see you go myself  
22 because, and I do wish you the best as you go forward. I know you probably  
23 have some things planned so hopefully we'll get to see you again.

24                  I can tell you personally you've been available to us and to  
25 me. Anytime we've had a need and reached out. And we're very grateful  
26 for that. And I know Mary has got some huge shoes to fill.

1                   Because when I first came to the Commission, you know,  
2 like everybody, more than anybody else probably, that I started walking the  
3 halls and cubicles and all the floors to meet everybody from the security  
4 guards out at the gate to back when I talked to the supply room all the way up  
5 to the 18th floor, meeting staff, the people. Meeting our human capital,  
6 meeting the people who are here every day doing what they do, right.

7                   And I firsthand got to see everybody in the places that they  
8 work. Diversity of this Agency is obvious. We are family in this Agency.  
9 That was recognized, well, from the first day.

10                  Everybody here is very real. But we are a product of where  
11 we came from, how we were raised. Our personal like and like experiences,  
12 be they good or bad.

13                  And that's what I really love about going around and meeting  
14 everybody is that I can meet you, I can share with you, I can learn from you.  
15 And if we take that experience, just that, and we build on that, that encourages,  
16 it builds trust. It builds relationship, which makes us stronger as an Agency.

17                  And I see that here. Okay. I don't just see it; I feel it when  
18 I go around. I know that's what's going on.

19                  That's why I miss not having everybody in the building, right.  
20 Where you can just talk to everybody casually and learn what's important to  
21 them. Because it does make, it makes me better, it makes me understand  
22 better what I need to maybe focus on.

23                  It helps me learn maybe what needs to happen. And it  
24 gives me a really good idea of things I need to pray about going forward too.  
25 So, I do appreciate that. And I miss it. So I look forward to that happening  
26 again.

1                   So, just very quickly, I have a couple of simple questions  
2 that I think that, Margie, you or anybody else can answer.

3                   On the executive order, and the related guidance, is our  
4 response, has it been consistent with other federal agencies, and if it's been  
5 different, how so?

6                   MS. DOANE: So, as far as I know, we have been  
7 consistent because we have made an effort to speak with other agencies, and  
8 with OPM, to make sure that we're really, that our understanding is consistent.  
9 So yes, we've been consistent with other agencies.

10                  But this is an ongoing activity. So we'll continue to see like,  
11 if there is a best practice by another agency, we'll continue to look through  
12 that.

13                  COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Okay. And I guess just  
14 another question, another area.

15                  So, for everybody who is listening, Staff wise and everybody  
16 who's in this room, one, I thank you for the important work that you've been  
17 doing remotely. Because there has been a lot of challenges to working  
18 remotely.

19                  I've really been personally impressed with how well its gone.  
20 I've seen, in just this few Commission meetings that we've had here where we  
21 had to bring people in, like today, how well prepared they've been, how  
22 accessible everybody has been during this whole pandemic phase.

23                  And I guess I just want to know, do you have the technology  
24 and resources that you need to continue to operate under these  
25 circumstances and if not, what would those needs be?

26                  MS. DOANE: Do you mean from a technical perspective?



- 1 I'll just talk and then you guys can add.

1                   So we are constantly reassessing what we need from a  
2 technology perspective to continue to be, continue to be successful. And so  
3 far we haven't identified anything in the short-term that we need.

4                   You know, we didn't need to expand our bandwidth and  
5 things like that. But other than that, we have what we need. And we are  
6 continuing to innovate and think about innovations.

7                   Like for example, we are moving the MAP. Everybody likes  
8 to talk about Mission Analytics Portal that is in NRR, for example. We're  
9 moving that now, that effort, to NMSS. NMSS is actively working with OCIO.

10                  COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Right.

11                  MS. DOANE: So we have, at this time we have what we  
12 need, Commissioner.

13                  I think our communication tools are being enhanced through  
14 Teams and other software programs like Teams. Because we have Webex  
15 as well to hold these meetings.

16                  But I think we have to continue to look for ways of using that,  
17 look for ways that continue to include as many people as possible. So we  
18 can improve, and we're continue to look for those ways because  
19 communication is really hard and fatigue is settling in. It absolutely is. And  
20 so, we have more work to do.

21                  COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: So that's a good area of  
22 focus that we can have further discussion about is how to keep people  
23 motivated.

24                  MS. DOANE: Absolutely.

25                  COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Okay, very good. And,  
26 Miriam, what we haven't talked about, at least I don't think it was mentioned

1 here today, I mean, we're in COVID, right, we're all working remotely.

2                   And as we come out of it, depending on who you listen to,  
3 is it going to be this year, is it going to be next year, I don't know, but as we  
4 come out of it, we're not going to be the same probably as an Agency. I  
5 mean, we're still going to have the same work, we're still going to be doing  
6 things but it's going to be done very differently.

7                   Have you all started looking at how that's going to impact  
8 our workforce?

9                   And looking at that potential tsunami that you were talking  
10 about of retirements and is there a plan in place to, where are we at in that  
11 plan to --

12                   MS. COHEN: Well, I'm just going to say a couple of things  
13 and then Marty can just obviously correct me as I walk out the door.

14                   But I think, it's going to tie all together with, I think the  
15 Agency really has to focus on culture because I think sustaining employee  
16 engagement the longer we stay in our virtual telework situation I think is  
17 something that I would pay attention to if I was still here.

18                   And then I think we need to really think about, let's talk about  
19 the NRAN cohort, right. How do you develop the next cadre of regulators --  
20 oh, I was just going to say, so how do you develop the future of cadre of  
21 nuclear regulators when you're in a virtual environment?

22                   I mean, they need to be coached and mentored by people  
23 that are in the workplace. So I think that is definitely a challenge that we have  
24 to pay attention to and to focus on.

25                   And then just finally, some food for thought. And I don't  
26 know, based on Commissioner Caput's comments is, if you look at some of

1 the trending data now about where people might go is that we might actually  
2 see attrition slow down.

3                   There might be people that are retirement eligible that are  
4 like, wow, I don't have to commute anymore, I'm saving money on gas, I'm  
5 really comfortable, I'm still engaged in my work. So we might not have  
6 attrition.

7                   So I think we have to just be mindful of that because it could  
8 slow down as well. At the same time, if people can work from anywhere,  
9 people that maybe weren't interested in us before, maybe because they may  
10 be able to work from another location. So I think there is challenges but  
11 probably likely more opportunities.

12                   COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: Okay. Thank you. So, to  
13 wrap-up, just want to thank you for that as you go out the door. That's good  
14 information, food for thought. And I do wish you the best.

15                   And, Laura, knows walking around the Agency, out in the  
16 regions too, I got all kind of questions. Especially when I first got here. Like,  
17 who let you in --

18                   (Laughter.)

19                   COMMISSIONER WRIGHT: And then one question I did  
20 get was, so where are you from. And I said, well, technically I guess I'm from  
21 Region II, so, that's where I came from.

22                   So thank you for your presentation, thank you for the  
23 questions, it's been great. And to be able to wrap it up, I wish I had the world  
24 ball because I would pass it to you.

25                   (Laughter.)

26                   CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: All right. Well, thank you for that.

1 And as I think I've done since I became Chairman, when it is someone's very  
2 last meeting, well first I'll just, ten-of-ten, Miriam, it's your tenth presentation  
3 here in the books.

4 But I might just give you, is there any kind of last word that  
5 you, and again, there is an abundance of gratitude for all your work here.  
6 You're also quasi-famous on the CHCO Council, which is how we know what's  
7 going on in other Agencies.

8 The Chief Human Capital Officer Council across agencies.  
9 You represent us on that. You'll be turning that over to Mary who will do, I  
10 think you've made some introductions for her with other agencies. But just  
11 reflecting on your long journey.

12 And before I turn to NTEU, which will be the last component  
13 of the meeting, before we left this group of presenters, I just wanted to give  
14 you a second.

15 MS. COHEN: No, I just wanted to say thank you. I've had  
16 the greatest job I think in the Agency working with the best people and having  
17 the greatest support of the senior leaders and at the Commission level. So  
18 I'm thankful and grateful, appreciate it.

19 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Okay, thank you again so much.  
20 And again, all our best wishes to you.

21 So, as I referenced, the final component of today's meeting  
22 will be that we will hear from the representative of the National Treasury  
23 Employees Union. NTEU will be represented today.

24 I am informed by Sheryl Sanchez, and she is joining us  
25 remotely via Teams platform. So there is someone expert who will, oh, there  
26 you are. Okay, great. Well, I'm looking up at the monitor. Sheryl, please,

1 go ahead and make your remarks.

2 MS. SANCHEZ: Good morning, Chairman Svinicki,  
3 Commissioners, EDO Doane, managers and Staff and most importantly, NRC  
4 Bargaining Union Employees.

5 I am Sheryl Sanchez, President of NTEU Chapter 208 and  
6 I'm pleased to be able to provide the Union's comments this morning.

7 NTEU is the exclusive representative of bargaining union  
8 employees here at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. I am joined virtually  
9 by a large number of employees on our NTEU team who work hard every day  
10 on behalf of bargaining union employees. Such as our stewards, labor  
11 partners and executive board members.

12 Without such a dedicated team, NTEU would not be able to  
13 strive to achieve our mission to work together to ensure that ever federal  
14 employee is treated with dignity and respect.

15 It is important that all federal employees are treated with  
16 dignity and respect. And as such, our current contact with the Agency or our  
17 collective bargaining agreement, dated November 9th, 2015, contains a  
18 dignity clause in Article 2. Which states that, relationships in the workplace  
19 should be conducted in a civil businesslike manner.

20 NTEU has been representing NRC employees since 1978.  
21 And this is the first contract that specifically contained the dignity clause.  
22 However, NTEU has stood by this mission statement for over 80 years.

23 Respect, dignity and civility are at the heart of any effort to  
24 ensure diversity and inclusion. Sadly, a lack of civility is often the result of a  
25 lack of respect.

26 If you do not feel respect for someone you may find it more

1 acceptable to treat them badly or uncivilly. But as our contract specifies, it is  
2 never acceptable not to conduct ourselves in a civil manner. This is  
3 commonsense but sometimes it's easier said than done.

4           Although it has been less than a year since we gathered for  
5 our last EEO briefing, so much has changed since we last met. So much has  
6 changed. And also, so much is still in the need of changing.

7           It is undeniable that the world has been changed forever by  
8 the COVID-19 pandemic. And in some ways, at some point in the future, we  
9 will all be better for this.

10           Currently, our employees are feeling a lot of anxiety and  
11 stress due to the uncertainty of the pandemic, as well as other events  
12 occurring in our country.

13           Our new mostly virtual work environment, although  
14 incredibly convenient and efficient in many ways, has also created  
15 opportunities for misunderstandings and incorrect perceptions, which can lead  
16 to false conclusions.

17           For example, a first level supervisor may send a rather  
18 innocuous email to an employee asking them what they're doing. The  
19 employee, already overwhelmed with running a household, working a 24/6  
20 schedule, having a spouse that is not working or is forced to work outside the  
21 household, navigating the challenges of elementary school and common core  
22 math, and who knows what else, interprets this as, "what are you doing," and  
23 worries that the supervisor is accusing them of not doing their job.

24           Add to this that we're knee-deep in performance appraisal  
25 season and anxious about the possibility of a second wave of COVID, and  
26 hurt feelings, fear, worry and anxiety can occur even when this was not the

1 supervisor's intention.

2                   There is also the possibility that the supervisor is dealing  
3 with their own issues and overacts. Possibly being unreasonably harsh.

4                   In this case, the employee is the one who, due to the  
5 imbalance of power, is more likely to be harmed.

6                   Honestly, a lot of our employees are struggling. And for  
7 those who are in certain groups that have been historically discounted and  
8 perhaps disrespected prior to current reality, these employees are being  
9 impacted more severely because they were already disadvantaged prior to  
10 the world being turned upside down.

11                   What can we do? Obviously there is no easy answer. But  
12 we have to find a way to speak up for those employees who may feel voiceless  
13 and speak out in support of all federal employees.

14                   It is essential that we strive to protect employees from  
15 harassment, discrimination and targeting. We must do all that we can to level  
16 the playing field so none of our employees feel like they are not valued.

17                   This is the only way we can move forward and be truly  
18 successful as an Agency. Our employees deserve no less.

19                   In conclusion, we are all handling the current reality  
20 differently. And some of us may do well one day but the next day not so  
21 much.

22                   If there was ever a time when we should all strive to be extra  
23 kind, empathetic, understanding and helpful to our NRC family, this is the time  
24 you all. Please, let's try every day to be nice humans.

25                   And for our bargaining union employees, NTEU is here to  
26 help get you through this. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us, we are



1 here for you.

2 Thank you all for listening. And please vote.

3 CHAIRMAN SVINICKI: Thank you very much, Sheryl.

4 And again, my thanks to all of the Staff, the presenters and my colleagues.

5 And with that, we are adjourned. Thank you.

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

7 at 11:34 a.m.)