

1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
2 NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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4 BRIEFING ON EEO

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6 PUBLIC MEETING  
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9 Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
10 Commission Hearing Room  
11 11555 Rockville Pike  
12 Rockville, Maryland  
13

14 Thursday, June 25, 1998  
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16 The Commission met in open session, pursuant to  
17 notice, at 2:02 p.m., the Honorable GRETA J. DICUS  
18 presiding.  
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20 COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

- 21 GRETA J. DICUS, Member of the Commission
  - 22 EDWARD McGAFFIGAN, JR., Member of the Commission
  - 23 NILS J. DIAZ, Member of the Commission
- 24  
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1 STAFF AND PRESENTERS SEATED AT THE COMMISSION TABLE:

- 2 JOHN MINNS, Selection Subcommittee
  - 3 PETER BLOCH, Management Diversity Subcommittee
  - 4 IRENE LITTLE, OSBCR
  - 5 JOE CALLAN, Operations
  - 6 PATRICIA NORRY, Management Services
  - 7 JIM McDERMOTT, OHR
  - 8 JEANETTE COPELAND, Paraprofessional Subcommittee
  - 9 DAVID DIEC, PMS, APAAC
  - 10 SAM COLLINS, NRR
  - 11 HUB MILLER, Region I
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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 [2:02 p.m.]

3 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Good afternoon, ladies and  
4 gentlemen. The Chairman has asked me to deliver the opening  
5 and closing remarks to the briefing today and to express her  
6 very sincere regret at being unable to attend unfortunately  
7 due to a recent death in her family. She felt, however,  
8 that it was important not to cancel or postpone this  
9 briefing, even though she is away from the office today, and  
10 she is attending a funeral.

11 The purpose of our meeting today is to discuss the  
12 status of the NRC's equal employment opportunity -- the  
13 EEO -- program for the period from July 1, 1997, through  
14 March 31 of 1998.

15 As you probably know already, the EDO is to report  
16 to the Commission at semiannual public meetings on the  
17 status of the EEO efforts, the progress of the program, and  
18 any associated problems. The Commission held its last EEO  
19 briefing on October 14, 1997. As a result of that briefing,  
20 the Commission requested that this briefing include a  
21 presentation by the Director of NRR and a regional  
22 administrator on the implementation of EEO program policies,  
23 including statistical information on the number and types of  
24 advanced degrees that are held by the professional staff in  
25 NRR. Therefore, the briefing today will include

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1 presentations by Mr. Sam Collins, the Director of NRR, and  
2 Mr. Hub Miller, the Region I Regional Administrator.

3 The SECY paper 98-137, copies of which are  
4 available at the entrances to this room, contains additional  
5 information and data on the status of the NRC's EEO program,  
6 the response to the Commission's SRM on the last briefing,  
7 and activities of the EEO advisory committees,  
8 subcommittees, and the Joint Labor-Management EEO Committee.

9 The paper represents the continuing cooperative  
10 work of the Office of Small Business and Civil Rights, Human  
11 Resources, the EDO's office, the advisory committees,  
12 subcommittees, and the Joint Labor-Management EEO Committee.

13 I encourage you to continue your efforts to work  
14 together to make improvements and accomplish clear results  
15 in meeting our EEO goals.

16 Now on that note and on behalf of my fellow  
17 Commissioners, I welcome the presenters and all employees in  
18 the audience who have demonstrated by your presence an  
19 interest in and commitment to the NRC EEO program. I look  
20 forward to hearing about the progress we are making and the  
21 results that we have achieved in the EEO area, and I would  
22 like particularly to welcome a newly formed subcommittee,  
23 the Paraprofessional Subcommittee, and I look forward to the  
24 contribution they will make in the EEO process.

25 Clearly our goal is an equitable environment for

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1 all our employees, and we will continue to respond to the  
2 changing environment within government, and within the  
3 industries we license and regulate. These industry changes  
4 include deregulation, restructuring, and utility mergers.  
5 We must continue our efforts to be more efficient, to  
6 streamline agency programs, and to reduce unnecessary budget  
7 expenditures. Always remember, however, that challenge is a  
8 pathway to opportunity.

9 Would any of my fellow Commissioners like to make  
10 a comment at this time?

11 [No response.]

12 Then given that, Mr. Callan, executive director of  
13 operations, if you will please proceed and introduce the  
14 people at the table.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. CALLAN: Thank you, Commissioner Dicus, and  
17 good afternoon everyone.

18 We are indeed pleased to be here today to provide  
19 the Commission with information on the current status of the  
20 Agency's EEO program. As you pointed out, Commissioner  
21 Dicus, this briefing will cover the period since the last  
22 EEO briefing on October 14, 1997. Joining me on my right is

23 Patricia Norry, the Deputy Executive Director for Management  
24 Services, and Jim McDermott, the Deputy Director, Office of  
25 Human Resources. Joining me on my left is Irene Little,

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1 Director, Office of Small Business and Civil Rights. Irene  
2 will now introduce the EEO Advisory Committee  
3 representatives.

4 Irene?

5 MS. LITTLE: Thank you, Joe.

6 To my left is Peter Bloch, the chairperson of the  
7 Management Diversity Subcommittee; John Minns, the  
8 chairperson of the Selection Subcommittee; to Mr.  
9 McDermott's right is Jeanette Copeland, who is the  
10 chairperson of the Paraprofessional Subcommittee, and David  
11 Diec, chairperson of the Performance Monitoring  
12 Subcommittee, who is also chair of the Asian Pacific  
13 American Advisory Committee. These are the presenters who  
14 will be speaking today.

15 Also participating in the briefing are several  
16 people in the well. I would ask that they would stand as I  
17 call their names.

18 We have Sue Smith, EEO counselor; Elliott Greher,  
19 chairperson of the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee;  
20 Raymond Holt, acting chairperson of African American  
21 Advisory Committee; Paul Narbut, chairperson of the  
22 Committee on Age Discrimination; Charleen Raddatz,  
23 chairperson of the Federal Women's Program Advisory  
24 Committee; Jose Ibarra, chairperson of the Hispanic  
25 Employment Program Advisory Committee; Mike Weber,

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1 chairperson of the Joint Labor-Management EEO Advisory  
2 Committee. Also joining us today is Peter Hearn, who's  
3 president of the National Treasury Employees Union.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. CALLAN: Thank you, Irene.

6 In addition to the committee members, we have two  
7 NRC managers participating in the briefing to discuss their  
8 implementation of EEO program policies. They are Sam  
9 Collins, the director of NRR, and I believe next to him Hub  
10 Miller, the regional administrator of Region I.

11 And before I turn the discussion over to Pat  
12 Norry, let me just say that although the Agency continues to  
13 operate in an environment of limited resources, the  
14 objectives of the EEO program are and will remain relevant  
15 as we carry out our management responsibilities. I firmly  
16 believe that the accomplishment of our EEO goals will  
17 enhance individual and organizational performance,  
18 contribute to the regulatory effectiveness of the NRC, and  
19 help ensure that NRC remains a strong and viable  
20 organization. I believe the Agency is doing a credible job  
21 of maintaining and in some cases enhancing work force  
22 diversity, and we are taking specific actions to manage our  
23 diverse work force more effectively.

24 And with that, I will now ask Pat Norry to provide  
25 details about our progress and a summary of our response to

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1 the staff requirements memorandum.

2 Pat?

3 MS. NORRY: Thank you, Joe, Commissioners.

4 May I have the first slide, please.

5 I would like to briefly highlight our responses to  
6 the information requested by the Commission in the SRM from  
7 the last EEO briefing. There is more detailed information

8 on each one of these items in the paper itself.

9 First we gathered data and compared NRC strategy  
10 for hiring entry-level women and minorities for technical  
11 positions with the hiring strategies of DOE, EPA, and NASA.  
12 We found that our success in these categories is similar to  
13 that of the other agencies. With NRC's accepted status and  
14 flexible hiring authority, and the fact that we use a  
15 variety of recruitment sources, our efforts to attract women  
16 and minorities for entry-level technical positions have been  
17 relatively successful. There's more information in the  
18 paper on the specifics that are characteristic of the other  
19 agencies, but the comparison looks pretty good.

20 Secondly, we're in the process of enhancing our  
21 merit selection tracking matrix to capture demographics of  
22 applicants on best-qualified lists, and we believe this  
23 enhanced system will let us assess the selection trends and  
24 patterns and develop better strategies for hiring.

25 We were asked to look at the extent to which our

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1 contract with the Southwest Research Center requires  
2 compliance with EEO regulations, and indeed it does, as do  
3 our contracts, Federal Government contracts with all  
4 entities doing business with the Government. In the case of  
5 the Southwest Research Center, they have really gone beyond  
6 what is strictly required and have an active minority  
7 recruiting plan.

8 In order to enhance our recruitment efforts we've  
9 used a variety of marketing strategies, including brochures  
10 and display materials and ads. What we're looking for there  
11 is to show specifically the challenging technical jobs that  
12 the Agency has, and we have a brochure which we'll be  
13 sending up for the Commissioners to look at when we get  
14 developed, which should be fairly soon.

15 In addition what we do with the people who are  
16 going out on recruitment trips, we give them very specific  
17 details about the technical positions that are available so  
18 that they're able to characterize them correctly.

19 We develop recruitment plans that show all of the  
20 career fairs and the onsite campus interviews, and we  
21 coordinate these with all the offices and with the regions,  
22 and we try to get people to participate in these recruitment  
23 efforts who can discuss the specific technical positions  
24 available.

25 We reestablished the technical intern program, and

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1 that of course includes positions in both headquarters and  
2 the regions. We recently made employment offers to one  
3 Asian male, one Asian female, one African-American male, one  
4 African-American female, three white men, and four white  
5 women.

6 One of the major challenges in our entire  
7 recruitment effort is attracting and hiring and retaining  
8 Hispanics. That has been a major focus and will continue to  
9 be. We have advertised in newspapers and journals that  
10 target Hispanics. We maintain liaison with universities and  
11 colleges, at institutions that have a high representation of  
12 Hispanic students, and they have been helpful in identifying  
13 candidates for us. This year we have made four selections  
14 of Hispanic employees, but more needs to be done.

15 With respect to the priorities of our efforts in  
16 the EEO program, there are four major areas. They include  
17 enhancing opportunities for women and minorities in  
18 professional positions; expanding the pool of minorities and  
19 women in supervisory management and senior positions;

20 enhancing efforts to attract and retain employees with  
21 disabilities; and improving communication about the Agency's  
22 EEO objectives.

23 While the NRC continues to be challenged by budget  
24 and FTE reductions and mandates to reduce supervisory  
25 ratios, these four goals remain the focal point of our

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1 activities.

2 May I have the next slide, please.

3 The first area of emphasis shows that we made 59  
4 hires, and of those, 69 percent were white males, 7 percent  
5 were white females, and 24 percent were minorities. A total  
6 of 11 positions were authorized for the technical intern  
7 program. Of the offers that I mentioned before, five so far  
8 have been accepted. And in addition, the Office of  
9 Administration has established and filled three  
10 administrative intern positions -- two black women and one  
11 white woman.

12 Also, in order to enhance opportunities, qualified  
13 graduates who participated in our historically black college  
14 and university research program are being considered for  
15 technical positions at NRC.

16 May I have the next slide, please.

17 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: The intern program has  
18 been up and down, and our budgets unfortunately seem to be  
19 headed down. There's about a \$16 million cut in the core  
20 budget aside from DOE in both Houses, \$16-\$17 million. Will  
21 we have to reassess very shortly again the viability of the  
22 intern program given a 4-percent reduction in our budget?

23 MS. NORRY: I believe the prevailing view is that  
24 we ought to continue it; that even though we are going down  
25 in overall staffing, that the intern program provides the

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1 kind of skills and talents we're going to need for the  
2 future, and that ought to be one of the things that gets  
3 maintained. That's the general thinking at this point.

4 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: Okay.

5 MS. NORRY: May I next slide, please.

6 Even with the impact of downsizing and working  
7 toward a supervisory ratio of 8 to 1, we have made some  
8 progress in our goals. The total on-board number of  
9 permanent employees during this period decreased and the  
10 total number of supervisory positions has declined, but the  
11 number of minorities in the feeder group, which is Grades 13  
12 to 15, has increased from 347 to 356 and the number of women  
13 in SES and SLS positions has also increased.

14 May I have the next slide, please.

15 We have continued our recruitment and retention  
16 efforts in this area. We in addition to the recruitment and  
17 retention efforts, we ensure that reasonable accommodations  
18 are provided to employees as required by law.

19 For example, we recently installed additional  
20 automatic door devices and special telephone services for  
21 three hearing-impaired employees.

22 May I have the next slide, please. This is the  
23 one that focuses on improving communications about EEO and  
24 Affirmative Action objectives. In addition to incorporating  
25 the EEO goals within each office's operating plan, we are

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1 also close to completing an updated Affirmative Action Plan  
2 which will be distributed to the entire agency. We believe  
3 that these will go a long way toward communicating to all  
4 employees what we are trying to achieve in the EEO program.

5 We have of course implemented a Managing Diversity  
6 process in the agency and that has been completed in the  
7 first stage. We conducted sessions for supervisors and  
8 managers in Headquarters and two of the regions and we will  
9 complete the other two regions shortly, then we will provide  
10 a session for other supervisors in management in  
11 Headquarters.

12 The next steps will be on some more practical  
13 information for all employees on how Managing Diversity can  
14 work for them.

15 Now I would like to ask Irene Little to provide  
16 highlights of the issues addressed by the EEO advisory  
17 committees.

18 MS. LITTLE: Thank you, Pat. The EEO advisory  
19 committees and the joint Labor-Management EEO advisory  
20 committee have continued their team effort with the Office  
21 of Small Business and Civil Rights and with Human Resources  
22 to support the agency's overall EEO program.

23 The committee's overall focus has been in four  
24 areas: improvement of the merit selection process; review  
25 of career development initiatives; support for a Managing

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1 Diversity Process within the agency; and assessment of  
2 policies and practices that impact employees in clerical  
3 support and paraprofessional positions.

4 The Managing Diversity subcommittee provided the  
5 impetus and some input for the agency's Managing Diversity  
6 process which was mentioned by Pat earlier. By the end of  
7 this fiscal year, we should have completed our orientation  
8 of managers and supervisors and in FY '99 we will initiate  
9 our orientation sessions for employees.

10 The Performance Monitoring subcommittee has  
11 completed its review of the agency's career development  
12 initiatives and has made several recommendations.

13 One of the subcommittee's major recommendations  
14 was restoration of the intern program. Here again that  
15 program has been restored.

16 We will continue our review and response to the  
17 remaining recommendations made by the subcommittee.

18 The Merit Selection subcommittee developed several  
19 recommendations that were included and discussed in the last  
20 EEO briefing. In response to one of their recommendations,  
21 the Office of Human Resources is developing a question and  
22 answer brochure to assist employees in gaining a better  
23 understanding of the merit selection process. A draft copy  
24 of that brochure has been provided to the Selection  
25 subcommittee Chairperson.

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1 We have also provided the committee a draft  
2 response to the remaining recommendations that were  
3 submitted several months ago.

4 We will continue to work with the Selection  
5 subcommittee to finalize both documents, the brochure and  
6 the response to their recommendations and report on the  
7 outcome of this at the next EEO briefing.

8 A newly-formed Paraprofessional subcommittee has  
9 been established --

10 COMMISSIONER DICUS: A question, please.

11 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I don't want to make  
12 this specific -- but have there been any allegations made in  
13 recent months as I think there was at one of the previous  
14 meetings about pre-cooking the qualification statements so  
15 that it is tailored to a single individual or -- I mean that  
16 is the heart of this issue, isn't it, this merit selection,

17 whether things get precooked to a particular individual?  
18 Then this brochure presumably is meant to help,  
19 but what other steps are you taking to make sure that  
20 doesn't happen?

21 MR. McDERMOTT: I think -- this is Jim  
22 McDermott -- I think the -- and John, correct me if I am  
23 wrong -- it wasn't so much precooking the announcements and  
24 things like that ahead of time as a view that in selecting  
25 officials' minds there is a small subset of truly viable

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1 candidates and people they don't know of haven't had the  
2 exposure, things like that, has somehow sealed off the  
3 process.

4 I don't want to mischaracterize what the views  
5 were last time, so jump in if you feel that that is not  
6 correct.

7 MR. MINNS: I will cover this when I give my  
8 presentation.

9 COMMISSIONER McGAFFIGAN: Okay, I'll wait.

10 MS. LITTLE: If I can add, one of the things we  
11 did last time is we accepted based on the recommendation of  
12 the Selection subcommittee a check-sheet that the HR  
13 specialist utilized with the management official to make  
14 sure that they are looking at broad rating factors to  
15 prevent just this kind of narrowly-focused rating criteria.

16 We have had a couple of instances where that has  
17 been brought to my attention. I discussed it with HR and we  
18 have resolved that issue, so yes, we have that in place and  
19 I believe it is in use throughout the HR community for all  
20 of the postings.

21 MR. McDERMOTT: We get a curious phenomenon in  
22 some postings, where the results revealed only two kinds of  
23 candidates, those not qualified and those graded A. It's  
24 not what you would think would be an expected distribution.  
25 That gets to the issue that Irene is mentioning, where what

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1 kind of a set of factors did we set up? Where did we set  
2 the bar and at what stage of the process is the bar set at  
3 this or that level -- so we are looking at that.

4 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Let me follow up on that, to  
5 Commissioner McGaffigan's question. Perhaps you want to  
6 address this when you do your presentation but in light of  
7 that, when we have an unsuccessful candidate, a qualified  
8 but unsuccessful candidate for a position because the other  
9 candidate was better qualified, do we ever give to these  
10 unsuccessful candidates on where they might be lacking in  
11 their skills, knowledge, experience and what they might need  
12 to do to fix that so that they may be successful in the  
13 future?

14 MS. NORRY: We tried to do that in cases where we  
15 can see obvious problems with an application for instance  
16 where with just some additional help that application could  
17 have been made a lot better, so we work with individuals.

18 We also encourage managers to talk with people who  
19 were not selected and pass on any information that might be  
20 helpful to them in trying to apply for future positions. If  
21 people contact HR and ask for information, HR will find that  
22 information and try to share it with them, so -- we need  
23 more of that though.

24 We definitely need more feedback. It is very  
25 frustrating when people are told no, there's nothing wrong

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1 with you particularly -- you just haven't been selected for

2 the last 10 positions you applied for. That is not helpful  
3 and we work very hard with managers to try to steer away  
4 from that.

5 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Maybe it would be helpful if  
6 we are able to transmit the message to the employees that we  
7 encourage this with the managers and maybe start tracking in  
8 some way this becomes a program that we look at.

9 MR. McDERMOTT: We developed fairly recently a  
10 course for managers and quite honestly the impetus of that  
11 was we've got to do a better job of talking to non-selected  
12 employees and that course has been delivered around a number  
13 of locations.

14 Some of the managers are -- Bill Kane and I have  
15 talked and they are doing something very good in NMSS to  
16 improve communication about the outcome of the selection  
17 processes.

18 I hope to see this spread.

19 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Maybe encouragement is not the  
20 right word -- there might be a better word to use that will  
21 be more specific and will express our desires to actually  
22 have feedback available to those people who do not make it  
23 in a more -- just call it accountable manner.

24 MR. McDERMOTT: Okay.

25 MS. LITTLE: The fourth subcommittee that has been

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1 established, recently established, has been the  
2 Paraprofessional subcommittee and they have started to  
3 review some of the practices that impact career advancement  
4 of administrative staff, but they have not submitted to us  
5 any recommendations at this time.

6 We certainly appreciate the time and effort that  
7 the subcommittees and the advisory committees have expended,  
8 identifying the issues and concerns, and making  
9 recommendations that they think will improve the program and  
10 have a positive impact on employees in general and we are  
11 going to ask David Diec to give some additional comments  
12 about committee activities. He will be speaking on behalf  
13 of the advisory committees. David?

14 MR. DIEC: Thank you. Good afternoon, members of  
15 the Commission, Executive Director for Operations, the  
16 Office of Small Business and Civil Rights. I am David Diec.

17 It is an honor for me to represent a diverse  
18 background of NRC employees including African-Americans,  
19 Asian-Pacific Americans, people who are concerned with age  
20 discrimination, women, and Hispanic-Americans -- here today  
21 to express our views and concerns regarding the Nuclear  
22 Regulatory Commission's Equal Employment Opportunity, EEO,  
23 program.

24 The EEO advisory committee's report as indicated  
25 in SECY 98-137 is structured in two parts. First is the EEO

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1 joint briefing statements including reports from the four  
2 subcommittees, and second is the individual statement from  
3 each of the advisory committees.

4 Representatives from the joint subcommittees who  
5 are at the table today, including myself, will answer any  
6 questions you may have regarding the EEO joint briefing  
7 statements and the subcommittees' reports.

8 The advisory committee chairs also are available  
9 to answer questions relating to individual advisory  
10 statements. By way of background, we have formed three  
11 joint subcommittees with members from each of the advisory  
12 committees as well as from SBCR and HR in 1996, as Ms. Pat  
13 Norry alluded earlier, that to help the agency identify and



14 enhance opportunity for advancement for minorities and  
15 women, expand the pool of minority and women for higher  
16 positions as well as to attract, develop and retain  
17 employees with disabilities as well as improve the  
18 communication about the EEO and affirmative action  
19 objectives.

20 The joint subcommittees are Performance  
21 Monitoring, which I chair; Managing Diversity, which is  
22 chaired by Judge Bloch; the Selection subcommittee, which is  
23 chaired by Mr. John Minns.

24 Additionally, we have recently formed the  
25 Paraprofessional subcommittee to address issues that may

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1 impact the administrative assistant staff, which is chaired  
2 by Ms. Jeanette Copeland, and Ms. Copeland will make a brief  
3 statement pertaining to her work immediately after my  
4 statements.

5 Commissioners, this is the fifth time that the  
6 committee has consolidated those issues that have common  
7 interests into a joint statement. The committees in  
8 consultation with SBCR and HR have continued a team approach  
9 and have worked together to address and resolve the open  
10 joint statement issues and questions raised by the committee  
11 in the last EEO briefing, SECY 97-197.

12 We are pleased to report that steady progress has  
13 been made in several areas. We applaud the agency decision  
14 to restore the NRC Intern Program. We strongly believe that  
15 this program will continue to be an effective means of  
16 providing opportunities for minorities and women.

17 We also believe that the agency's decision to  
18 implement a Managing Diversity process will have a positive  
19 payoff.

20 A number of recommendations made by the Selection  
21 subcommittee either have been adopted by the management or  
22 are under cooperative discussion. Mr. John Minns will make  
23 a statement regarding the Selection subcommittee work  
24 following Ms. Copeland's statement and finally Judge Bloch  
25 will report to you his statement regarding accomplishments

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1 about the Managing Diversity.

2 Members of the Commission, the mutual cooperation  
3 and the open communication among the advisory committees  
4 SBCR and HR are crucial and are generally effective in  
5 resolving longstanding issues. However, two issues continue  
6 to be of concern to our EEO advisory committees  
7 collectively.

8 The first is an issue that has been raised several  
9 times but little progress has been made. It was first  
10 raised with regard to Asian-Pacific Americans but appears to  
11 affect all minorities and women. That is, limited  
12 representation in the SES and a longer than average time in  
13 grade, particularly at the Grade GG-14 level.

14 The second issue is the potential adverse impact  
15 on EEO-related activities, especially in the training area  
16 during the downsizing and budgetary constraints.

17 In gathering data for the analyses, and in talking to  
18 our constituents, we continue to sense that NRC employees  
19 are skeptical as to the fairness of the system intended to  
20 provide equal opportunity for all, especially with the  
21 current downsizing and budgetary constraints.

22 We are however confident that the recommendation  
23 we proposed to resolve the issues, if fully implemented,  
24 will continue to contribute to the development of the

1 equitable system.

2 In conclusion, the EEO advisory committees  
3 appreciate the attention that the Commission has given to  
4 our concerns and with that I would like to --

5 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Some questions.

6 MR. DIEC: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: You say if fully  
8 implemented your concerns on these two issues could be dealt  
9 with. With the \$16 million budget reduction facing us and  
10 perhaps more in future years -- we were facing a \$100  
11 million budget reduction over two years a few weeks ago --  
12 can they possibly be fully implemented, and with some of the  
13 report language about management? It sounds -- from the  
14 House language they are even more concerned about too many  
15 managers, which means presumably too many 15s and SESers, so  
16 the whole system given the direction we seem to be getting  
17 from the Congress is going to make it very difficult on both  
18 of these issues, the training cutbacks.

19 It comes down to if you are not bringing very many  
20 people in, and we may not be in order to avoid RIFs and that  
21 terrible word, there isn't much -- you have ongoing training  
22 for the people you have and you need to keep that up, but we  
23 are in this terrible box and I don't know how soon we are  
24 going to get out of it.

25 So are there -- it isn't really your task, but at

1 some point you all in order to get your initiatives  
2 implemented are going to have to suggest other mechanisms  
3 for observing cuts or something.

4 MR. DIEC: Employees are aware -- are keenly aware  
5 of the situation that the agency is going through. We are  
6 expecting to do more with less, and I think that we are all  
7 prepared to do more with less.

8 However, having that as a constant reminder to our  
9 later day activities, without opportunities for employees to  
10 provide the best, or to do the best with the appreciation  
11 from the management, so that employees are -- feel  
12 appreciated and needed.

13 The issue of having the opportunities for  
14 employees to enhance their career or to move up in a career  
15 ladder is important to everyone of us. Having a system in  
16 line that allows everyone to fairly compete, regardless of  
17 the number of opportunities. If we have a lot of  
18 opportunities, by all means, it is going to be great. But  
19 if the opportunities are far and few in between, however,  
20 there are certain opportunities available regardless of his  
21 situation. If employees are having the ability to compete  
22 squarely and selected for, and they are fully aware of their  
23 limitation and capability, I think that is what we are  
24 looking for, rather than having the system that we don't  
25 really know whether or not or effort is going to be

1 appreciated or opportunities are.

2 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: Do we -- I'll direct  
3 this to management, do we have an idea as to how many 15 or  
4 SES level slots are likely to come available in the coming  
5 fiscal year, given a \$16 million reduction in our budget?  
6 Is that something you -- and how soon do you know such  
7 things?

8 I mean if you didn't know this October 1st, I'll  
9 give you an out, how would you publicize it then, that this  
10 is realistically -- I mean because part of this is

11 communication. That sort of came out at this morning's  
12 thing that I watched on television as well. Part of it is  
13 just -- is communication, so that people understand what the  
14 score is. Because I think it was the 14 group which is  
15 being talked about, which was one of the areas, I think they  
16 came up red for job satisfaction this or whatever this  
17 morning.

18 So, and that's -- so, go back to my original  
19 question. When can you convey what the likelihood of  
20 opportunities are, knowing that there is going to be some  
21 variation as the year goes on?

22 MS. NORRY: I think, as you know, Commissioner, we  
23 are looking now at how we can meet our goal of 8 to 1 in  
24 supervisory ratio. That is clearly going to require some  
25 additional reductions at the top. You can't get there

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1 entirely by reducing levels of supervision at the lower  
2 levels. We are looking at that now. We are going to be  
3 getting some information out to the offices. And once all  
4 that is sorted out, we will have a better feel.

5 We are communicating and we need to ask the office  
6 directors to continue to communicate with their staffs about  
7 these necessary reductions. And when we know how all this  
8 is sorted out, we have to be sure that the word gets out.

9 But it is clear that we are going to have to  
10 reduce in the upper level positions. I think that this puts  
11 greater pressure on us, as David said, to make sure that  
12 what opportunities are available are done fairly and are  
13 provided to all in a way that meets merit selection  
14 principles.

15 MR. CALLAN: Just one point I would make,  
16 Commissioner, and that is that only a fraction of the GG-15  
17 positions are impacted by this 8 to 1 effort, because fewer  
18 than half of our GG-15s are supervisors. And we do not have  
19 any overall effort to get the number or the percentage of  
20 15s down. We limit -- we try to limit the number of GG-14  
21 positions and above to about 44 percent. Is that right?

22 MR. McDERMOTT: Fifty-five.

23 MR. CALLAN: Fifty-five percent or -- yeah, 55.  
24 So that's -- we are a very highly graded agency, that's a  
25 very generous allocation of positions to GG-14 and GG-15

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1 positions. So that -- we don't see any reduction in that  
2 percentage.

3 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: Can I follow up on that?

4 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Yeah.

5 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: Do you get into trouble  
6 with OPM or because we are an accepted agency, we have the  
7 flexibility to have that high a grade structure?

8 MR. CALLAN: It's always a point of contention,  
9 isn't it?

10 MS. NORRY: It is something we -- it is a point of  
11 contention, but we don't get in trouble with OPM. We are  
12 required to let them know certain things about SES, of  
13 course, because we do come under their jurisdiction for SES.  
14 But the rest of it, they know we are highly graded and so  
15 far they haven't made a fuss about it.

16 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: And we don't have -- I  
17 mean one of my experiences in government as a fairly junior  
18 foreign service officer was having -- I was in the White  
19 House Science Office, I was trying to get my secretary a  
20 higher grade, and I had this young 23-or-so year old OPM  
21 person come in and sort of audit her job to make sure that

22 she was worthy of this promotion. That doesn't happen to  
23 us?

24 MS. NORRY: No.

25 MR. CALLAN: We do it to ourselves.

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1 [Laughter.]

2 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. I think we can move  
3 on.

4 MS. COPELAND: Hi, I am Jeanette. I am Jeanette  
5 Copeland. I the Chairperson of the Para-Professional  
6 Subcommittee.

7 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. Could you speak a  
8 little more into the mike, please?

9 MS. COPELAND: Okay. I am not used to this.

10 COMMISSIONER DICUS: That's okay.

11 MS. COPELAND: The subcommittee was formed in  
12 November of 1997, so we really haven't voiced a lot of our  
13 issues, except what our goals are that we are planning. And  
14 one of the goals is that we are trying to review the  
15 agency's awards, comparing the technical staff to the  
16 para-professional staff, that's the administrative,  
17 secretary, licensing assistants to see that the kinds of  
18 awards that they have received, the trends that have  
19 followed in the kinds that they have received.

20 We are also reviewing the administrative position  
21 descriptions because we are trying to determine if the  
22 administrative staff is compensated across the board  
23 uniformly. So we are trying to look at other agencies as  
24 well as within our own agency.

25 Finally, we are looking at the administrative

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1 opportunities and career paths, and would hope that the  
2 Upward Mobility Program could be reinstated. We know that  
3 has significantly decreased, and because of the office  
4 technology coming in, more so into the agency, that the  
5 administrative staff is feeling like they are being cut out  
6 and that we feel like they need more advancement and  
7 training.

8 MS. LITTLE: Okay. Thank you. Any questions?

9 [No response.]

10 MS. LITTLE: All right.

11 MR. MINNS: Thank you.

12 MS. LITTLE: Thank you.

13 MR. MINNS: I am pleased to be invited to address  
14 the Commissioners today. My subcommittee was formed to  
15 address areas of concern jointly identified by the seven EEO  
16 Advisory Committees. The Selection Subcommittee comprises  
17 NRC employees and knowledgeable managers from Human  
18 Resources and Small Business and Civil Rights, who choose,  
19 in addition to their jobs, to take on additional  
20 responsibilities in the EEO area.

21 Last year we made 23 recommendations concerning  
22 the merit selection process. Most of the recommendations  
23 will help to improve employee communication -- will help to  
24 improve the communication process between the employees and  
25 managers. In cases in which pre-selection is perceived, the

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1 merit selection process will serve employees as an informal  
2 mechanism for bringing such perceptions to the attention of  
3 management.

4 Although we submitted these recommendations for  
5 comments in May 1997, we have only recently received  
6 responses. One of the responses is the merit staffing at  
7 the NRC, which represents HRS replies to one of our

8 recommendations. The Selection Subcommittee plans to review  
9 the responses in great detail in the coming weeks and will  
10 work with HR and SBRCR cooperatively to agree on changes  
11 that will be made.

12 Our interest is to ensure that the tone and  
13 content of these documents are in line with our  
14 recommendation and they demonstrate full management support.  
15 We want to continue our cooperative process because we  
16 believe that communications and management skills will be  
17 increasingly important as the agency downsizes. That's all  
18 I have.

19 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. Thank you.

20 Commissioner, do you have questions?

21 [No response.]

22 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. Thank you.

23 Mr. Bloch.

24 MR. BLOCH: Thank you. My committee is Managing  
25 Diversity Committee, and I want to begin by saying that it

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1 has been a joy working with the managers and employees who  
2 are diverse and working together to make this agency more  
3 effective in EEO.

4 I would like to emphasize something that John just  
5 said. He is talking about the pre-cooked positions in part,  
6 and it is still a work in progress. I think we are working  
7 on it effectively, but the recommendations that came from  
8 the committees have not yet been formally acted on by the  
9 staff. That's what we are hoping to work together with them  
10 on in the future.

11 We have been very pleased in the area of Managing  
12 Diversity that the agency is starting a new initiative. We  
13 consider it a very important initiative, and the training of  
14 the managers and the planned training of the employees is  
15 extremely important.

16 This initiative will be good for that agency  
17 because we are in a terrible box, because this doesn't  
18 require hiring new people, it requires treating the people  
19 we have better and making them more effective.

20 In this regard, I want to mention Dennis Rodman.  
21 Dennis Rodman is mentioned because he is an example of a  
22 rather odd character who would make most of us uncomfortable  
23 if we were on the same basketball team, but without him the  
24 Bulls wouldn't have won two world championships. And the  
25 idea is that in our work place there are many people who

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1 would make us uncomfortable because they are not of our  
2 background, they didn't grow up with us. Maybe they don't  
3 even have the same intellectual style that we have, but they  
4 could add to the process if they were fully incorporated.

5 And the problem is that to do that, managers have  
6 to be able to, very frankly, look at their own weaknesses in  
7 dealing with people who are not like them. That is not an  
8 easy program to implement.

9 And I would like to mention that Commissioner  
10 McGaffigan and I were looking at the same TV program this  
11 morning. I noticed that there were a number of the findings  
12 that seemed to be relevant to how well we are don't in using  
13 people effectively right now.

14 The most striking finding was question No. 33,  
15 which is the management style that the NRC encourages  
16 employees to give their best, and only 33 percent of our  
17 employees said yes. And that compares with a national norm  
18 of 52 percent. So there is room for improvement. And if we

19 can improve in that area, my belief is that we are going to  
20 improve job satisfaction in this agency and people are going  
21 to know that if there are more openings in the future, that  
22 they will be treated fairly, because on a day to day basis  
23 they are being used more effectively.

24 I would just like to conclude that it is very  
25 important that this program be implemented seriously, that

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1 it not become window dressing, as can easily happen in a  
2 management program, and that there be a lot of management  
3 attention paid to it so that it will be as effective as all  
4 of us dream it should be. We all want a better agency.  
5 Managing Diversity is a way of approaching that.

6 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Thank you very much.

7 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Questions?

8 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: No.

9 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I think it is three  
10 championships that Dennis has been --

11 [Laughter.]

12 MR. BLOCH: A better basketball fan than I.

13 MS. LITTLE: We need to have a brief change of  
14 scenery right here. Okay.

15 MS. NORRY: Sue Smith is one of the EEO  
16 counselors. And I believe last time we came before you we  
17 pointed out the tremendously vital role that the EEO  
18 counselors play, and we thought it would be good to have one  
19 of them come on behalf of all the counselors and talk about  
20 their activities.

21 Sue.

22 MS. SMITH: Thank you. Commissioners Dicus, Diaz,  
23 McGaffigan, the primary role of the EEO counselor is to  
24 facilitate informal resolution of allegations of  
25 discrimination between the involved parties whenever

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1 possible. The goal of the counseling process is to resolve  
2 the complaint at the lowest possible level. After meeting  
3 with the complainant and conducting fact-finding, the  
4 counselor will generally make contact with the first line  
5 supervisor and move up the management chain, as necessary to  
6 attempt resolution.

7 Individuals who feel they have been subjected to  
8 discrimination must contact an EEO counselor within 45 days  
9 of the event giving rise to their allegation. The EEO  
10 counselor has 30 days to complete fact-finding and attempt  
11 resolution. And additional 60 days resolution -- excuse me,  
12 an additional 60 days extension may be granted if the  
13 employee and counselor feel resolution is imminent.

14 If the issue is not resolved, the counselor  
15 notifies the employee in writing, advising him or her of  
16 their right to file a formal complaint. If a formal  
17 complaint is not filed, the counselor has no further role.  
18 However, if a formal complaint is filed, the counselor  
19 prepares a detailed report of counseling activities.

20 A significant amount of the EEO counselor's time  
21 is spent in discussions with individuals regarding issues  
22 that never materialize into formal complaints, and that is  
23 my primary focus today. I gathered information from several  
24 EEO counselors regarding themes and issues that employees  
25 bring to them at the informal stage but often do not raise

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1 as formal complaints.

2 These include, No. 1, performance appraisals.  
3 Employees' perceptions that ratings across the board are  
4 being lowered to fully satisfactory without good reason.

5 Two, pre-selections. Employees still feel that  
6 this is a real problem within the agency. They feel that it  
7 wastes the time of employees in filling out application  
8 packages, of HR staff in reviewing the applications and  
9 arranging for panels and of management in interviewing those  
10 applicants. Employees would like to see greater use of  
11 accretion of duties when management already has someone in  
12 mind for a vacant position.

13 Three, unfair distribution of awards, lack of  
14 recognition for excellent and outstanding work, and  
15 favoritism by managers.

16 Four, lack of communication from managers,  
17 especially during periods of change. Change is anything  
18 that departs from that which the employee has become  
19 accustomed. For example, the impact of, quote, "new  
20 standards for performance appraisals," or going through a  
21 reorganization. These changes bring about insecurities  
22 among employees. Employees would like to see management  
23 involve staff during the planning process, not just inform  
24 them after plans have already been made to enact the  
25 changes.

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1 Some of these issues are not issues of  
2 discrimination. My experience has been that EEO counselors  
3 serve as a sounding board for many, many issues. I have  
4 been an EEO counselor for over eight years, and I find the  
5 role of an EEO counselor to be a critical, challenging and  
6 rewarding one. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

7 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Thank you. Let me ask you a  
8 question on this performance appraisal situation where  
9 employees' perceptions that ratings across the board are  
10 being lowered to fully satisfactory without good reason. Is  
11 that perception or is that a fact? Do we know?

12 MR. McDERMOTT: In some offices it is fact. Why  
13 is that happening? Joe and I talk about it, too. We said,  
14 you know, we have -- we have been cruising along for many  
15 years with 95 percent or more of our employees rated  
16 outstanding or excellent. You know, it was turning into a  
17 pass-fail system. Outstanding was pass, excellent was fail.  
18 It was really not healthy in our view. You didn't spread a  
19 rating, and it was not good for employees because we are  
20 lumping them too much.

21 And we talked about changing the systems. We  
22 talked -- we see a lot of people. But one thing that fresh  
23 eyes did was looked at -- and I am looking at Joe, looked at  
24 the manual chapter, and he said, what if we would do what it  
25 says in this manual chapter? As in apply the definitions of

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1 outstanding, excellent and fully successful, which is a  
2 dirty word in the NRC performance appraisal -- the words  
3 themselves aren't all that bad -- if we applied them more  
4 exactly.

5 And if you did that, you know, sort of a code word  
6 in outstanding is rare and exceptional contribution during  
7 the rating period. And nobody was getting anything well  
8 done, everything was rare or medium rare in the prior  
9 system.

10 So the answer is, yeah, it was a fact. We looked  
11 at those and some people whose performance level really  
12 stayed the same found their rating down a notch in the last  
13 rating year, and that was not applied uniformly across the  
14 agency. We said let's try it and see, and it had various  
15 results.

16 COMMISSIONER DICUS: So what sort of plans do you  
17 have in mind, or what sort of brainstorming have you done to  
18 see that if this is the proper move to take, that it is  
19 going to be done uniformly that? Because that is  
20 problematic if it is here and there.

21 MR. McDERMOTT: Yeah, you got to do something  
22 about it.

23 COMMISSIONER DICUS: And I think this is helping  
24 to lead to that problem.

25 MR. McDERMOTT: First of all, level the playing

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1 field across the agency. And then -- and this is sort of --  
2 at present, I haven't unveiled this to Ms. Norry yet. But  
3 one of the things --

4 [Laughter.]

5 MR. McDERMOTT: One thing that generates a lot of  
6 heat about this is the uses to which we put performance  
7 appraisal, and particularly the performance appraisal  
8 document. Everybody wants it to be a vehicle for good,  
9 candid, constructive communication, but then we say, but  
10 we're going to use it in merit selection, same document. So  
11 employees are saying, you know, if you damn me with faint  
12 praise, I'm dead, and employees have come to me and said, if  
13 I don't get an outstanding, I'm out of the running in a  
14 merit competition.

15 So the point I want to revisit and review is, is  
16 that really worthwhile or are we working against ourselves  
17 when we say, you know, let's have good, straightforward  
18 objective performance appraisals, and then, you know, try  
19 and get that exactly even across the agency -- no way. It's  
20 like school -- there are some easy markers and there are  
21 some hard markers, and there will always be both kinds of  
22 markers.

23 So I want to get that kind of softened or --  
24 soften the impact of that in the performance or in the merit  
25 selection process. I think it would take some heat out of

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1 it.

2 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I will say that based on  
3 my experience in government, and my entire work experience  
4 has been in government, although not very often in the  
5 system in which most of the employees work, I think it's  
6 real important that you get away from a 95 percent O&E.

7 I had a terrible experience -- I didn't, but I  
8 watched a terrible experience at Los Alamos a few years  
9 back. They had essentially a pass-fail system. You didn't  
10 even have to write. There was no communication with the  
11 employees. If you checked somebody fully satisfactory, that  
12 was the end, and if you found something wanting, you had to  
13 write a long report. So what did people do? They checked  
14 the box and the performance appraisal system lasted ten  
15 minutes.

16 Then they had to do a RIF, and they had an  
17 informal system where everybody got in a room and rated  
18 their employees and figured out who was going to get -- 800  
19 people had to get RIFed. The amount of litigation was  
20 unbelievable.

21 So I think you have -- you have to have a system,  
22 I think, where the reputation of the person, the person who  
23 gets asked at four o'clock on Friday to get the work done  
24 that needs to get done or whatever lines up with what their  
25 written appraisal does, and it has to be done on a uniform

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1 basis across the agency, it can't be one part of the agency



2 doing it and another part not.

3 So I encourage the direction, but I think there's  
4 all sorts of implementation problems when you fall into the  
5 Los Alamos syndrome to work your way back out of it.

6 I had another lab in my state, Sandia, which every  
7 year identified the bottom 25 percent, and they were  
8 identified, they knew who they were, and that was a more  
9 industrial approach and it worked. It was much better --  
10 much better communication because people knew whether they  
11 were in the top 25 percent, middle 50, or the bottom 25,  
12 they knew where they were.

13 MS. NORRY: And I would just add that one of the  
14 ways you get this done, in addition to -- last year was the  
15 first year we really made an attempt across the board, and  
16 you're going to have these kinds of problems. But the  
17 communication is key. Some offices did a much better job of  
18 that than others, and we have to make sure that that happens  
19 uniformly.

20 The other thing is senior managers must be held  
21 accountable for what the results and what's happening in  
22 their offices. They must be held accountable for that. And  
23 that's built into the system against which people are  
24 appraised.

25 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Mr. Callan?

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1 MR. CALLAN: I'm sorry. I was just going to jump  
2 in. This is such an important subject, I don't make any  
3 excuses for contributing to this discussion.

4 I would just make two points. One is that much of  
5 what we have heard so far this afternoon the way of  
6 concerns, frustrations, can be linked to the lack of an  
7 honest and fair appraisal process.

8 Our merit selection process breaks down if you  
9 don't have honest appraisals, honest and fair appraisals;  
10 our award program breaks down if you don't have honest and  
11 fair appraisals. So it's very important that we normalize  
12 the agency and establish an honest and fair process.

13 It has been problematic. You know, the effort to  
14 get to that vision predates me here. I was regional  
15 administrator when we were trying in earnest to get -- I  
16 think the regions made a lot of progress a couple of years  
17 ago, and if I don't mind saying so, sort of led the agency  
18 in a way, setting the example.

19 This year, for the first time, and I applauded the  
20 staff not too long ago, the senior managers, I think we have  
21 made as much progress this year in getting all the offices  
22 in the region fairly normalized, not where we need to be,  
23 but it's as close as, I think, we have ever been, at least  
24 since I have been around. So I'm encouraged by the progress  
25 we made this year in that regard.

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1 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Yes.

2 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Just going back on the same  
3 issue, Ms. Norry, you said that you have to make sure that  
4 these things happen. I think the question that we would  
5 like answered is, how do you make sure that it happens? In  
6 other words, the issue is what implementation of what needs  
7 to be done, you know, this program, this outline, is going  
8 to take place so when we get here six months from now, we  
9 won't revisit this issue, which is a very important issue.  
10 And I think that Commissioner McGaffigan, you know, is quite  
11 correct, it is the heart of how we are going to address not  
12 only one issue, but a multitude of issues, and I think it is

13 critical.

14 So might I encourage you to try to not say, you  
15 know, we're going to make sure, but we would like you to get  
16 back with how are you making sure? It's the how that's  
17 important.

18 MS. NORRY: Okay.

19 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Thank you.

20 MS. NORRY: Yes.

21 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Thank you.

22 MS. NORRY: I would just like to point out that  
23 these EEO counselors -- this is all volunteer time and they  
24 all have regular full-time jobs, more than full-time jobs,  
25 and they do a tremendous service in working things out so

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1 that many of these issues do not get to the stage where they  
2 have to be filed formally.

3 So thank you.

4 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Thank you.

5 MS. NORRY: We will now have statements from Sam  
6 Collins and Hub Miller.

7 Sam, would you go first, please?

8 MR. COLLINS: Certainly. Good afternoon,  
9 Commissioners. I welcome the opportunity to speak for the  
10 NRR team on this important topic. As indicated this morning  
11 in various ways, people are our most valuable resource, and  
12 that's certainly true in NRR. Personally, after being here  
13 for a little over a year, I am certainly proud of the NRR  
14 team and what we have accomplished.

15 Ms. Norry has covered many statistics. I'm going  
16 to focus the majority of my presentation on process, because  
17 I believe, as mentioned here earlier, the tools that we have  
18 to work with as far as the stated constrictions, if you will  
19 -- in some cases, they're opportunities, but in today's  
20 environment, they are, in fact, constrictions that we have  
21 to manage our staff, and as Hub and I are here primarily as  
22 representatives of offices that have to take the concepts  
23 that were talked about here earlier and the guidelines and  
24 actually apply them to very large organizations and diverse  
25 organizations at that.

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1 NRR is committed to EEO goals and objectives. We  
2 are a product of many very talented individuals. We have a  
3 number of opportunities that arise over the course of the  
4 year. Our staff is budgeted at approximately 645  
5 individuals. Just as a matter of comparison, it looks like  
6 that number is going down approximately 65 over the next  
7 fiscal year, although that's still to be worked out in  
8 detail. But those are the types of challenges that, day to  
9 day, we face with implementation of the programs.

10 Many of those individuals who are members of the  
11 NRR staff were represented here today and spoke prior to  
12 myself, and we are very involved in the process.

13 Of the total on-board number, which is closer to  
14 630 right now within NRR, Hispanics represent 2 percent,  
15 African-Americans represent approximately 8 percent,  
16 Asian-Pacific Americans 15 percent, whites 75 percent.  
17 Classically, over the past two to three years, the staff has  
18 been composed of approximately 24 percent women and 76  
19 percent men. That's how the demographics work out.

20 We have been focusing heavily on communications.  
21 That was mentioned here earlier. We have instituted a  
22 number of processes to try to work through some of the  
23 communication barriers and layers, referred to as a clay  
24 layer this morning, I think, in response to the survey

1 We have had approximately 25 responses to our  
2 web-based SET process that we have where people can submit  
3 issues, including those similar to what we talked about  
4 today to the NRR executive team, and we respond to those and  
5 we put the answers back out on the web.

6 Many of those deal with hiring, they deal with  
7 selections, they deal with organizational changes, and  
8 that's a way of communicating specific issues up and down  
9 the line.

10 We have regularly all-hands meetings, and we're  
11 such a large organization, we have to break that up into two  
12 meetings. But we fill the vast part of the auditorium  
13 approximately once every two to three months, and we have  
14 topics which we speak to.

15 One of those, interestingly enough, was  
16 appraisals, and we conducted these all-hands meetings  
17 towards the end of last year's appraisal period, and the  
18 very topic was, how do we ensure that people receive an  
19 honest and fair appraisal? We covered the manual chapter,  
20 we covered the definition of the words in the manual  
21 chapter, we discussed the statistics for NRR, how they  
22 compared with the other offices, and we actually ended up  
23 working as a team with the staff, the bargaining unit  
24 eligible staff, to determine how were we going to get from  
25 where we are now, which was clearly not an appraisal system

1 which sent a meaningful message to individuals in most  
2 cases, to a point where we had a better gradation of  
3 approach and a more honest exchange of views.

4 To the credit of the bargaining unit staff, they  
5 said, just go ahead and do it, but ensure that it's done  
6 equitably, and that people do, in fact, receive a meaningful  
7 message. I had a second session with the managers, and the  
8 managers were much more reluctant.

9 But as a group, we did address at least in part  
10 with last year's appraisal a shifting of those numbers so  
11 that they were somewhat more representative of the overall  
12 agency, and I think we have another slight adjustment to  
13 make, perhaps. But overall, the numbers have declined from  
14 outstanding, have been grouped in the middle around  
15 excellent, and there has been about a 3 percent increase in  
16 the FS. So I think we're achieving that goal and we have  
17 done it in a way that perhaps is more responsive to your  
18 question, Commissioner Diaz, for a program office  
19 implementation.

20 How do we hold our managers accountable? Each  
21 manager has an attribute of their performance plan which  
22 deals with rating employees, which deals with performance of  
23 employees and addressing that performance of employees. So  
24 there is a mechanism by which senior managers can cascade  
25 down through the organization to hold the first-line

1 supervisors, and then back up the line, individuals  
2 accountable for those honest appraisals.

3 Is it always done? Probably not. Is it an area  
4 we need to focus on more? Yes. And SES is no different.  
5 We have been in a process by which, at least by the past two  
6 years, and I'm sure it took place to some extent before I  
7 arrived, where we, in fact, ranked the SES as a prelude to  
8 SES appraisals to ensure that the message that goes out is  
9 not taken in a silo in a large organization.

10 In fact, we have input from each member of the  
11 executive team on that rating because we see each other very  
12 differently as we assess each other's performance and the  
13 various roles that we play. And the ET comes to a consensus  
14 on the overall stack up of senior executives, and then we  
15 ensure that the appraisals are graded that way.

16 We have had some problems. Last year, we did a  
17 post-performance appraisal review of SES and we found out we  
18 still had inconsistencies. When you looked at the highs and  
19 lows within the rankings and you looked at the words in the  
20 system, they didn't always match. So we have more work to  
21 do, but clearly we have a way to judge that and to measure  
22 it, so we'll continue to do that.

23 I think it's perhaps a perception by the  
24 individuals who are subjected to the general grading  
25 performance system that we perhaps do not go to that level

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1 of detail with in SES because it's an FS pass-fail type of  
2 system, but, in fact, we do within the NRR organization.

3 Continuing on briefly, we have established a  
4 number of working committees. We have an awards  
5 subcommittee that we use now. We used to perform awards  
6 granting on a division level, in some cases on the branch  
7 level. Now we do it on an office level.

8 Those award packages are brought up in front of  
9 the executive team for NRR and they are screened by each  
10 division director. Working with NTU, we provide the award  
11 packages to NTU for them to review, and we receive some  
12 meaningful comments from NTU on those award packages, having  
13 to do primarily with consistency and whether the message is  
14 appropriate given the award.

15 That process is working, at least to my mind, very  
16 well, and I'm sure you'll have the opportunity to hear NTU's  
17 opinion, but I think that's an opportunity we took advantage  
18 of.

19 The same with training. Because of the limited  
20 amount of training funds and the opportunity to be  
21 inequitable in that area, we're screening the awarding of  
22 training funds -- in some cases, they're significant; paying  
23 for advanced degrees, for example -- through the same  
24 committee as we have for awards to ensure that we're  
25 consistent and ensure that any appeals are approached

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1 overall and there is equity within NRR.

2 Moving on, we have a number of challenges, and  
3 some of those were articulated earlier today concerning the  
4 eight to one, concerning the staffing reductions. I think  
5 as we work through that process, communication is going to  
6 be very important.

7 I intend to involve the staff as well as the  
8 bargaining unit in these areas because I anticipate that  
9 it's going to push us into potential reorganizations and  
10 into different lines of responsibilities and perhaps into  
11 different supervisory levels where we will be entertaining  
12 less SES first-line supervisors and perhaps more GG-15  
13 first-line supervisors, and that will be the subject of more  
14 discussion with our partners.

15 We have had some opportunities in SES. Two new  
16 SES -- one white male, one white woman -- have been  
17 appointed. One African-American woman and one Asian-Pacific  
18 woman were selected for 14 positions, and two  
19 African-American women were selected for GG-12  
20 administrative positions.

21 We had a question earlier. Commissioner

22 McGaffigan, you asked about the intern program. We have  
23 termed that program the entry level program within NRR.  
24 There are some differences having to do with the number of  
25 rotations and the types of rotations that individuals are

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1 receiving, and we have a number of detailed statistics in  
2 that area.

3 There is an error in the SECY paper, and I would  
4 like to just clarify that for you. We have actually made  
5 twelve offers, not eight, for the entry level program, and  
6 we have had seven people accept that. Of the people who  
7 have accepted, we have 57 percent minorities, and that  
8 number is four, one white woman, two white men, for a total  
9 of seven. And we have a number of declines, which include  
10 one minority, two women, and two white men. So we are  
11 having some success in that area. We anticipate continuing  
12 that.

13 The primary difference between the intern program  
14 and the entry level program is that we target specific  
15 technical disciplines for the entry level program, and those  
16 individuals are assigned in that discipline area right from  
17 the initiation of the program rather than serve rotations  
18 throughout the agency and then choose an area of expertise  
19 in concert with agency needs at the end of an intern  
20 program. So it's more targeted towards focused areas as  
21 well as immediate contribution.

22 Let me go on to address one of the other areas  
23 that was an IOU. Let me find the right section here. That  
24 has to do with advanced degrees. Carl Paperello got me in  
25 this box last SEO meeting, and working with Katherine Green

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1 and Susan and Jennifer in the NRR team, who works in this  
2 area of recruiting and EEO. We have probably more  
3 statistics than you care to hear, but let me just briefly  
4 tell you where we are with advanced degrees.

5 We have 86 percent degree holders in NRR.  
6 Forty-five percent of those are advanced degrees, and I have  
7 a breakdown of those if anyone is interested. For the  
8 professional staff, 98 percent of individuals are degree  
9 holders and 53 percent have advanced degrees. Of the  
10 administrative staff, 57 percent are degree holders and  
11 seven are advanced degrees. Of the clerical staff, 4 of 66  
12 are degree holders and one of those individuals has an  
13 advanced degree.

14 So within the NRR, we are very highly educated by  
15 degree, and I think that shows in the quality of the work,  
16 and we'll continue to reinforce those.

17 We have done that in the past through the  
18 accommodation of training funds for advanced degrees, and we  
19 have had to cut back somewhat in that area this year, and I  
20 think we have heard some of the feedback from that  
21 discussion. I think that's either an area we need to focus  
22 on given the priorities of where we spend the funds or it's  
23 just reality given where we are with the budget, or a  
24 combination of both.

25 I'm going to cut short my presentation. If there

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1 are any questions, I'll be glad to respond to those now or  
2 at the end.

3 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. Commissioner Diaz?

4 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: No.

5 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Commissioner McGaffigan?

6 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: The one piece of news I

7 think you've -- there's a lot of news, but the one piece  
8 that maybe people stopped on was the notion that you were  
9 going to go down from 645 to 580, which is 50 below your  
10 current on board.

11 How do you do that while managing all of these  
12 issues that we talked about with the first panel? It just  
13 strikes me that it makes life very difficult, because you're  
14 -- when we deal with budgets, we deal with things like, you  
15 know, 2500 hours versus 2700 hours for core inspection, and  
16 there are some FTE associated with that, but then when you  
17 have to get down to managing, say we go to 2500 hours,  
18 advancing that a year, there are real FTEs in some region  
19 that have to be managed somehow.

20 MR. COLLINS: Right.

21 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: So how do you reduce 50  
22 from your on board --

23 MR. COLLINS: Right.

24 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: -- and fit it within all  
25 these other boundary conditions?

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1 MR. COLLINS: I understand the question.  
2 Just to clarify, of course, the budget process is  
3 working through, as well as the Commission approval.

4 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I understand.

5 MR. COLLINS: But as an illustration --

6 [Laughter.]

7 MR. COLLINS: Or adjustments. We have options.

8 Working with Hub, because certainly the program  
9 office, along with defining the programs and procedures and  
10 processes, work with the regions for implementation. So we  
11 can't divorce ourselves from the impact on the regions, and  
12 that's a very real issue because that's our product in most  
13 cases.

14 I'm going to cover probably two areas briefly.  
15 One is attrition, and attrition is not an insignificant  
16 factor when you have an office the size of NRR. The  
17 statistics would show, as brought to me by Katherine and her  
18 team, that we lose about two people per pay period. So  
19 that's about 52 per year, and that's fairly consistent over  
20 the past years.

21 So the numbers are not as significant of a  
22 challenge perhaps as the type of individual and the  
23 expertise of the individual that we have as a mix to work  
24 with within NRR to achieve our program goals, and therein  
25 lies somewhat of a challenge given a very real concern that

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1 has been expressed not only this morning, but perhaps today  
2 in that we have people who have a long history, we have a  
3 lot of technical expertise within the agency. We have to  
4 have a balance of entry level programs and those who are  
5 mature, knowledgeable regulators and program office staff to  
6 meet our goals.

7 So the mix is the issue. How do you maintain a  
8 robust system of turnover yet some semblance of stability to  
9 ensure that we can meet those goals?

10 Reorganizations are the second area I would like  
11 to acknowledge, and we -- it probably seems to Pete that we  
12 do that continually, and to the staff somewhat also, and  
13 it's a truism.

14 I think these numbers, though, that we are  
15 potentially looking at and that we looked at as part of the  
16 appropriations committee reviews force us to look into  
17 options in that area, and we can gain some efficiencies and  
18 some effectiveness, I think, by looking at the way we have

19 historically been structured first if we are to look at some  
20 of these numbers in the future, how we need to be structured  
21 to do the work, and we can gain some efficiencies there.

22           So I don't have as much of a concern about getting  
23 to the target number as I do ensuring that working with that  
24 number, we have the right grades of individuals, the right  
25 types of individuals, and they are in an organization that

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1 provides support to get the work done, and that's the  
2 business of all of us here at the able, working with the  
3 bargaining unit staff, to ensure that we get from point A to  
4 point B.

5           MR. CALLAN: There is one nuance to these FTE  
6 numbers that's important, I think.

7           This supposed or hypothetical 50 FTE cut that  
8 we're talking about is being driven not by FTE ceilings  
9 imposed on us, but by dollar ceilings. So in order to  
10 realize the dollar savings that we need to realize, those  
11 losses have to occur early in the fiscal year.

12           For example, ideally, 25 people would walk out 1  
13 October, and then you would realize that dollar savings for  
14 the entire year. So it's really a very complex equation in  
15 terms of realizing a dollar savings. We're not targeting an  
16 FTE goal by 30 September; we're trying to realize money.

17           COMMISSIONER DIAZ: If NRR -- I'm sorry.

18           COMMISSIONER DICUS: No, go ahead.

19           COMMISSIONER DIAZ: If NRR attrition is two people  
20 per pay period, what is the attrition rate in the entire  
21 agency?

22           MR. McDERMOTT: Right now, the attrition rate is  
23 about 5.6 percent, and it will probably come out to no more  
24 than a tenth of a percent off that one way or the other.

25           COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Five-point-six percent.

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1           MR. McDERMOTT: Yes.

2           COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Per year?

3           MR. McDERMOTT: Yes.

4           MR. COLLINS: There was one other brief area that  
5 we committed to discuss, and that was how were we addressing  
6 the Hispanic -- the need to have Hispanic opportunities  
7 within NRR and the Hispanic opportunity program that we  
8 have.

9           We have been working in that area fairly  
10 aggressively for this past year. Our HR staff, working with  
11 Paul Byrd and Jim, have been attempting to attract qualified  
12 individuals. We had four -- we have four Hispanics among  
13 our 77 graduates for the intern program. That's the formal  
14 intern program, if you will. We had a Hispanic intern  
15 program who was a former Region IV employee who is here  
16 today attend a Society of Professional Engineers Job Fair.  
17 That was a Hispanic-sponsored organization. She met with  
18 representatives of the National Achievement Awards, and  
19 we're developing new relationships with universities.

20           So I think we're out there looking for  
21 opportunities in those areas. Our success rate is an area  
22 that continues to be a challenge, I believe, and I think  
23 that's indicative more of are we competitive, are we  
24 offering the right types of positions and the right type of  
25 attractions. We have more opportunity for success in that

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1 area at the entry level and the intern than we do at the  
2 more mature staff just because of some of those challenges  
3 with what it takes to hire experienced people.

4 But we'll continue to work in that area, but I  
5 anticipate that will be a continuing challenge for us.

6 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Thank you.

7 MS. NORRY: Okay. Hub?

8 MR. MILLER: Good afternoon. I appreciate as well  
9 the opportunity to talk about Region 1 and our EEO efforts.

10 We're working hard to increase diversity and to  
11 sustain an equitable work environment in the region, and  
12 this afternoon, I would like to just touch upon a number of  
13 the initiatives that we have undertaken, describe to you  
14 some of the challenges that we face, and then finally share  
15 with you also results.

16 Let me begin with recruitment and hiring, because  
17 one of the biggest challenges we have faced this past two  
18 years has been filling a large number of reactor inspector  
19 staff vacancies. This has been an extensive effort.

20 We screened over 700 resumes, interviewed 135  
21 people, and to develop a high quality, diverse candidate  
22 pool, we did a number of things, quite a few things: placed  
23 advertisements in various engineering publications and web  
24 sites with substantial minority and women readership; we  
25 renewed contacts with historically Black colleges and

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1 universities as well as African-American and Hispanic  
2 student groups and professional organizations. The region's  
3 EEO advisory committees helped us out quite bit in this  
4 regard.

5 As a result of our efforts, we were able to hire  
6 25 highly qualified technical and professional people, which  
7 is quite a few people for an office the size of this region.  
8 In that group were five women and minorities.

9 We frankly found, and this echoes a bit what Sam  
10 said, difficulty in competing with private industry when it  
11 came to attracting experienced minority engineers. So as  
12 the recruitment efforts proceeded, it became clear that  
13 being successful required us to focus at the college  
14 graduate intern level, and I'm happy to report, in fact,  
15 that these efforts recently paid off in the hiring of a  
16 Hispanic engineer who just joined us this past week as an  
17 intern.

18 Intensive as our recruitment efforts were, they  
19 were just first steps, and we knew that. Equipping this  
20 relatively large group of new hires with knowledge and  
21 skills to do an effective job posed a significant challenge  
22 for us. So we structured a form of matriculation program  
23 that went beyond the normal required training, technical  
24 training that is provided to entry -- new entry or new  
25 hires. We conducted numerous special training sessions. In

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1 fact, these sessions were delivered by mid- and senior-level  
2 managers in the region.

3 Where appropriate, we extended work assignments in  
4 reactor -- or in resident inspector offices were provided to  
5 give the new hires practical site experience very early on  
6 in the matriculation process, which is important.

7 We instituted a mentoring program to assure  
8 specific needs of individuals were given attention, and as a  
9 result, eleven of the 25 candidates have already been  
10 selected for resident inspector positions, and this includes  
11 two of the five minorities that I talked about.

12 Six individuals have already completed the  
13 rigorous -- and it is very rigorous -- rigorous inspector  
14 certification process, and excepting our new intern, all of  
15 the remaining members of this group will be certified by the



16 end of the year.

17 I have focused a lot to this point on new  
18 recruits. A different but equally important challenge, of  
19 course, relates to continuing staff development. Much, in  
20 my mind, depends upon individual initiative when you talk  
21 about this, but to me, supervisors have to exercise a great  
22 deal of leadership. The staff development must be an  
23 abiding concern of all supervisors and managers. This  
24 involves many things. It involves, of course, listening to  
25 staff aspirations, career goals, but also, very importantly,

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1 providing honest, constructive feedback on performance, and  
2 this is something we give great attention to in the region.

3 We have clearly communicated our expectations, I  
4 believe, to management. Staff development is a major focus  
5 area of all of our management retreats in the region.  
6 Virtually all the managers in the region have completed  
7 cultural diversity and merit staffing training.

8 We had some problems early on in the recruitment  
9 effort with respect to the interviewing techniques, and so  
10 we provided techniques on interviewing that apply not just  
11 to new hires, but also to people in the advancement process.  
12 It's a big part, I think, of dealing with the issues  
13 relating to pre-selection.

14 I must also add that we have as a practice in the  
15 region for all selections, managers talk to individuals who  
16 are not selected to provide feedback and give constructive  
17 help on what they might do to be more competitive in future  
18 promotions.

19 We have emphasized rotational assignments. In the  
20 past two years, 30 individuals have been given various  
21 assignments in headquarters offices, in the resident  
22 inspector offices, team leader positions, and very special  
23 projects, and nearly half of those participants have been  
24 women and minorities.

25 Training funds, as Sam said, are limited, and the

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1 resources are limited, and we have established a training  
2 council in the region to, among other things, review all  
3 specialized training requests and monitor the status of  
4 required training, but beyond that, to look forward to  
5 identifying new training opportunities, limited as they are,  
6 to identify those.

7 Perhaps the biggest challenge we face in the  
8 region in the EEO area relates to the regrettable fact that  
9 there are currently no women or minorities in permanent  
10 management positions in the region, and this situation is  
11 made especially difficult given the number of positions that  
12 we have had to eliminate to get to the current eight to one  
13 ratio, supervisors to staff, that we are currently at. As a  
14 result of this, there have been no permanent management  
15 position -- management promotion opportunities in the past  
16 tow years in the region.

17 Having said that, I believe it is vitally  
18 important that we provide opportunities to the staff to  
19 develop management skills, to equip staff to compete for and  
20 effectively fill these positions when they open up, and at  
21 some point, they will open up.

22 Also on the positive side, I want to emphasize  
23 that largely due to special needs in the region to focus on  
24 a number of troubled plants, we have had a number of  
25 temporary promotion opportunities, seven in fact, and three

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1 women have filled those positions and one Asian male were  
2 selectees for those seven temporary positions.  
3 I have to tell you in preparing for this and  
4 recently asking for staff feedback, I got feedback that was  
5 similar to some of what you heard this morning, and that is  
6 that there is concern on the part of the staff about what  
7 the future holds -- declining budgets, the limited  
8 opportunities that exist with the downsizing for promotion,  
9 in our region closure of some plants. Among other things  
10 are the things that lead to this. And so I think more than  
11 ever before we have to concern ourselves with creating a  
12 positive, supportive work environment.

13 There are many things that you can talk about in  
14 this area, but we are doing a number of things largely that  
15 relate to quality of life and to creating a family-friendly  
16 work environment. For example, on numerous occasions we  
17 have supported work at home and modified -- and other  
18 modified work schedules to support individuals facing  
19 illness and other special personal needs. We are working  
20 with the regional affirmative action advisory committees to  
21 obtain their ideas and help in this area, and one recent one  
22 perhaps small but I think still helpful was the Bring Your  
23 Child to Work Day that we plan to have later this month,  
24 because I think this is the kind of thing that tends to  
25 build esprit de corps and a sense of teamwork amongst the

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1 staff and management.

2 With respect to awards, I think this is an  
3 important thing. We also established an awards board to  
4 assure that we are handling that in an equitable way. And I  
5 guess -- this is a broad area, and we could talk at length  
6 about it, but it's clear to me from the feedback I've gotten  
7 in the region and listening this morning that a big part of  
8 what we have to do at this difficult time is communicate,  
9 and I expect to be working with the partnership and with the  
10 advisory committees to step up. We do a lot of  
11 communication in the regions through seminars, the  
12 inspector's seminars and the like, but I think this is an  
13 area where as events unfold here and there are the cuts that  
14 are coming and the like we have to redouble I think our  
15 efforts in this area.

16 And so with that I'll be glad to answer any  
17 questions.

18 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Thank you.

19 Commissioner Diaz?

20 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: No.

21 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Commissioner McGaffigan?

22 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: No.

23 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. Thank you.

24 MS. NORRY: Okay. Thank you, Hub, and thank you,  
25 Sam. This concludes our prepared presentations,

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1 Commissioner Dicus.

2 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. Commissioner Diaz, I  
3 think you wanted to make some comments.

4 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: See, this is our kind of all  
5 over the place, because I was writing as we went on. I  
6 think first, going back to Commissioner McGaffigan and Joe  
7 Callan's comment, I think we're well aware, and it keeps  
8 coming up, that the Agency might not be growing, and in fact  
9 it might downsize. I think it is obvious that we all are  
10 emphasizing that even while that is happening we must  
11 maintain our focus on these efforts. It should not be an  
12 excuse to just slack back or fall into some complacency,

13 that it's vital to what we're doing. It cannot be an  
14 excuse. Reduced resources might actually be an opportunity  
15 to get better performance appraisals, to do all of the good  
16 things that we should do well.

17 I wrote a series of things as we were going down.  
18 For example, we keep hearing that accomplishments will  
19 enhance or initiatives will enhance. I believe that at some  
20 time, hopefully in the near future, we will hear  
21 accomplishments have enhanced and initiatives have resulted.  
22 Because what I see is that we have a very good  
23 infrastructure to implement EEO programs. We have really  
24 gone the mile in establishing a lot of very good things. We  
25 have the right people. We have the right, you know, ideas.

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1 We have, you know, the right hopefully resources.

2 The bottom line is how they get implemented. And  
3 that issue is deeper than infrastructure. It is a cultural  
4 issue that we need to face time and time again. And that is  
5 the issue that these people that might not have the same  
6 color have the same right as anybody else if they're fully  
7 qualified to the same positions or to the same, you know,  
8 opportunity to enter. And that is something that is, you  
9 know, it has to be realized.

10 There is no doubt in my mind that blatant  
11 discrimination is really not the issue. That we can take  
12 care of without an EEO program. It's the more insidious  
13 discrimination, the one in which people don't even  
14 consciously realize they are discriminating. That needs to  
15 be fought by initiative from the Commissions and by EEO  
16 programs.

17 Those are the hard issues. Those are the ones  
18 that need to be faced. Those are the ones that need a  
19 cultural change. Those are the ones that when it happens,  
20 then you will attract the right people. You will be able to  
21 keep the right people. There will be no question because  
22 people will feel that this place really wants them and that  
23 they are respected and that their civil rights are foremost.

24 I see no reason why Hispanics are lagging behind  
25 or were already lagging behind thing. It's, you know, and,

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1 you know, I don't want to make it an issue because I am  
2 Hispanic. But I think it is an obvious thing that is not  
3 only a national but is a case in here. When we say  
4 something like we are similar to other agencies and that is  
5 taken as a measure of success, I think it should be taken as  
6 a measure of lack of success, not as a measure of success,  
7 because the other ones are not doing, that doesn't mean that  
8 we should not be doing.

9 What should never happen in this Agency, what is  
10 not acceptable, is that any one minority, being woman,  
11 African American, Asian, Hispanic, not be given the  
12 opportunity to obtain a job when they are qualified for it.  
13 And that's what an equal, you know, opportunity means. It  
14 doesn't mean a lot of programs and a lot of initiative, but  
15 it means implementation. Because the issue always is what  
16 you do at the bottom line, and not what words you put out.  
17 It is important that as we get into an area in which we're  
18 going to require more efficiency, we realize that whether it  
19 is in the inspector program, or whether it is what we're  
20 doing here, the bottom line is implementation. We have  
21 everything we need. What we need to do is implement it.

22 Thank you, Madam Chair.

23 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Thank you very much.

24 Commissioner McGaffigan?  
25 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: No.

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1 COMMISSIONER DICUS: At this time I would like to  
2 inquire as to whether the National Treasury Employees Union  
3 representative would like to make a comment.

4 Please go to the podium.

5 MR. HEARN: Good afternoon, everybody. I'd like  
6 to make some comments on what I've seen at this meeting in  
7 years past. For a starter, on the handout, on page 2, you  
8 list the EEO program goals, and there seems to be a lack of  
9 goals for the new Paraprofessional Subcommittee. I think  
10 that should be modified and goals that they see needed.

11 Another issue I'd like to address is empowerment.  
12 We've talked about the budget crunch, and that hurting  
13 upward mobility. We have a large percentage of minorities  
14 in the NRC who are in what I call logjams. They're at a  
15 grade where there's very little opportunity to go to the  
16 next grade. And through empowerment, which there's an  
17 executive order out to implement that, I think we have to  
18 strive harder to implement it.

19 You have to bring down functions from the SES down  
20 to the 15s, and they in turn, it doesn't stop there, they in  
21 turn have to turn over their lower-graded functions to the  
22 14s, and eventually you have people turning lower-graded  
23 functions down to the grade levels from 8 to 12, and you're  
24 going to be creating new paraprofessional positions, and  
25 they're sorely needed, as I'm sure Janet can attest to.

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1 There are people down there that have got degrees,  
2 they're getting degrees, they're very well qualified.  
3 There's a new field, information technology. I'm not up on  
4 it, but I know it deals with transfer handling, cataloging  
5 information. And we have 15s doing that. They could  
6 probably pass that down, and I know there's some secretaries  
7 that have degrees or are taking college-level courses to  
8 learn this. And you could probably move them up into these  
9 new-grade jobs.

10 One of the mentions, David mentioned the problem  
11 with having the Asian Pacifics spend a lot of times at the  
12 GG-14 grade. The IG's briefing this morning, he had a chart  
13 which had different characteristics in it, and the grade  
14 that stood out the most as being the most unhappy were the  
15 GG-14s. And that's because they're frustrated that they  
16 can't get to the 15. But the, like I said with the  
17 empowerment, you would expand some of the work in the 15  
18 area. Also, as 15 leave, you shouldn't be hiring from the  
19 outside. You should have a total freeze on the higher  
20 grades, and you should have the managers project where  
21 they're going to need the expertise in these higher grades,  
22 and then they should motivate the lower-graded professionals  
23 to enhance their skills and training to fulfill these  
24 grades.

25 Another thing to observe is with the streamlining

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1 and budget cuts the total numbers go down, the total  
2 salaries go down, total number of people go down, total  
3 number of 14's and above go down. But the average grade  
4 goes up. The average salary goes up. You have people who  
5 are going to do more with less. That means they have to  
6 enhance their skills, enhance their performance. They need  
7 an enhancement in pay to do that.

8 That's about the end of my comments.

9 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. Thank you very much.

10 MR. HEARN: Thank you.  
11 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Would there be any further  
12 comments from the subcommittees?  
13 MR. NARBUT: Just one, Commissioner.  
14 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Would you please go to the  
15 podium.  
16 Thank you.

17 MR. NARBUT: This is not part of the agenda. I'm  
18 Paul Narbut with the CAD. But one thing I did notice in  
19 today's hearing is that we heard the word "age" mentioned  
20 twice, both in introductory statements, and I guess I'd ask  
21 that the future briefings include at least some discussion  
22 of age-related issues. We have an aging society. We have  
23 an aging work place here in NRC. And we need to address  
24 those issues. And I guess the central thought that I have  
25 is that we need to keep our aging employees motivated.

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1 There's always a danger of thinking you've reached the end  
2 of the trail, and there's no place to go.

3 And that's the end of my statement.  
4 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. Thank you very much.

5 I would also like to offer the opportunity for  
6 comments from our other committees. The Affirmative Action  
7 Advisory Committee?

8 MR. GREHER: My name is Elliott Greher, and I'm  
9 chairman of the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee. I  
10 wanted to place an emphasis on the training and training  
11 funds. We've cut them starkly. That's not what we should  
12 do in this kind of environment. If anything, we should  
13 raise them. When we have a proportion of people who let's  
14 say are hydrologists who lead disproportionately to the  
15 number of problems, and I'm just picking on that particular  
16 area, without any knowledge about it, and we have to train  
17 other people to move into that area and to help out, we need  
18 training funds.

19 In almost all the issues that were presented  
20 today, training funds would be a way of helping solve a  
21 problem, and we don't seem to -- instead of cutting the  
22 training funds. So I very strongly support increasing  
23 training funds both for all of the employees in the NRC and  
24 for those people who are women or minorities of various  
25 kinds, including the handicapped, who could use those funds

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1 to advance more surely and to provide for them a feeling of  
2 great satisfaction on the job in their own role.

3 Thank you.  
4 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Thank you.  
5 Comments from the Advisory Committee for African  
6 Americans?

7 MR. HOLT: No.  
8 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. Any further comments  
9 from the Asian Pacific American Advisory Committee?

10 MR. DIEC: There is one additional comment that I  
11 would like to contribute, is that we would strongly  
12 encourage the management to look into rotation of assignment  
13 opportunities for employees, especially in the area that we  
14 don't have much of opportunities for promotions. In doing  
15 that I think that it's not only enhanced the employees'  
16 ability to prove that they are worthy of doing more of the  
17 important projects or assignments, but also help them to put  
18 together a perhaps impressive resume for opportunities when  
19 the Agency has opportunities available. And that is perhaps  
20 one of the most important things that we are hoping that

21 will happen for all, so that we can have the ability to  
22 compete squarely and fairly.

23 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay. Thank you.

24 The Federal Women's Program Advisory Committee?

25 MS. RADDATZ: Thank you, Commissioner.

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1 I was very happy to hear Hub say that he's using  
2 family-friendly work place issues as a way of addressing  
3 some EEO concerns. As you may have noticed from the Federal  
4 Women's Program statement in your package, we've kind of  
5 departed from our traditional role of providing an analysis  
6 of the statistics to saying that we probably aren't going to  
7 be able to have a great impact on the amount of hires or  
8 even promotions given the environment in which we are.

9 So what we would hope is that management could  
10 help to focus on making our jobs more desirable, to make us  
11 enjoy what we're doing more than we are, more than we do  
12 now. And this sort of thing can be done by things like the  
13 work at home program, by offering the kinds of things that  
14 we've done with the Federal women's program, the Bring Your  
15 Kids to Work Day and that sort of thing. I'd also like to  
16 see the Agency encourage things like organ donation and  
17 other family-oriented sorts of things.

18 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Thank you.

19 And the Hispanic Employment Program Advisory  
20 Committee.

21 MR. IBARRA: Thank you. We are concerned and you  
22 all talked, there was a lot of talk today about how hard it  
23 is to hire Hispanics and yet we have lost a lot of  
24 Hispanics. Last year we lost like four.

25 We need to concentrate on the ones of the

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1 Hispanics that are here. We need to make more opportunities  
2 for them and if we are going to recruit, I think all  
3 Hispanics at this agency are willing to go and recruit and I  
4 think we are very good salesmen. I think we know our  
5 culture, our people, and I think we can make a difference.

6 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Thank you. The Joint  
7 Labor-Management Equal Employment Opportunity Committee.

8 MR. WEBER: Good afternoon. I will be brief.

9 We have had a lot of meaty discussion this  
10 afternoon, got a lot of progress to make. It's interesting  
11 and exciting and challenging for all of us to be a  
12 participant in that process.

13 I would call your attention to the recommendations  
14 that the committee has in the paper. One in particular that  
15 is directly relevant to the Commission is the committee's  
16 recommendation that the Commission decide what will happen  
17 to the Commissioner Assistance Pool. That is a program that  
18 has been in place for some time, and the committee felt that  
19 that was a good opportunity to go forward and make progress  
20 in the EEO area and we don't want to dictate to the  
21 Commission by any means what the Commission would like to do  
22 with that but we certainly would like to call it to your  
23 attention.

24 One other thing that I would offer is all the  
25 committees in a way work for the Commission, and so if there

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1 are out of this great assemblage of meaty issues particular  
2 issues that the Commission is interested to hear from the  
3 committees on, I am sure the committees would be happy to  
4 entertain those topics.

5 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Okay, thank you.

6 Actually, I want to make a comment about the

7 Commissioners Assistance Pool or maybe it's the alleged  
8 Commissioners Assistance Pool -- I am not quite sure which  
9 it is, but I think it would be important.

10 I would ask you -- I would like to have a history  
11 of that pool and where it was started, what happened, where  
12 it is now, are we using it. I don't think I used it and  
13 does it have validity and should it continue or no. If it  
14 continues, should it continue in some different format.

15 I think it would be useful for us to have that  
16 information.

17 COMMISSIONER MCGAFFIGAN: I could add to that.

18 I was aware of the Commissioner Assistance Pool  
19 when I came in, about two years ago, and I think I ended up  
20 interviewing 43 people for the various positions in my  
21 office -- the Famous Forty I think we called them -- but in  
22 my own judgment there were some good people in the pool and  
23 there were some very, very good people who weren't in the  
24 pool. I don't know quite how the competition to get in the  
25 pool had been run prior to my arriving and how old the data

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1 at the pool was when I arrived but I think we do need a  
2 recommendation, as Commissioner Dicus has suggested, as to  
3 whether it is viable but it was remarkable some of the  
4 people who interviewed with me who made known their desire  
5 to -- some of them got jobs, some of them didn't -- but  
6 there were many who were not in the pool who were very, very  
7 good.

8 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Commissioner Diaz.

9 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: On a similar subject, I think  
10 I would like and I am sure the Commissioner would benefit  
11 from having a sanitized best qualified list in which  
12 positions are matched against selections without names -- no  
13 names of anybody -- but where we could see what position was  
14 here, who were the in best qualified list, was there any  
15 minorities, and who got selected. No names -- but actually  
16 so we can see how the process is working, how many  
17 minorities are getting in the BQL and how many are being  
18 successful. I think that certainly would help.

19 MR. McDERMOTT: We have that kind of information.

20 COMMISSIONER DIAZ: Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER DICUS: Well, in closing again I very  
22 much would like to thank all of the employees in attendance  
23 here and those of you who are listening for your interest in  
24 these very important topics, and I would like to thank all  
25 of the participants for your views, your comments and your

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1 suggestions.

2 Clearly these briefings are comprehensive and it's  
3 a very complex subject, and I think our conversations today,  
4 during these conversations we have heard of our many  
5 successes and I think we have some opportunities. They  
6 don't call them failures, they are opportunities -- so these  
7 are clearly in the performance appraisal. It is core to so  
8 many of our activities and I think it is clear this needs  
9 some attention -- clearly in recruitment, diversity,  
10 fairness, fairness in representation, fairness in selection,  
11 and we have to do all these things in a changing environment  
12 as we go forward.

13 As external and internal pressures will continue  
14 to challenge us as an agency, we are all responsible -- we  
15 have responsibilities in creating and promoting an  
16 environment in which all employees are provided an equal  
17 opportunity to display their talents, to compete for

18 advancements, free of real or perceived preselection, and to  
19 contribute to the agency mission.

20 First, I again urge managers and supervisors to  
21 continue to evaluate your employees fairly and objectively,  
22 to recognize those employees that demonstrate superior  
23 performance, and to provide opportunities for training and  
24 for development.

25 Second, I would like to thank again those of you

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1 who serve as EEO counsellors, providing a very critical  
2 function in this very important area, and I encourage you to  
3 continue your excellent performance.

4 To all employees, the Commission thanks you for  
5 your efforts and we appreciate everything you have given to  
6 this agency.

7 Now unless there are any other comments, then we  
8 will stand adjourned.

9 [Whereupon, at 3:53 p.m., the briefing was  
10 concluded.]

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