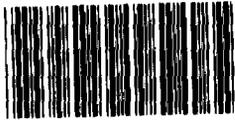


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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548



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FOR RELEASE AT HEARINGS
SCHEDULED FOR 9:30 a.m.
THURSDAY, MARCH 29, 1979

STATEMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY
J. DEXTER PEACH
DIRECTOR, ENERGY AND MINERALS DIVISION
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CIVIL SERVICE

OF THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON POST OFFICE AND CIVIL SERVICE *HSE 02907*
ON

AGC 00912

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Subcommittee:

GAO welcomes the opportunity to submit comments for the record to the Subcommittee on the results of our examination of the Department of Energy's (DOE) personnel management practices. Our comments will cover:

- the impact of the Federal hiring freeze,
- the allocation of Supergrade positions, and
- the recent Civil Service Commission (CSC) report on (DOE) and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) personnel matters.

AGC 00013

AGC 01432

We have been examining these selected aspects of DOE's personnel management at the request of the Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy and Power, House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce. We testified before that Subcommittee on these and several other matters on February 15, 1979.

HSE 02303

004564

Just

While our final report has not been issued, the following summarizes the results of our work.

Hiring freeze

As of January 1979, DOE's total on-board personnel had, since the hiring freeze went into effect, decreased by 152 positions from 19,077 to 18,925, while its headquarters staff increased by 9 positions from 7,690 to 7,699.

We contacted several DOE organizations and found that most had been given some form of staffing relief for high priority programs and had generally increased their on-board personnel since October 24, 1978, when the hiring freeze began. DOE officials generally told us that the hiring freeze had no serious impact on their organizations.

DOE's Office of the Assistant Secretary, Conservation and Solar Applications (CS) was the only organization included in our review that indicated serious staffing problems as a result of the Federal hiring freeze. Although CS has major ongoing National Energy Act (NEA) responsibilities, it had not been given any type of relief. A CS official told us that the Office of Solar Applications and the Office of State and Local Programs are the two offices that have been severely affected. The Office of Solar Applications has high priority responsibilities for the development of solar energy and the Office of State and Local Programs is responsible for administering grants totaling several hundred million dollars.

Although the hiring freeze was lifted on February 1, 1979, DOE has advised some of its organizations, including CS, to use caution in increasing their on-broad strength until their FY 1979 supplemental appropriations are submitted and approved.

DOE's FY 1979 and FY 1980 budgets provide for a substantial number of staff to implement the NEA. DOE plans to devote approximately 956 positions to NEA responsibilities in FY 1979 and 985 positions to these responsibilities in FY 1980.

FERC estimates that 410 of 1800 positions in its FY 1979 budget will be devoted to NEA responsibilities. Other DOE organizations which will have a large number of NEA related positions are the Economic Regulatory Administration (238 positions), CS (182 positions), Energy Information Administration (63 positions), and General Counsel (51 positions).

ALLOCATION OF SUPERGRADE POSITIONS

The DOE Act, authorized the Department a total of 511 Energy Executive Service (EES) and 178 Supergrade (SG) positions. An additional 20 SG positions were authorized by the Emergency Petroleum Allocation Act bringing to 198 the number of authorized supergrade positions. In addition FERC also has 23 Administrative Law Judges (Supergrades) which are from resources controlled by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

When DOE was established, the initial allocation of supergrade positions was made primarily on the basis of the number of encumbered positions assigned to the various headquarters and field organizations as of October 1, 1977. During FY 1978, DOE reviewed several organizations which accounted for about 37 percent of the total number of supergrade positions. Although FERC was allocated an additional 21 positions, the other offices only had minor changes.

In December 1978 DOE initiated its first systematic review--except for FERC--of the allocation of supergrade positions among its various organizations. The review is expected to be completed by early April. The review will provide DOE with a greater understanding of how and where the executive level positions are being utilized and to identify areas where allocation adjustments may be necessary. Specifically, the goals of the position review are threefold:

1. To identify the specific utilization of each allocated supergrade position.
2. To identify supergrade positions which could be considered candidates for reallocation during FY 1979.
3. To identify critical requirements that organizations may have for additional positions.

DOE's current effort will include for the first time

a review of supergrades in Energy Technology which is allocated 145 supergrades.

FERC is the only organization not included in the current DOE supergrade review. FERC, as in the past, will make specific requests to the Secretary of DOE for additional supergrade positions as it deems appropriate.

Civil Service Commission Report

A Civil Service Commission (CSC) report dated September 25, 1978, identified two major DOE personnel management problems:

- DOE lacked a complete organization structure, including a lack of mission and functional statements.
- Numerous DOE positions were misclassified and overgraded.

CSC found that many major DOE organizational components did not have an approved organizational structure nor mission and functional statements below the primary organizational levels. CSC recommended that DOE take corrective action no later than March 1979. A DOE official informed us that DOE has now approved the majority of its organization structures and mission and functional statements. All organizations should have DOE approval by the end of this month.

CSC randomly sampled about 40 of the 1,376 positions which DOE had completed classifying at the time of CSC's review and found 16 positions misclassified (11 overgraded).

CSC estimated that about 515 of the 1,876 positions may be overgraded. Currently, DOE has classified over 9,000 positions and found a total of 390 misclassifications (50 overgraded). A DOE official told us, however, that some DOE organizations with the greatest potential for overgrading problems have yet to be classified. DOE officials anticipate that its department-wide classification review will be about 95 percent complete by the end of June. DOE is currently reviewing recent OPM interim regulations on downgrading before taking any action on the overgraded positions.