

March 7, 2013

Dear Colleagues,

One year ago March 6, the Department of Energy established the Office of the Ombudsman. Earlier in my career, I watched a similar office at Stanford University provide a safe, independent, and confidential environment for university employees to resolve workplace matters. After spending time at the Department of Energy, I suggested the creation of the Office of the Ombudsman so that DOE Federal employees could benefit from that same sort of positive workplace resource.

Over the past year, the Ombudsman's experienced staff has begun to hold employee brainstorming sessions, help employees communicate with their supervisors, and assist Departmental leadership with complex situations involving many employees. Rita Franklin has led this effort and I am grateful for her leadership and the work of her team. Through their efforts, the Office of the Ombudsman is helping employees feel empowered to share their ideas, voice their concerns, and become more able to complete the Department's mission. I am thrilled to report that since its creation, the Ombudsman staff has addressed issues affecting over 550 employees. In the years to come I am sure that the Office will become an increasingly important asset for the Department of Energy.

In addition to addressing our Nation's energy, environmental, and nuclear challenges, the Department has a commitment to provide employees with a constructive workplace. Please join me in expressing my gratitude to those in the Office of the Ombudsman charged with improving our work lives on a daily basis, and I would like to personally say congratulations to all who helped establish this office and those who continue to carry out its tasks.

The Office of the Ombudsman can be reached by calling (202) 586-0500 or by e-mail at ombudsman@hq.doe.gov.

Secretary Steven Chu
U.S. Department of Energy