

Roundtable Meeting Overview

January 25, 2011

Deputy Secretary Daniel Poneman hosted a Roundtable Meeting with Department of Energy (DOE) and union leadership on January 25, 2011. This meeting was part of DOE's effort (1) to maintain open communications with worker representatives in areas of mutual interest; (2) to improve the Department's operations; and (3) to support its mission to protect the safety of its workers, the public, the environment, and our national security.

In his introduction, the Deputy Secretary expressed the value of these communications efforts: "It is important to stay in touch...DOE workers are our history, our present, and our future...it is important that we work together from the helm to the deck plates." The Deputy Secretary stated that the meeting serves as an opportunity for DOE leadership to listen to the Federal and contractor union leaders who represent the Department's workforce. In abidance with labor relations statutes, Jean Stucky from the Office of General Counsel advised that specific terms and conditions of employment or any pending negotiations or bargaining could not be discussed.

A highlight of the meeting was an unexpected visit by Secretary of Energy Steven Chu, who welcomed the union leadership and emphasized his and the Department's deep commitment to safety. Secretary Chu emphasized the importance of DOE in reestablishing the United States as an industrial leader and its critical role in moving forward more globally with green energy/green jobs, quality manufacturing, and getting back to "made in the USA." In his words, "Energy is the center for critical technologies that feed into everything." The Secretary noted that we will play a central role in industrial competitiveness and prosperity.

DOE and Union Remarks

Deputy Secretary Remarks

- It is critical that we focus on meeting objectives that improve the Nation's competitiveness in the nuclear industry, which could provide tremendous opportunities for our workers.
- Accountability is a crucial element of performance — the DOE Line Programs are responsible for setting strategic direction and keeping front-line workers safe.
- Maintaining communications at all levels, both nationally and locally, is imperative.
- DOE has worked to improve communications with our workforce and help solve problems through the Office of Human Capital.

DOE Office of Human Capital Remarks

- Primary communications themes are safety and training. All are concerned about training as budgets tighten. We continue to focus on embedding safety into our daily lives. Managers are held accountable for the safety of their workers.
- Employees must feel good about having a career — not just a job. We will continue to emphasize training and ensuring the transfer of knowledge.

Union Remarks

The following is an overview of union remarks related to establishing labor management forums throughout the Department:

- The Naval Sea Systems Command Council (NAVSEA) was endorsed as a “gold standard” for strategic level labor management partnerships. It was proposed that the Department look at the NAVSEA model and consider establishing a council at DOE.
- Many of the Federal union representatives expressed concerns about their view of DOE’s broad interpretation of “pre-decisional involvement” [as defined in Executive Order 13522: *Creating Labor Management Forums to Improve the Delivery of Government Services*]; and maintaining the importance of collaborative, rather than a “notice and comment,” form of worker involvement.
- The Federal Labor Relations Authority recently published guidance for Federal agencies on predecisional involvement.
- Many of the union representatives expressed the importance of establishing labor management forums at all levels of recognition (national, local, regional, component).
- Labor management forums related to wellness/fitness, preventative, and comprehensive surveillance programs achieve behavioral changes and subsequent cost savings.

Union-reported areas of concern included:

- Worker protection issues at Metropolis, Illinois, and Paducah, Kentucky, communities.
- A need for expanded support for DOE’s medical screening program to enhance early detection/protection efforts.
- Issues with “under-reporting” related to behavioral-based safety initiatives.
- Issues associated with the National Nuclear Security Administration Nuclear Production Contract Merger language.

Union-Shared Best Practices included:

- The endorsement of the HAMMER Training and Education Center as a DOE-wide model for worker safety training with highly successful worker-trainer programs.
- A joint effort by the International Association of Fire Fighters and the International Association of Fire Chiefs to co-sponsor a labor management initiative, which would bring union leaders and their management representatives together to collaborate on developing cooperative labor-management relationships.
- Recognition of the Office of Health, Safety and Security (HSS) for its efforts to engage front line workers in worker health, safety, and security improvements through a collaborative project with the National Academy of Public Administration and union leads— the NAPA Worker Dialogue.
- Recognition of HSS for engaging efforts to address the aging workforce through the work of the Protective Force Career Options Study Group and a recent report to Congress.

Many union representatives expressed appreciation for DOE's efforts to open communication between DOE and union leadership through the Roundtable Meetings and were hopeful of their impact on the development of labor management forums across the Complex.

Meeting Wrap-Up

- DOE will continue to work on issues related to the medical surveillance program (preventative/early detection) and improving the availability of training. HAMMER is a good example of best practices for training both nationally and internationally. Through training, productivity will be enhanced.
- DOE's Offices of the General Counsel, Human Capital, and Health, Safety and Security will follow up on Union-expressed issues (re: labor management forums; worker protection issues at Metropolis, Illinois, and Paducah, Kentucky communities; National Nuclear Security Administration contract merger).
- There is a critical need to focus on objectives that improve the Nation's nuclear competitiveness and build opportunities for our workers, who are critical to the Nation's prosperity.
- DOE appreciates the participation of union leadership in the Roundtable Meeting and will continue to support communications at both national and local levels.

Roundtable Meeting Attendees

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DOE

1. Daniel Poneman – Deputy Secretary of Energy
2. Rod O'Connor – Chief of Staff, Office of the Secretary of Energy
3. Tom D'Agostino – Under Secretary for Nuclear Security & Administrator, National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA)
4. James Cavanagh – Associate Principal Deputy Administrator/NNSA
5. Michael Kane – Chief Human Capital Officer
6. Ingrid Kolb – Director, Office of Management
7. Jack Surash – Deputy Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management
8. Glenn Podonsky – Chief Health, Safety and Security Officer
9. Jeffrey Lane – Assistant Secretary for Energy for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs
10. Amelia Jenkins – Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs
11. Jean Stucky – Office of General Counsel
12. Dave Jonas – General Counsel/NNSA
13. Mari-Jo Campagnone – Office of Health, Safety and Security
14. Margot Anderson – Senior Advisor to the Deputy Secretary of Energy
15. Randy Dowell – Office of Human Capital
16. Robert Myers – Office of Management
17. Lily Alexander – Office of Health, Safety and Security
18. Martha Thompson – Office of Health, Safety and Security

Union/Stakeholder

1. Metal Trades Department
2. Building and Construction Trades Department
3. United Steel Workers
4. International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
5. Sheet Metal Workers International Association
6. International Guards Union of America/National Council Security Police
7. International Chemical Workers Union Council
8. Operative Plasters' and Cement Masons' International Association
9. International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers
10. National Federation of Federal Employees
11. National Association of Government Employees
12. International Association of Fire Fighters
13. HAMMER Education and Training Facility
14. National Treasury Employees Union

Unions Invited But Unable to Attend

- Laborers International Union of North America
- International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
- American Federation of Government Employees