***COMMENTS ON Federal LMF KICK-OFF MEETING:***

A fantastic start to the new collaborative working relationship between the Department and its employee unions espoused by Secretary Moniz.  Getting concerns out in the open and building a strong foundation of honest communication will help us all do better (as the Secretary desires).

            To that end, Jennifer Carter did an outstanding job of organizing and helping to facilitate our meeting.  The trainers from the FMCS were wonderful.  Facilities were available to make sure that we could be productive (meeting rooms, flip charts, water, etc.).  HQ provided pre-meeting logistic support, material preparation and distribution, and invitations to the Department’s 19 different elements to make sure the right people attended.  All of this in a very short time from our introductory teleconference with the Secretary on May 30.

            One immediate positive outcome from the LMF meeting was the distribution of draft OPM policy (*Comp Time for Religious Observances*) to Forum members for pre-decisional input.  Thank you (and Bruce Murray) so very much for providing us an opportunity to comment before it is finalized.

This is the first time we have been apprised by DOE or BPA of pending new government-wide rules before they are delivered to us for traditional impact and implementation negotiations.  Other Unions have expressed similar thoughts.

I believe that this is an excellent example of improved communication and coordination that will result from a functioning LMF.  Knowing what’s coming down the pike makes us more efficient and effective.  Having the ability to give input prior to decisions being finalized gives both parties a better opportunity to craft great products, and will substantially decrease the amount of time and energy needed at the I&I bargaining phase.  This kind of collaboration has the big added benefit of making employees feel engaged and valued.

I sincerely appreciate this opportunity.  I think it enhances our working relationship.  It shows that you and your colleagues are trying new things to make DOE and BPA function better.