

August 15, 2008

Hon. Diane Feinstein, Chair
Senate Interior Appropriations
131 Dirksen Building
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Norman D. Dicks, Chair
House Interior Appropriations
Room B-308 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Jeff Bingaman, Chair
Committee on Energy & Natural Resources
Room 304 Dirksen Building
Washington, DC 20510-6150

Hon. Nick Rahall, Chair
Committee On Natural Resources:
Room 1324 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

Sen. Ken Salazar
Room 702 Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510-0607

Rep. Diana DeGette
Room 2421 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Honorable Members:

We are a group of employees in the Denver Office of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), Department of the Interior (DOI), seeking your support and oversight to stop an unannounced reorganization that is eliminating scores of civil service positions.

Our concerns are that this *de facto* reduction in force –

- Cripples the scientific, environmental and multidisciplinary capacities of Reclamation;
- Violates the 2008 Omnibus Appropriations Act restrictions on the expenditure of funds to promote additional outsourcing; and
- Disrupts the lives and careers of dedicated employees – and their families – with no notice, explanation or apparent legitimate reason.

We request that Congress direct the DOI and Reclamation to cease all reorganization activities until the next administration takes office.

These extensive personnel changes (described in the attached fact sheet) are being undertaken as part of an initiative called “Managing for Excellence” or M4E. Despite the fact that Reclamation management has spent months and considerable funds developing their M4E plans, most Denver employees were not informed what those plans were or how it affected their positions.

We believe Reclamation management is taking actions to set the stage for contracting more federal jobs now and for years to come (see attached ME4 excerpt). As this

attachment shows, Reclamation management has not completed studies for “right sizing” but is nonetheless taking major actions to downsize staff.

Functions targeted by the M4E reductions include numerous scientific positions, our laboratories, environmental and other specialists who implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements for Reclamation water projects, as well as research functions and even the Technical Services Center library. In fact, some of these functions have already been eliminated.

These changes will tie the hands of the next administration, which should have the opportunity to fully consider the agency’s mission, capabilities, and budget before deciding among the full range options what course of action it should pursue with respect to Reclamation staff, functions, and facilities.

Specifically, we urge Congress to impose a moratorium throughout Reclamation for the remaining few months of this administration on any further –

1. Authorities for reduction in force (RIF);
2. Further staff and budget cuts, including the critical support and service areas of the laboratory and library
3. “Voluntary” early-out removals;
4. Unilateral reassignments and
5. Suspension of grievances against forced reassignments.

We sincerely hope that you will act to ensure responsible oversight is exercised over this massive lame duck maneuvering by Reclamation management.

We are not signing this letter for fear of certain retaliation. For more information, please contact Jeff Ruch or Adam Draper at Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) (202) 265-PEER, which at our request is distributing this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Technical Services Center (TSC) Employee Group via PEER