

n-96-01
II-A-659

Kopes

MEMORANDUM

JAN 29 1982

Date :
Subject: Status of the Noise Office Phase-Out Effort
From : Kathleen Bennett, Assistant Administrator for
Air, Noise and Radiation (ANR-443) *W/1*
To : Anne Gorsuch, Administrator (A-101)

As you already know, I earlier approved a detailed phase-out plan for the Noise Program that would permit us to reduce the staff in that Office in orderly phased stages, clear the Noise Program regulatory agenda and successfully hand off responsibility for noise abatement to the States. I asked the Office Director to advise me of the items in the Noise Program that were essential to accomplish and in what time frame they could be completed. This is a short status report covering the progress of that phase-out effort.

In planning the phase-out of the program, we picked January 1982 and June 1982 as milestones. I am pleased to report that we are making excellent progress in accomplishing our objectives. All of our goals established for the January milestone have been met! I might mention that this progress was not accomplished without a degree of difficulty. As staff left for other employment, a considerable amount of detailing and reassignment of personnel was necessary in order to ensure that the work was carried out as efficiently as possible. Also, it was necessary to ask employees to phase-out programs that they had heretofore tried to build with a high degree of personal satisfaction. In this regard, I have to give the Noise staff high marks for their cooperation and their insight in facing the realities of the phase-out and its personal implications. Morale has remained remarkably high and the work has been completed in a timely manner.

When the decision was made to close out the Noise Program last February, there was a total of 92 people on board. We set a goal of reducing this number to approximately 29 or 30 FTE by the end of January 1982. The management of the Noise Office launched a truly comprehensive outplacement program to assist personnel within the Office in locating and gaining other employment. This outplacement program has proven extremely successful and has resulted in the program meeting its targeted January end-strength. This is a 68.5 percent decrease in personnel, all accomplished without a formal reduction-in-force. We are optimistic that we can reach the projected June staffing level of 18 or 19 FTE's without resorting to a reduction-in-force, barring the impact of other Agency personnel actions prior to that date.

A major objective of the phase-out was to initiate action to withdraw a number of products scheduled for regulation and prepare all of the necessary administrative procedures to be left in place for Agency personnel charged with responsibility for those few regulations remaining in effect. We are now 30 days ahead of schedule in phasing out this part of the program.

Another priority area we selected for emphasis was to strengthen State and local noise control programs so that they might assume complete responsibility for environmental noise abatement. To accomplish this we set a comprehensive state strategy goal to assist a minimum of 24 states to stabilize their noise control efforts and to build their overall capacity to assume full responsibility for noise abatement within their geographic borders. We also continued an extensive "Each Community Helps Others" (ECHO) program to assist cities located in States without noise abatement authority. In addition, we are attempting to institutionalize the "Buy Quiet" program into the government purchasing process throughout the United States (within time and funding constraints) in order to have an ongoing noise abatement impact on the market for products purchased by State and local governments. Finally, we are arranging for the timely transfer of approximate \$1.5 million dollars worth of noise control equipment to State governments for use in ongoing abatement programs.

The housekeeping functions necessary to close out the office are proceeding on schedule. The staff has already identified and prepared all records needed in the regulatory and non-regulatory areas for final and future use by Agency personnel with noise abatement responsibilities. They have identified, inventoried, and archived in the Federal Records Center over 600 boxes of material thus far. They are in the process of distributing all available noise-related publications to State and local governments, private foundations, or universities for their use in ongoing noise abatement programs. During the past two months over 53,000 copies of noise publications have been transferred to State and local governments, universities, health organizations, and other interested groups who have need for them. Finally, they are closing out or terminating over 170 ongoing contracts resulting in a saving of approximately \$270,000 to the taxpayer.

All things considered, the phase-out of this program appears to be on schedule (or even ahead of schedule) and is being accomplished in an efficient and successful manner. If I can provide you with any additional information on this effort, please do not hesitate to call me.

ONAC Official
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P&PS Read
OD Read
ANR Read
Ms. Bennett

ANR-471:DFranklin:SSD:CM#2:x77600:rm1108:1/26/82

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