

NFFE



Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers

USFS Forest Service Council

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We work for America every day



Message from Forest Service Council (FSC) President, Mark Davis

Local Presidents,

Please forward to bargaining unit employees you represent. Per the [Interim Direction for Rehire of Long-term Temporary Seasonal Employees in the Competitive Service](#) dated January 6, 2012, long-term temporary employees now have a measure of job security they have never before had. This policy was developed by collaboration between your union and agency leadership in the Forest Service Partnership Council. As a result of this work, the agency has committed to rehiring those with 24 months of service, as long as certain common-sense criteria are met. This is an historic accomplishment. Under regulations at 5 CFR Part 316 Subpart D, the agency may use rehire or any of a number of other authorities to fill temporary positions. This is the first time the agency has committed that they will rehire those who meet certain criteria.

While this is progress we all celebrate, it is not enough. We will continue to work for a path to permanence that will provide a bridge to career positions for long-term temporary employees. We will continue to work to secure benefits such as health insurance and pension coverage. For more information on this continuing struggle, see http://www.nffe-fsc.org/committees/legislative/temp_hire.php. In the meantime, we are happy and proud that some 2,700 long-term temporary employees can be much more confident they will have a job this field season.

Note that this policy does not apply to STEPs or to other temporary employees with less than 24 months of service time. This does not mean these employees cannot be rehired. It just means the decision to rehire remains discretionary on the part of the hiring official, as has been the case as in years past.

In closing, a few words about inclusiveness and diversity. Those who may believe the union is standing in the way of this initiative are dead wrong. What we do believe is that any strategy employed in the name of inclusiveness and diversity must be balanced with the rights and opportunities of current employees. Under the Chief's interim direction, use of rehire will remain discretionary for some 10,000 temporary positions, including STEPs. While hiring officials undoubtedly will and should use rehire for some of these positions (to retain critical experience, for safety reasons, etc.), many others of these positions will be open to competition. This provides the agency with a good opportunity, consistent with merit system principles at 5 USC 2301, for recruitment of "qualified individuals from appropriate sources in an endeavor to achieve a work force from all segments of society." We welcome these new hires, just as we welcome returning temporary employees, as our brothers and sisters. We hope all employees will do the same.

In solidarity,

/s/ Mark Davis

Mark Davis, President

NFFE Forest Service Council

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