



April 17, 2003

Dear Commissioner Crotty:

PEF/encon is concerned that the last five weeks of posted vacant positions did not include many non-managerial positions. It is our belief that numerous journey-level positions for various PS&T titles need to be filled due to the essential work that we perform.

For example, only one EE2 position was posted. Will there be additional postings to backfill more EE2 positions? PEF/encon strongly advocates backfilling more EE2 positions for the following reasons:

1. During the recent retirement incentive approximately 27 EE2s retired from state service. PEF/encon believes the work of licensed professional engineers is critical to DEC's mission as they perform important technical work for the Department. How will the agency complete its mission with this loss of technical staff?
2. DEC needs to backfill more than one EE2 position to meet its mandates. DEC can request backfills for items which are critical for DEC to fulfill its mission. When a critical EE2 position is backfilled, the vacated EE1 position could be left unfilled during this financial crisis. Backfilling the critical EE2 position while leaving the EE1 position vacant would not increase the fill level at DEC.
3. PEF/encon supports DEC's decision to backfill 20 supervisory EE3 positions. Unfortunately, these supervisory engineering positions will be filled by EE2s reducing the number of EE2s even further. After the retirement incentives and backfilling, the number of EE2 positions remaining at DEC will be reduced by 46. This is a 15% reduction in the number of filled EE2s positions and is the largest reduction in any title at DEC.
4. DEC posted 6 Environmental Engineer 1 positions. These engineering positions will be filled by engineers from outside of the Department. DEC should consider promoting employees from within the agency from EE1 to EE2 before hiring new engineers from the outside. Hiring from the outside increases DEC's fill level.
5. As of April 10, 2003, the statewide EE2 promotional list has 60 candidates qualified to be promoted. The EE1s on the EE2 promotional list have all obtained a professional engineering license and have over four years of qualifying engineering experience. In the past, the Department promoted engineers to the EE2 level shortly after the engineering license was obtained. Recently though, licensed engineers have had to wait as many as

seven additional years for a position to become available. These engineers, based on their license, now practice professional engineering for the Department at a substandard level of compensation when compared to their peers. These engineers deserve to be fairly compensated for obtaining their professional license and practicing professional engineering for the Department.

6. DEC requires much of the work submitted to the Department to be certified by a licensed professional engineer, such as permit applications and plan submissions. It is appropriate for DEC professional engineers to review and approve these applications and submissions. DEC may be criticized if there are not adequate professional engineering staff available for this work to be reviewed and approved in a timely manner.

PEF/encon requests that DEC backfill more than one EE2 position. There are sufficient EE1s currently on the EE2 promotional to backfill every EE2 position that will be vacated due to the retirement incentive and backfilling EE3 positions. The engineers on the EE2 promotional list deserve to be equitably compensated for the professional work they perform so DEC can meet its mandates and fulfill its mission.

In addition, it is our belief that similar analyses to the above would indicate that DEC career employees in other title series should also be promoted to the journey-level in order to ensure that DEC's environmental mandates are accomplished. Thank you in advance for your consideration and prompt response.

Sincerely,

Karl Berger
PEF/encon Albany Chief Steward

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PEF Executive Board

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PEF Executive Board

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