

## **Executive Summary**

(April 2003)

**Subject:** Federal Labor Relations Authority Inspector General Review of Federal Labor Relations Authority Case Processing

**Background:** Over the past year, the caseload and time to process Authority cases has increased to the point of concern. Typically, the goal for case processing is 180 days which may take longer for complex or novel cases. Authority case processing has never been documented or standardized in the three Members' Offices. Several previous assessments were made of the Authority's case processing but major changes to the process have not been made over the last decade. However, after this internal review was initiated, two Member Offices revised their internal case processing by implementing more internal controls and accountability which is good.

**Discussion:** The FLRA Inspector General commenced this review in February, 2003 and completed this review in April, 2003. There were no material weaknesses found in the FLRA Authority case process. However, the current process could be performed more efficiently if it was standardized among the three Member's Offices, and if the case writer vacancies would be filled. Other productive actions such as more front end communication and more interaction among the Members prior to decision making, consolidating the drafting/issuance of the decision letter would all accelerate the process.

Although case processing over this past year by the Authority does not appear customer oriented, this review surfaced sufficient explanations for the slow down of Authority Case processing during 2002 and evoked management actions to improve the timeliness. During this past year, Member Pope and Member Armendariz's case writing staff had vacancies which could not be filled until a few weeks ago because of budgetary constraints. The Case Control Office was operating a good portion of the year without a Director. The Chairman and Chief Counsel were inundated with an extraordinary amount of Agency administrative issues, significant turnover of employees, and a major Headquarter's move.

### **Conclusion:**

The Authority Case Process involves lots of processing action, some of which can be eliminated or combined to make the process more efficient and effective. While some vulnerabilities exist, basically, the management controls appear to be sufficient. The primary deficiencies pertain to communication, lack of standardized policy among the Members Offices and the incomplete submission of cases by parties. For the most part, the Case Control Office, The Authority, the Collaborative Alternative Dispute Office, Administrative Law Judges and the Office of the Solicitor appear to be performing their jobs appropriately. The standardization of case processing among the three Members' Offices and more case communication at the onset and prior to the decision making process will improve reducing the backlog and enhance the decision making process.

