



# NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

Affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers



## NFFE News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 19, 2009

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# MORALE ERODED IN FEDERAL LANDS WORKFORCE; NEW ADMINISTRATION, POLICIES COULD CHANGE EMPLOYEES' OUTLOOK

**Washington, D.C.** – Employee representatives of federal land management agencies deliver testimony today in a House Subcommittee on Capitol Hill concerning how to turn around low employee morale in federal agencies like the U.S. Forest Service, Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management.

Employee representatives argued that morale eroded during the Bush Administration because federal land management agencies tended to act unilaterally on major initiatives, failing to get input—and therefore buy-in—from agency workers.

“How did we get to this point?” Ron Thatcher, NFFE Forest Service Council President, asked rhetorically in his oral testimony. “In every case, we hear the same thing: leadership didn’t ask the field. We believe it is time for a new way. It is self-evident that front-line employees are the ones who know the best way to get their jobs done. We need to tap into this collective wisdom. To make the best decisions, the agency needs to engage employees as advisors, even as collaborators.”

Even as agency workers vented to members of the Subcommittee, they left lawmakers with a sense that morale in land management agencies might soon be on the mend.

“I want to leave you with the genuine sense of optimism I feel going forward,” said Elaine Downing, out of the California Bureau of Land Management. “I, and many other employees at BLM, have a strong belief that our work environment will soon improve. We strongly support the efforts of President Obama and Secretary Salazar to bring fairness, integrity and accountability back into the Department of Interior.”

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*Established in 1917, the National Federation of Federal Employees is the oldest union representing civil service federal employees. NFFE currently represents 100,000 federal employees government-wide. NFFE is affiliated with the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. For more information, go to [www.nffe.org](http://www.nffe.org).*