

Administrative Time Conflict

This material is part of a collection that documents the harassment, discrimination, and retaliation perpetrated against Alaska's women research scientists by their supervisor, with full knowledge (and arguably, "tacit approval") of their federal employer, the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS)

From: "Cindy Bower" <Cindy.Bower@ars.usda.gov>

Subject: Administrative Time Conflict

Date: Sat, June 19, 2010 1:50 pm

To: "Hammond, Andrew" <Andrew.Hammond@ars.usda.gov>

Cc: "Matteri, Robert" <Robert.Matteri@ars.usda.gov>,"Whalen, Maureen" <Maureen.Whalen@ars.usda.gov>,"McLellan, Don" <Don.McLellan@ars.usda.gov>

Dr. Hammond,

On June 18th, I was successfully bullied into changing my (legitimate) Administrative Leave to Annual Leave. However, I would like it on the record that ARS administrative personnel willfully misinterpreted regulations to restrict my benefits during my (unrequested) relocation to Kodiak Island.

Here are the facts:

1) Packing, loading, and then receiving household goods is directly related to a change of official duty station, since the movers are required to pack and load the household goods between 08:00 and 5:00 on a weekday, and the employee is expected to be at the house watching the movers pack and load. The same criteria apply to receiving household goods at the other end.

2) The Subarctic Agricultural Research Unit's "not for packing and unpacking" edict, which was used to deny my request for Administrative Leave, has been taken out of context. In P&P 402.4 (Administrative Leave and Excused Absence), section 2.8 (Change of Official Duty Station), the section in question states: "The time associated with packing or unpacking one's possessions is not subject to administrative leave as this activity is covered in the commuted rate allowance". SARU administrative personnel have misinterpreted this sentence by failing to understand the definition of "commuted rate allowance" (and instead, simply eliminating it from the sentence).

3) The Commuted Rate System does not apply to my relocation. Under the Commuted Rate System, employees arrange for the shipment of their own household goods and are then reimbursed for the costs. I was subject to the "Actual Expense Method" (probably because a commuted rate allowance is not allowed for Alaska or Hawaii). Under the actual expense method, household goods are shipped at the Government's expense by hiring a Relocation Coordinator, who selects the moving company and arranges for carrier service (http://www.irs.gov/irm/part1/irm_01-022-007.html#d0e174).

My relocation to Kodiak Island disrupted my life and caused me thousands of dollars in non-reimbursable expenses. This latest conflict has greatly increased my level of stress, when all I was asking for was the same access to Administrative Leave that is guaranteed to all ARS employees through P&P 402.4. I'm certain that these issues could have been handled rationally long before they escalated into this letter to you, if the current conflict of interest did not exist with every decision made by my supervisor. Please reassign me to someone who does not have a history of harassing and discriminating against women research scientists.

Thank you.

Cindy

Dr. Cindy Bower

118 Trident Way
Kodiak, AK 99615
(907) 486-1534
Cindy.Bower@ars.usda.gov

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