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December 13, 2011

Mark Gottlieb, Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
4802 Sheboygan Ave 120b
Madison WI 53705

Dear Secretary Gottlieb:

Recently, members of the State Engineering Association (SEA) on WisDOT staff were briefed by managers regarding various changes in the upcoming compensation plan. A number of these members have raised questions about the new Discretionary Merit Compensation (DMC) component of the plan.

SEA respectfully requests a written or electronic copy of the DMC and whatever written administrative policy the DOT develops relating to its particular implementation of the DMC.

SEA also seeks clarification on whether its members in the engineering unit are broad-banded for purposes of the DMC. Our strong impression is that they are not. If true, this suggests to us that those employees who are our members can only receive a lump sum payment under DMC. That would not be base-building for continuing salary and benefit purposes. It would thus seem to be inconsistent with the state's goal of compensating top performing employees at an on-going higher level, and in turn with retaining their services. It also appears quite inequitable, in that other employees including managers who are broad-banded would be eligible for base-building salary increases.

Is it truly the agency's intent to set up a two-tier compensation system that rewards some employees permanently, while at best rewarding others only on a temporary basis?

A number of our members also have expressed dismay that their 30-cent per hour salary add-on is being taken away, even though they are still obliged to obtain professional certification. This change seems inconsistent with the stated goal of rewarding merit, pursuing equity and promoting retention. The loss of the add-on thus serves as a disincentive that weighs against engineers and technical specialists obtaining additional training at their own expense.

SEA would like to request a meeting with the agency to discuss the mutually beneficial restoration of the traditional and proven add-on system. SEA believes such a change is within the discretion of the agency to grant. In returning to the traditional system of add-ons, the agency would be letting more worthy employees know it appreciates the work they do, while continuing to honor a past commitment made by the state during good-faith bargaining

SEA also is looking for clarity on behalf of our members who receive Professional Development Training benefits in exchange for past salary concessions. Many of our members are concerned that PDT will be lost to them, amounting to a further base-pay decrease. That, it seems to us, would further negate the stated aims of the agency to reward workers and pursue equity in compensation planning.

Letter to M. Gottlieb re compensation plan concerns – Page 2 of 2

A series of other concerns have been raised by SEA members, who want to know more about changes in the turn-down mileage reimbursement policy, stand-by pay and call-back language, changes that would appear to create dis-equity rather than equity.

I hope we and the agency can work through these questions and issues and gain a better mutual understanding of the changes in SEA member compensation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Klipstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mark Klipstein
President