UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Chief Financial Officer and
Assistant Secretary for Administration
Washington, D.C. 20230

MAY 26 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR Secretarial Officers
Heads of Operating Units

FROM: for Deborah A. Jefferson
Director for Human
Resources Management

SUBJECT: Status of Department of Commerce Senior Executive Service
Candidate Development Program

We announced the Department of Commerce (DOC) Senior Executive Service (SES) Candidate Development Program (CDP) May 2003. During the final phase of the evaluation of CDP applicants, we determined that the program should be focused on specific succession planning needs. The Department is facing a potentially high rate of retirements in the SES cadre. For the period, FY 2004 through FY 2008, 70 percent of our SES employees in the eight most populous DOC mission-critical occupations are eligible to retire. Similarly, 79 percent of SES employees in the 12 additional mission-critical occupations are eligible to retire during this same period.

These staggering numbers prompted us to review the 2003 CDP in terms of its ability to respond to DOC's potential exodus of senior executives. While doing so, we benchmarked the Plan against other successful CDPs and concluded that the program could be enhanced to provide a higher return-on-investment for both the bureaus and the candidates. Based on this review, we halted work on the 2003 CDP and have designed an improved program for 2004.

We are confident that the newly revamped CDP program has the necessary ingredients to: 1) attract the best and the brightest applicants, 2) ensure selection of the best candidates with the highest potential for program success, and 3) provide candidates with high-caliber training and developmental assignments in the SES Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs). In the end, both the candidates and the Department will reap the benefits of well-prepared leaders for the future. We will notify the applicants of the 2003 CDP of our improved program offerings and will inform them of their automatic inclusion as applicants in the new program.

Additional detailed information will be forthcoming. For now, I encourage each of you to be thinking about: 1) those SES managers you believe would make outstanding mentors for candidates, and 2) potential executive-level developmental assignments where candidates can gain experience in one or more of the ECQs. We will be contacting your servicing Human Resources Offices very shortly to obtain this information.