



DEC 14 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL NOAA EMPLOYEES

FROM: Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Under Secretary of Commerce for
Oceans and Atmosphere

SUBJECT: NOAA's Alternative Dispute Resolution Program

As most of you know by now, I am a firm believer in creating a positive working environment that allows each and every one of you to contribute your best to the agency mission, as well as gain personal satisfaction and pride in accomplishment. This e-mail message is intended to inform you of the value of NOAA's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program in achieving that objective.

I ask you to consider the following points as you work to create an atmosphere of trust and open communication in your work place.

Conflict is a natural part of life. When work life conflicts arise that are beyond your control, the Mediation Services offered by ADR can help you resolve those natural conflicts to everyone's mutual satisfaction as early as possible, in an appropriate and cost-effective manner and at the lowest organizational level possible.

NOAA's ADR Program can help your team function harmoniously and even address "morale" problems in a positive way. One NOAA manager said of the Facilitated Problem and Action Planning sessions, "Most importantly, I want to make sure that you are aware that the ADR Program has performed miracles with my staff in a short period of time."

In a larger sense, we are all each other's "customers." The ADR Workshop on Non-violent Communication can help you respond professionally and constructively to dissatisfied as well as satisfied customers, and the other workshops and seminars can help you assure that everyone's needs are being met to the fullest extent possible.

The hard fact is that conflicts and disputes cost resources. Costs of conflict such as wasted time, reduced decision quality, lowered job motivation, lost work time and health costs can have a significant impact. The more you can learn about resolving conflicts yourself with the ADR Conflict Resolution Workshop and the seminar Getting What you Need at Work -- interest-based negotiation for everyone, the more able you will be to make your best contribution -- to NOAA's mission accomplishment. Recognizing the power of perception is an integral part of all ADR services. By using mediation, taking workshops and consulting with ADR staff, you will better be able to recognize and address the perceptions of others.

Your personal development and job satisfaction are important to me and to the NOAA team effort. I have complete trust in your willingness to do your best in accomplishing NOAA's important mission, even during times that are personally difficult for you. I strongly encourage you to contact the NOAA ADR Program for consultation, advice, and help with any difficulty or conflict in your work life. You can learn more about what the NOAA Alternative Resolution Program can do for you by visiting the ADR Web site at <http://www.adr.noaa.gov>

