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cc:

Subject: Contracting out Government Work

This concept of contracting out much of the work currently handled by the government needs to be thought through carefully. I am one of the government workforce and have been informed of the new changes regarding the new computer One-number-for-everything help desk. I'm afraid this one move will set us back at least 10 years in getting our jobs done. As few as 5 years ago I worked in an office that did not have local support. The result was that those of us that knew computers became the local experts and spent most of our time serving as help for the office instead of getting our own jobs done. By taking away immediate access to computer people and making us submit "help desk" tickets I think we will be going back to local support by people who should be doing something other than fixing computers. It was such a relief when our management finally realized that computers were the way of the future and put people in place to actually spend their time fixing problems. Now that has not exactly been taken away from us - but it has sure been made cumbersome by making us use a nation wide help desk. This is not my first experience with help desks - I have been using one for years. It works but is not cost effective for me. It usually takes a couple of days to get an answer - and many times the answer is "gee - seems to be a problem - we'll get back to you". We I need something from my local folks I usually get an answer in a couple of hours and the answer actually helps. It does not seem to be a good use of my tax payer dollars to use a help desk. In addition - they say we are suppose to document the length of time it takes to get an answer so they can see if it is better than what we have. Since we have not documented our current situation - how are they going to be able to see a change? This is one of those policies that might look good to the public - but makes government employees look and feel like idiots because we know how to get our jobs done - but no - we have to use a different method that is less cost effective and cumbersome.

On other areas of work- I have used contract employees for much of my work. Sometimes it works out well - but it has to be in a well defined area that is taught in higher education institutes. In my area of work - much of my work is not easy to specify which makes contract prep a challenge for me - let alone for someone who has no experience working on the ground. Contracting works great for specific things like - design and put a culvert here, put a bridge here, build this road or trail. It absolutely is not effective for fixing stream and fish problems. I'm am speaking from 12 years of experience.

This really needs to be thought through carefully. I care a lot about doing my job with maximum cost effectiveness - in my opinion - I'm the one who needs to decide what can be contracted out not someone in Washington furthermore, anybody who has tried to use help from even a private computer company knows that it is more effective to have someone in person to help with the problem. How stupid is it that we are going to have to call a nation-wide help desk to have printer cartridge replaced when they are just going to call our local computer folks. What an embarrassing situation to put us in thinking about how that will look to the public.

I am a government employee - but first I am a taxpayer.