

(b) (6) Privacy, (b) (7)(C) Enforcement Privacy

Madison, WI 53705

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December 3, 2019

U.S. EPA External Civil Rights
Compliance Office (2310A)
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear U.S. EPA External Civil Rights Office (ECRCO)

I am writing to file a complaint of discrimination against the State of Wisconsin, Department of Natural Resources (WI DNR), Environmental Management Program, Petroleum Environmental Cleanup Program (PECFA) which receives EPA funding for their program on behalf of both myself and others with disabilities currently employed by the WI DNR. This discrimination continues to take place from June 30, 2015 to present time. I am filing this complaint because I was denied reasonable accommodations for work and job as a Senior Hydrogeologist, because of my being hearing impaired and the difficulties this presented to work in a noisy environment. I requested reasonable accommodations to move to a different, empty cubicle – of which there were several vacant cubicles nearby within the work area of the program. I requested moves to different cubicles from ~2015 to ~February 7, 2019 – the day I was terminated for other reasons and which I believe was retaliation for requesting accommodations for my hearing disability. I know I was depressed by the inaction of management in DNR from the entire duration mentioned above, and this resulted in decreased job performance. I also complained to the Dept. Personnel Office at the time of my request for accommodations in 2018. My workload was kept minimal as compared to other colleagues and I requested increased workload and was given assurances of comparable workload balancing which never took place – which resulted in me feeling further alienated and not valued.

I am also sending this complaint of discrimination on behalf of (b) (6) Privacy, (b) (7)(C) Enforcement Privacy a former colleague who is presently employed by the Department of Natural Resources. He has consistently been ignored by management when requesting information and advice from his managers on business matters in the PECFA Program, and is made to feel diminished and not valued as well. He also filed a request for accommodations at or about the same time as I did in 2018 (I had no prior knowledge of his

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filing a request for accommodations, so this was done independently of my actions). These documents are in the files of DNR Personnel Office, I don't have copies of them, but they should be available upon request. I was terminated on February 7, 2019, and I believe this would not have happened if I was not depressed and despondent honestly. I was informed by management (b) (6) Privacy, (b) (7)(C) Enforcement Privacy) that my request for accommodations was perceived as a threat to management. Thus when I went through the appeal process of trying to retain my job, I believed I was fired with retaliation being a major factor in their decision to terminate my employment. At any rate, those documents should be available with the Department as well, within the files.

Therefore, I am filing this complaint on behalf of both myself and (b) (6) Privacy, (b) (7)(C) Enforcement Privacy. I request reinstatement in a comparable position with the same or higher salary with the Department of Natural Resources as the Advanced Hydrogeologist job classification. Furthermore, we requested that position descriptions be provided and those were never provided. Why? In my view, it was in order to prevent staff from advancing in their careers or to be treated the same as our colleagues within the same program with the Department of Natural Resources with the goal being to reduce staff. Thus this is another long-term practice of discrimination against both (b) (6) Privacy, (b) (7)(C) Enforcement Privacy and I in order to do our jobs to the standards necessary to ensure compliance with fair labor laws and equal opportunity for disabled employees within the State of Wisconsin, Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Management, Remediation and Redevelopment Program office in Madison, WI.

I still continue to be depressed over this egregious conduct by the Department, and have been in the care of mental health professionals ever since, and thus I believe that any deadlines for the dispute process should be extended for these extenuating circumstances. The loss of my career and my reputation, not being able to obtain unemployment compensation, or even considering my immediate supervisor for a reference has hampered my ability to support myself and my family in job search efforts for a family supporting living wage.

Again, more details are in my personnel file and in my former work computer/work server, which upon further examination should provide detailed information to help corroborate these issues and exact timelines for further clarity.

I look forward to hearing from you.

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