



Organization of Professional Employees
of the U. S. Department of Agriculture

October 4, 2011

Dear fellow OPEDA member:

Federal employees are under attack on many fronts from the media, special interest organizations, and others who wish to reduce the Federal Budget at the expense of Federal workers and annuitants. Legislation is being proposed that will, if enacted, have a disastrous effect on Federal pay, benefits, and annuities. Recent inaccurate reports from major news sources claim that Federal workers are "overpaid." This has led to Federal employee pay being frozen for two years.

It is now being proposed that the pay freeze be extended three or more years. Also under consideration is a 10% reduction in Federal pay, a freeze of within-grade step increases, an increase in employees' CSRS and FERS retirement contributions, and reduction of the federal share contributed for health care coverage. Furloughs, closures, RIFs, and involuntary separations are also being considered and/or implemented.

With the costs of health care, food, energy, and the basic necessities of life near all-time highs, USDA employees and annuitants cannot afford to stand by and allow these unfair attacks on our pay and benefits to continue. OPEDA is your advocate in Washington to help protect you from these unfair attacks. We work closely with other Federal employee organizations and Unions representing over four (4) million Federal workers and annuitants to protect your interests. However, to be successful advocates for you, we must have sufficient member strength and resources.

There is something you can do to help. Over two-thirds of OPEDA members reside outside of the Washington, DC, Metropolitan Area. To be effective in countering these efforts at misinformation, we need to establish new OPEDA chapters to provide accurate information about the valuable services we provide, and recruit new members from every USDA office. U.S. agriculture and forestry production is a global success story.

All USDA employees and retirees are eligible to join OPEDA. Please let your peers know about our organization. Thousands of dollars of pay and benefits are at risk!! At a cost of only \$2 per pay period, all USDA employees, particularly our younger workers, should be informed about OPEDA's efforts to protect their interests.

Thank you for your continuing support of OPEDA -- and please help us combat this threat by establishing new chapters and recruiting new OPEDA members in your local area.

Sincerely,

Louis Iacoletti,
President, OPEDA