



## ***In Their Own Words***

### **2014 Survey of U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement & Investigations (LE&I) Staff**

#### **Essay Responses**

*PEER sent a survey to all of the professional staff within the Law Enforcement & Investigations (LE&I) program of the U.S. Forest Service. Respondents self-identified as a Law Enforcement Officer (LEO), Special Agent, Supervisor Manager or Program Assistant support staff. The survey consisted of 18 multiple choice questions about the leadership, effectiveness and direction of the LE&I program. Of the 430 surveys returned, 337 contained essays in response to this question:*

#### ***How could LE&I best be improved?***

*Topics are presented in the order of frequency with which the issue was raised in essays.*

#### **I. Leadership**

A LEO wrote – “LE&I is a great agency, but is poorly led...morale is horrible because there is no accountability for our leadership and upper/higher management”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “Worst agency I have ever worked for by far! I will be leaving the agency because of the extreme mismanagement and immoral conduct by Ferrell, Perry, Pollard, Willis, King and Clemens. Until cancerous managers are removed nothing will change.”

A Special Agent wrote – “Replacing the Director & Asst. Director with somebody with experience, integrity and leadership qualities. That being said the USFS has a vacuum of leadership throughout, not just LEI.”

A LEO wrote – “First Getting Rid of David Ferrell. Nothing can change until we get good people in DC, no-one wants to work there under this leadership.”

A Special Agent wrote – “Fire David Ferrell and replace him with someone, anyone, who won’t be vindictive, mean-spirited, grudge-holding and retaliatory...Hire a director based on his own written responses to job qualification questions instead of someone, like him, who hired someone else to write answers to job qualifications/ECQs.”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “When the Director makes statements to R5 LEI personnel such as:

‘I make the rules so I can change them.’ And ‘I won’t transfer people when I have a line of people waiting for these jobs.’

It shows that Director Ferrell does not care about LEI employees.”

A LEO wrote – “LEI can best be improved by changing its Director, David Ferrell, with someone that supports their employees and the mission. The director should not have a huge disconnect with the field!”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “The train is headed down the [wrong] tracks, and we need to get it stopped.”

A Special Agent wrote – “LEI Management is more interested in the politics and political ramifications of their decisions and not what is best for the LEI program.”

A LEO wrote – “Removing Ferrell. Morale has dropped in LE&I considerably since he became director.”

A LEO wrote – “LEI can be best improved installing a Director with REAL Law Enforcement background, with a proven track record of caring about their employees, a fact that Mr. Ferrell cannot fathom. LE&I has lost numerous valuable employees under his tenure due to his horrific inability to provide LEADERSHIP and value his employees for their actual merits instead of their sex or race.”

A Special Agent wrote – “Morale is not low, it is miserable. ALL employees that once were motivated – are miserable. It is sad. Ferrell has destroyed this agency. He tells employees if they don’t like it – leave.”

A Program Assistant wrote – “David Ferrell rules by intimidation. Regions are not permitted to run effectively as Director Ferrell continues to make all regional decisions.”

A LEO wrote – “90% of the LEO’s feel that our director HATES us!”

A LEO wrote – “When I was at FLETC the Forest Service members of my class met with Director David Ferrell and the rest of the leadership team. This was a few years ago and the only thing that sticks out in my mind is Ferrell informing us as to ‘never make a mistake’ because he would not support us. In my opinion this is Ferrell’s attitude toward those employees who do not have a direct relationship with him or an important member of his leadership staff.”

A LEO wrote – “Improving its leadership. Our leadership would be improved if we had experienced and competent leaders who proactively worked to improve LE&I instead of holding it down.”

A Special Agent wrote – “I do not dislike Mr. Ferrell but he is clearly in over his head as the director. He has surrounded himself with people who will go along with what he wants.”

A Special Agent wrote – “A good start? Fire David Ferrell...”

A Special Agent wrote – “Removing the current LEI Director and Deputy Director from their positions. They wholly lack *any* leadership skills, and can barely fulfill basic management responsibilities. The lack of business and political acumen displayed by the Director’s Office has been detrimental to the entire LEI organization.”

A LEO wrote – “LEI leadership, especially Director Ferrell, make decisions based upon what will make them look good to their superiors. They couldn’t care less how their ignorant, illogical decisions have repeatedly had lasting negative impacts to the folks who are actually out in the field trying to do their jobs.”

## **II. Lack of Resources**

A LEO wrote – “Our workloads keep going up, we become responsible for more territory and cases, our manpower keeps going down.”

A Program Assistant wrote – “Go to the chief to ‘fully fund’ all the regions so the regions don’t have to seek funding from the F.S. staffs or cut Coop Agreements to pay salary.”

A LEO wrote – “Funding for LE&I is horrible. There’s never money for training or equipment.”

A LEO wrote – “Resources: Money wasted buying gold badges for LEOs. New tasers were unnecessary and bulky making them difficult to carry. The MUVI personal video recorders were absolute junk.”

A LEO wrote – “By not cutting hours of work, AUO, and having mandatory office days. We no longer can survive on the do-more-with-less. I already cover 3 districts and 1.5 million acres by myself.”

A LEO wrote – “Way more country to patrol than we can. Concerns go unanswered. Can’t go afield...Feeling hog-tied.”

A Program Assistant wrote – “Realizing that you can only try to do more with less for so long. After a while, employees feel overworked and under-appreciated.”

A LEO wrote – “Management needs to stop using the ‘Do more with less’ attitude having LEO’s cover more area because of budget or not pre planning when there is a retirement or vacancy not being filled when those vacancies are known ahead of time.”

A LEO wrote – “Funding for LE&I is horrible there’s never money for training or equipment that LEO’s need vs what the WO ‘thinks’ they need.”

A LEO wrote – “In my opinion [the] majority of LE&I’s problem rests with the ability to successfully achieve a bigger BUDGET, that I feel was sabotaged by the USFS when LE&I was stove piped into our own chain of command against the wishes of USFS Management. It is still apparent to this day that the USFS Managers still want LE&I to fail, so that they will be placed back under their control which is an even worse predicament.”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “Officers and SAs in the agency are worked to the point of exhaustion nearly all year. Divorces, failing health, lack of any personal interests, over investment in the position, and low morale are a product of an environment where the workforce is trying to keep up with a demand 5 times its capability. Many Officers simply burn out, move on, or settle into a rut of permanent apathy, doing little to further the mission.”

A LEO wrote – “We have got to get up to speed with the world as far as technology. We are in the dark ages! Need to run subjects on mobile terminals, need nat’l database access, need good people search engines to find the bad guys.”

A LEO wrote – “Selling those drones we bought to fund a few officers...”

A LEO wrote – “BLM officers have mentioned to us several times that they do less work than us and get paid more, plus they are scheduled for overtime throughout the year.”

A LEO wrote – “I patrol 2.3 million acres by myself, 2 ranger districts. That is unacceptable! We are overworked and underpaid and not appreciated. I need several more LEOs in my patrol area.”

A LEO wrote – “Equipment that works. My Panasonic Toughbook is awful. The air card quit working two weeks after I got it. The docking station quit working about the same time frame. The Toughbook routinely dumps my passwords and I have to go through two or three levels of the helpdesk before someone finds a fix that only lasts about a week. It struggles with the internet. Lotusnotes causes it to implode (freeze and have to reboot). The list goes on. I’m not the only one with these problems. I know LEO’s who’ve had to have their Toughbooks reimaged more than once... Would be nice to have a tablet so that we could stand outside our vehicles to enter VN’s.”

A Special Agent wrote – “All we ever hear is budget, budget, budget, yet I still see management taking trips to units, attending retirement ceremonies in government vehicles, and continually misusing privileges for personal gain!”

A LEO wrote – “...we are told over and over how important work life balance is, yet management vacations and Annual Leave seem to be the only ones exempt from cancellation. The compromise and sacrifice stays at the lowest levels, as is apparent in the

recent and poorly timed raise being given to SACs while we are all told to carpool, and cover vacant areas with no hope in sight of filling them at a level lower than comparable agencies with less land and responsibility.”

### **III. Mismanagement/ Organizational Dysfunction**

A LEO wrote – “Replacing under qualified managers with qualified leaders. Focusing on the agency mission and stop hindering employees from doing their jobs strictly due to budget.”

A Special Agent wrote – “Better cooperation between patrol and investigations, less ego between the two, better adherence to established policy.”

A LEO wrote – “Better communication w/ the field. What do they even talk about during National Leadership or Regional mtgs? USFS communicates w/ their people, why not LE&I?”

A LEO wrote – “Changing the Special Agent based atmosphere. Special Agents receive regular awards and LEO’s do NOT!”

A LEO wrote – “Morale could be improved if LEO’s felt like management actually wanted them to do their jobs and supported them in this mission. Instead it seems most or many in management are more concerned with their own careers and not making decisions-that matter. ‘You can’t lose if you don’t play the game’ comes to mind and sums it up. Rather, management focuses on minor, insignificant details that hamper LEO’s from doing their jobs.”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “Allow someone who wears a uniform daily to be involved in decision making.”

A LEO wrote – “Overhaul of our management used to be field-driven. Now has become self-serving bureaucracy.”

A LEO wrote – “I strongly think this agency is TOP HEAVY!!!”

A LEO wrote – “Seek field-input prior to equipment purchases. Each work unit has unique issues requiring unique equipment. Designating an equipment budget per officer/agent would accomplish this goal.”

A LEO wrote – “The wearable body camera is the latest boondoggle. We told the WO we didn’t want dash cams and to their credit they listened to that. But I got a camera the size of a smartphone that is still in the box and I doubt I will ever use it. Why not test several different models and get feedback from the field? Lots of agencies do this with major purchases.”

A Program Assistant wrote – “Whoever ordered the cameras obviously did not get input from the field because they are very bulky and not easy to use. Not very many of the LEOs use these so it’s pretty much a waste of money.”

A LEO wrote – “Get rid of some of the unnecessary positions (‘Patrol Commander’ for God’s sake?) and more GS 5/7/9’s for the field.”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “LEI is also plagued by micro managers in the upper echelons. Instead of leaders we have a group of managers who get so in the weeds that they paralyze operations which slows down if not completely stops good enforcement and investigation work.”

A Program Assistant wrote – “...even though management knew that our division of the USFS would be getting a substantial decrease in funding for FY14, they decided to purchase all of LE&I new tasers and holsters when there weren’t problems with the old ones. In addition, last year the WO purchased body worn cameras for the entire LE&I, but in our region, they have been nothing but problematic and simply don’t work. In fact, few officers will even use them. They are a very cheap brand, the batteries won’t hold a charge, and they are large and bulky.”

A LEO wrote – “Lateral transfers offered to current employees for job announcements. Take care of your employees for successful work and allow lateral moves.”

A LEO wrote – “Upper management returning emails and phone calls (they never do).”

An LEO wrote – “Allow LEO’s to change duty stations. Many feel trapped where they are.”

A LEO wrote – “Allowing internal transfers would dramatically increase morale.”

A LEO wrote – “Removing upper level management and allowing more movement within the agency. Currently lateral movement is prohibited and upward movement is difficult and limited.”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “Hire managers/SAC’s/directors that understand land management law enforcement. Does not mean they need to come from the Forest Service, but they have roots in resource L.E. and know what it is like to be in a patrol car, late at night, in the woods.”

#### **IV. Selection and Promotion**

A Special Agent wrote – “addressing the fact that the Good-ole-boy system has made an astonishing comeback in management practices in the past 5 years or so; women are being held back, harassed and/or targeted by male managers at increasing rates and standing up for themselves only makes it worse.”

A LEO wrote – “It would also help if you hire managers that have worked on the ground and possess some sort of leadership experience. I am a Marine and I could really shed some light on leadership and what traditions need to be maintained and which ones need to be modified.”

A LEO wrote – “Hire managers that have actual field experience or at least an understanding as to what LEOs do.”

A LEO wrote – “Little or no chance of promotion. We promote from outside the agency.”

A LEO wrote – “Promoting within ranks...Balancing diversity hiring/promoting with the best qualified...”

A LEO wrote – “Favoritism is a massive problem in USFS LE&I. It is clear that the only way to promote or transfer is to be someone’s favorite.”

A LEO wrote – “Recruit more LEOs from within the FS. Too many new hires from Park Service, Border Patrol, Sheriff’s Depts. They don’t understand how FS works and they frequently have a hard time adjusting...a difficult time prioritizing work and seem to need a lot of supervision.”

A Special Agent wrote – “Hire personnel who actually want to work in the woods and have a connection with the outdoors.”

A LEO wrote – “Favoritism is rampant – choice details, assignments, collateral duties, etc.”

A Program Assistant wrote – “Hiring Captains and Commanders with little or no resource law enforcement experience has killed morale and faith in leadership.”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “Showing support of current FS LE&I Employees: by approving more lateral reassignments and hardship requests. Senior management routinely deny these requests then hire new employees, with no LE experience into positions sought after by our current folks who have valid hardships and/or would be more qualified for the position! This has a very negative effect on morale.”

A Special Agent wrote – “LE&I will never change as long as you keep promoting ass kissers who will not go against the grain for the greater good! There are highly skilled employees that would make a difference in this agency, that we have either lost to another agency or they are so beat down they will never put in for a job.”

A LEO wrote – “Outreach open LEI positions to all Forest Service LEI personnel first, before posting the position. That would allow LEI personnel the opportunity to stay with the Forest Service instead of looking at other agencies to get where they would like or need to live. Don’t rule out an individual for a LEI position, because he is already in LEI.”

## **V. Culture of Retaliation & Discrimination**

A LEO wrote – “We need to get rid of the mentality that when one person craps their pants we all have to wear diapers. We need to be able to go work without fear of doing something wrong and then getting investigated forever because of it.”

A LEO wrote – “Officers need support from upper level management. People in LE&I are ‘working scared’ and are making decisions based on what leadership may think of the decisions. It puts officers in a very dangerous situation when faced with a split-second decision.”

An unidentified employee wrote – “This typed response can be a gauge of the retaliatory paranoia in the field. I didn’t want this to someday be seen and my handwriting recognized.”

A LEO wrote – “This is a horrible place to work.”

A LEO wrote – “We treat suspected criminals with more respect in due process than our own. Management refuses to adhere to our own policies and comes up with inventive and creative ways to avoid them. Rather than follow proper procedure management bullies and intimidates subordinates into the behavior that best suits management.”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “There appears to me to be a ‘tyrannical’ style approach to decision making. ‘Because I told you so’ style decision making from the top down, often made in a vacuum with a stated resistance to input. Unfortunately, when you combine fragile egos and inflexibility to input, these decisions (which are sometimes wrong) stand as final – to the detriment of the affected employee.”

A LEO wrote – “When I was at FLETC Ms. Pollard came to our class and stated ‘there are too many white people here, we need more color in the Forest Service.’ I about fell out of my chair. If that’s not a racist comment, then I don’t know what is.”

A LEO wrote – “Too much time and effort is spent targeting good employees/officers while officers who deserve to be fired, are not held accountable or disciplined.”

A LEO wrote – “Treat LEO’s like professionals instead of grunts.”

A LEO wrote – “Retaliation by management to perceived non-team players seems excessive and extreme. Management appears to govern through fear and intimidation, fostering an adversarial relationship between them and their employees.”

A LEO wrote – “Discipline LEI management who has made retaliation a common practice.”



A LEO wrote – “I love my job but hate the fact of coming to work for the Forest Service. Nothing but internal DRAMA.”

A LEO wrote – “Attempt to motivate us instead of trying to constantly break us down.”

A LEO wrote – “LE&I has taken the Chain of Command too far as to where a LEO cannot talk to anyone above their Supervisor.”

A Program Assistant wrote – “I have worked for LE&I since 1998 and this is the worst I have seen. The lowly leg workers in the admin team are the least appreciated bunch...Our series is specialized in such a way that we don't just answer phones and do filing. We are entrusted with confidential matters, we handle evidence, we are liaisons between the court and the CVB offenders, and we handle more than the regular nine to five desk jobs. I believe we are an integral part of the unit yet we have never been shown any acknowledgement or appreciation.”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – RO management does not provide positive reinforcement or positive ‘good job’ to our hard working LEI employees who work hard and do good work...at the end of the day, no matter how much you tried and good work you did – top management at the RO could care less.”

A LEO wrote – “In the 5 years I've worked as an LEO it seems morale is the lowest. I like to remain positive and I still love my job, however the BLM is looking real good right now. Thanks!”

A LEO wrote – “We are broken. I'm not an ‘angry naysayer’ or one of those LEO's that are bitter and hostile. I am deeply saddened by our agency and what has happened and how low we have fallen! I just want us ‘fixed’ and to be respected by others and to do REAL, quality work. Right now we are at best a ‘D-’ outfit.”

A LEO wrote – “Identity of LE&I needs to be improved. Everything from uniforms to patrol vehicles should be revamped. LE&I needs to be identified and NOT mixed up or misunderstood with another division (i.e. Fire, recreation, or timber). We can still and will work with the other divisions but our identity needs to be defined. We need our identity and LE&I pride! We have NO pride..We are nothing but overpriced security guards.”

A LEO wrote – “Employees are scared about being retaliated on by management...God forbid one of us has to shoot someone in the line of duty because we will not be backed up by management.”

A LEO wrote – “Stop doing internal investigations on employees under the guise of a supervisor's inquiry.”

A LEO wrote – “This is my 3<sup>rd</sup> Fed Land Management agency and the worst career move I've made. Management of LE&I is very top down and top heavy. Management is

uniformly seen to be biased and vindictive. Since I've been in this region 2 captains and 6 LEO's have been fired. My captain has received more than 12 EEO/Union complaints."

A Special Agent wrote – "There is nothing more that can erode away the trust and morale of the troops in the field than not being upfront and honest with them. We are constantly being misled, given half-truths or just out and out lied to. We are always kept in the dark and never really know what is going on at all LE&I levels other than rumor control."

A LEO wrote – "People are afraid to call OIG and report fraud and dishonesty in our WO LEI office because all calls at OIG are then referred back to our WO LEI office along with the name of the person who made the report."

A LEO wrote – "LE&I management (SSA's) attempt to supervise by intimidation. LE&I management also doesn't know policy (or doesn't care). Look at the grievances being filed by LEO's. It appears most of them are being won by the LEO. That's a clue! I need more paper!!" [to write comments]

A Special Agent wrote – "There is great cause for concern in the USFS ranks about internal investigations and unfair punishment. Recommend putting together an annual report summarizing types of internal investigations conducted, punishments, aggravating factors, and lessening factors. This report would have the offender's identity be anonymous. This will make employees aware of consequences for violating policy. This policy is already in place in the US Department of Justice with great success."

2

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – "I don't believe that dissent is targeted for retaliation, but it is certainly ignored."

## **VI. Misplaced Priorities**

A LEO wrote – "The agency does not provide adequate personal protective equipment. They waste money on shit that is not critical to the needs of the employees. This is the only Federal LE organization that does not provide duty boots for the LEO's."

A LEO wrote – "Management has just ordered law enforcement officers to stay in their office and NOT PATROL one day a week to cut down on mileage costs. Tax payers are not paying the gov't to have their law enforcement officers sit in their offices!!!"

A LEO wrote – "Refocus priorities on resource protection & enforcement. Too many new LEOs spend too much time enforcing state laws."

A LEO wrote – "I have been with the FS for several years, yet I have no idea what management wants from its LEOs."

A LEO wrote – "Traditional backcountry and horse patrols need to be revived and supported better. Too much time is spent on technology and not on just ground pounding traditional forest patrols."

A LEO wrote – “We need to become a true law enforcement agency or branch. We place too much emphasis on passing off our responsibility to protecting the NF and enforcing criminal laws onto other agencies especially to county sheriff. We are a joke as an agency and everyone knows it.”

A LEO wrote – “LEO’s are threatened with ‘quotas’ to write 100 violations per year minimum by Director Ferrell. You will never see this in writing, almost... This forces employees to write violations where they might exercise their own discretion.”

A Special Agent wrote – “Getting back to an emphasis on resource related crimes rather than domestics – property – etc.”

A LEO wrote – “Not focusing on internal investigations or operational issues at the zone or forest level.”

A Special Agent wrote – “Re-focusing limited financial resources away from WO/RO positions and toward boots on the ground positions.”

A LEO wrote – “Quit the focus on stats and fix the gaps in our authority and jurisdiction.”

A Program Assistant wrote – “There is an unwritten quota system that is used to measure employee performance. Stats should not be the only thing used to determine funding levels and what positions to fill.”

A LEO wrote – “Focusing on F.S. Resource related infractions and not enforcing all state infractions, i.e. taillights, registration, tinted windows, etc. etc. etc. also a lot is done off of our jurisdiction.

A Program Assistant wrote – “Stats. This has been a huge push from upper management (WO and RO). Not only do they request that we produce numbers (IRs and VNs), BUT they want these to be ‘recreational’ in nature. They don’t want to hear that we’ve been writing issuances on DRUG related issues. This filters down so that regional management is pushing LEOs hard for stats, rather than looking at the entire job they do; thus high performance ratings given by LEO’s direct supervisors have been lowered at the RO level – all because they’re not producing ‘paper’”.

A LEO wrote – “Focus on mission and allow funding for ground ops before funding special projects.”

A LEO wrote – “NO MORE FOCUS ON A QUOTA or stats or the ‘100 rule’”.

A Special Agent wrote – “I’m responsible for others, but I’ve lost faith in the alleged ‘mission’ of the U.S. Forest Service.”

A LEO wrote – “Greater focus on resource crimes than drugs.”

A LEO wrote – “In my remote community b.s. tickets for statistics-sake, has been my biggest hurdle to overcome. We need to be better at community policing.”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “An emphasis must be placed on expanding our capabilities by developing areas of specialty such as timber theft, large group management, drug operations, fire investigation, etc. to ensure we are able to take on major investigations in an effective manner.”

A LEO wrote – “I feel LE&I has lost focus on our mission ‘caring for the land and serving the people’...Get rid of any type of statistic pressure for the LEO/SA. I would rather see good solid cases/citations instead of how many tickets someone wrote. Does the number of tickets really help prevent crime? No, good solid police work and being out there helps prevent crime.”

A Special Agent wrote – “We have no mission, no established priorities.”

A LEO wrote – “Too much emphasis is being based on budget and putting LEO’s in harm’s way and losing the battle on the forest by not being able to focus on forest issues but time sheets.”

A LEO wrote – “Absolutely zero incentive to be in the field when every case is thrown from court and upper management does nothing about it after several requests to contact USAO/Marshalls office.”

A Special Agent wrote – “Conducting a comprehensive audit and review of the LEI Division by an outside objective organization such as the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). This should be a welcome and desirable action that is embraced by the Senior Leadership of the Forest Service. This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of LEI switching over to a stovepipe organization. Measuring the current state and effectiveness of the LEI organization should be a top priority.”

A LEO wrote – “Management and protection of the outdoor resource on NFS land is secondary (at best). Primary emphasis on IR numbers as an end. Quantity of IR statistics over any quality of real case work.”

A Special Agent wrote – “Increase the emphasis to conduct advanced resource related cases. These cases need to be taken through prosecution with the proper support and backing of the Regional Office (RO) and of the Washington Office (WO). In the past five years the emphasis has been taken away from conducting investigations and placed in the uniform presence.”

A Special Agent wrote – “We should be emphasizing our main mission which is resource investigation...we are going to experience an increase in timber theft with a workforce who knows NOTHING about combating it. It’s history repeating itself, and it’s a shame.”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “A more ‘resource’ guided approach to law enforcement and investigations, what the program was established for. Too many LEO’s see their job as highway patrol.”

A LEO wrote – “Focus on the apprehension of criminals rather than treating LEI employees as the criminals.”

## **VII. Training**

A LEO wrote – “Stop using FLETC as a dumping ground for problem employees.”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “The retirement of AD Jeannie Pollard and the establishment of a strong, progressive program at FLETC... Remove poor performing employees – do not just move them around – like to FLETC.”

A LEO wrote – “We no longer have quality training. We “check the boxes” and call qualifications ‘training’. Most of the Forest Service LEI staff @ FLETC is an embarrassment. We shuffle non-performing problems off so they can train the next generation.”

A LEO wrote – “The situation at FLETC does not reflect well on the Agency and causes morale issues because of a double standard. A senior leader can do things that would get other officers and agents fired. Director Ferrell has not demonstrated effective leadership dealing with this situation and several others.”

A LEO wrote – “TRAINING is always the first to get cut when budgets are cut. Even though it improves officer safety and productivity.”

A LEO wrote – “Working to develop leaders from within. Training of LEO’s for mid-management does not exist.”

## **VIII. Paperwork**

A LEO wrote – “WAY LESS PAPER WORK!!! It takes WAY too much time to submit time and justify what we do with a daily – weekly – Biweekly-AUO and Pay. Love the job, but the paperwork is out of control.”

A Special Agent wrote – “decreasing the excessive ‘admin duties’ placed on officers/agents; it significantly decreases their effectiveness in the field (because they are in the office doing repetitive paperwork, spreadsheets, ect.)”

A LEO wrote – “Get rid of Lotus Notes!!! We need a standard fill form that will figure up AUO, Biweeklies and Quarterlies.”

A LEO wrote – “I feel LE&I can best be improved by removing the redundant paperwork, moving to an online report database (to include uploaded documents & photos), and by focusing on increased efficiency rather than increased policy.”

A Special Agent wrote – “We are bogged down by so much computer work and paperwork we have to do we cannot do our jobs effectively due to being in office doing redundant paperwork. Streamline computer programs to fill out several forms with same info instead of having to do it several times. We need to be in field more and office less.”

A LEO wrote – “Having management that is bright and knowledgeable enough to realize the Leimars is a pathetic attempt at software development that should have been scrapped years ago.”

A LEO wrote – “Get rid of the case opening reporting procedure, Liemars, and the ROI form. Invest in a good, professional reporting system that local or state police agencies have been using that has been proven to work. In my opinion, investing in a good reporting system would make officers/agents job more efficient, hold officers and agents accountable for reports/investigations, standardized case reporting, help keep track of stats and cases, and help keep LEOs and agents in the field instead of in the office creating redundant and duplicate paperwork.”

## **IX. Uniform & Equipment**

A LEO wrote – “Provide better field appropriate uniforms and get off the chintzy low quality ones.”

A LEO wrote – “Adopt a uniform and uniform policy that makes sense based on the mission and environment officers work in. One uniform and coat does not work in 50 states and Puerto Rico...Allow officers an equipment allowance to upgrade and replace safety equipment as they deem necessary.”

A LEO wrote – “The uniforms available to us are great for the officer that sits in his vehicle but not someone who walks through the woods, brush, water on proactive patrol.”

A LEO wrote – “Uniforms – The current uniform is not suited to for [sic] working in land management”

A LEO wrote – “This job is a police officer job so a working pistol is needed not hand me down weapon systems.”

A LEO wrote – “Get some real damn FIELD uniforms and allow officers to do the job they know how to do.”

A LEO wrote – “It is sad this uniform jacket is not water proof or warm in winter conditions and officers are reprimanded for using personal coats.”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “Permitting installation of lights on weapons systems, night vision equipment, standardized GPS units, and individual equipment purchase is vital to mission success.”

## **X. Other Issues**

A LEO wrote – “Allow Officers and Investigators to talk to the press. Many times I have been asked what I do because people, including fellow LE agencies, have no idea of what we do. Often times, people think I check people in at camp grounds and ensure people pay their camp fees, not that I am a Federal Law Enforcement Officer. When there is a serious, life-threatening accident that I respond to and help save a life, I can’t tell the press. When I have arrested a wanted felon, I can’t tell the press. When I have caught an illegal immigrant stealing special forest products, I can’t tell the press. Why? Our local communities and fellow Law Enforcement agencies need to know what we are doing in the forest. I am required to submit weekly articles to the Forest, so why can’t those be listed in the local newspaper as well?”

A LEO wrote – “Better authority nationwide, not just a patchwork of MOU’s and deputization dependent upon LEOs.”

A LEO wrote – “Improving out of date CFRs.”

A Special Agent wrote – “Requiring all LE&I to take and pass a bi-annual physical fitness test. As a group we are fat and unfit for duty.”

A Special Agent wrote – “Within LE&I, we will most likely lose some great officers and agents to other agencies because of the GS pay scale. Our officers are not at the level they should be and not equal to other agencies. The Special Agents are limited to promotion of a GS-12 and the majority of other agencies are GS-13’s.”

A LEO wrote – “LEOs do the same damn job as BLM Rangers, actually they do more, and yet BLM Rangers are 11’s while FS LEOs are 9’s.”

A LEO wrote – “WORK WITH THE UNION, NOT AGAINST.”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “Fostering an environment where the Union works cooperatively with management...”

A Program Assistant wrote – “I don’t feel that Senior Leadership respects the Union as partners or equals either.”

## **XI. PEER & the Survey**

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “Hopefully the organization can grow & learn from this survey. Make us better. Thanks.”

A LEO wrote – “Most LEOs do not talk with upper management on a regular basis except for surveys like this.”

A LEO wrote – “It seems PEER may be the only one’s listening...the communication of upper management of LE&I is dismal to say the least.”

A LEO wrote – “Employees are losing faith in LE&I and I hate to see that. I love what I do, and that’s why I hope this survey helps.”

A Special Agent wrote – “Thank you for attempting to help out and good luck.”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “I decided to submit despite my concerns regarding the inherent bias in this survey. Answered your questions to the best of my ability even though several were vague and show an unfortunate agenda to blame management. Some of your survey questions are insulting to the majority of LE&I employees who have worked hard and sacrificed to be where we are today; as an LEO, Special Agent, Program Assistant, or Supervisor/Manager.”

A Supervisor/Manager wrote – “Thank you for assisting those officers in the field with respect to allowing their voice, in some manner be heard and the problems they face made known.”

### **Final Comment**

A LEO wrote – “Currently we have poor leadership, a poor budget combined with poor priorities. ‘The good news about being in last place is that we have nowhere to go but upward.’”

###