Court Grants Preliminary Approval to Boeing Settlement

A U.S. District Court Judge in Seattle today gave preliminary approval to a proposed settlement of the Beck v. The Boeing Company class-action gender discrimination lawsuit. Attorneys for the plaintiffs and the company agreed to settle the monetary aspects of the case in mid-May and have since been negotiating the remaining terms of the settlement.

Under the terms of the settlement, Boeing has agreed to pay between $40.6 million and $72.5 million, which will be divided among named plaintiffs, other members of the class, class attorneys and administrative expenses. The final amount of the monetary settlement will depend upon how many members of the class file a valid claim. It's estimated that the total number of employees in this class is approximately 29,000.

"Boeing has been and will continue to be firmly committed to an environment in which employees are treated equitably and have opportunities to build successful careers," said Boeing's Executive Vice President of Internal Services Laurette Koellner. "This agreement contains several enhancements related to performance evaluations, salary reviews, promotions and other employee relations practices. We view these enhancements favorably and believe they will strengthen our already robust suite of employee-focused processes."

The court's approval of all monetary and non-monetary items of the settlement is subject to a final hearing to review the fairness of the settlement to the class as a whole. That hearing will take place after the class has been notified and been provided sufficient time for the filing of any objections or requests by class members to opt out.

Filed in U.S. District Court in Seattle in February 2000, the lawsuit alleged that Boeing had denied women equal pay and other employment opportunities based on their gender. The lawsuit originally sought class certification for female Boeing employees nationwide, but in October 2001 the court denied that request and instead certified the case as a class-action only for employees in the Seattle metropolitan area who have worked for Boeing at any time from early 1997 to the present.

The class covers two groups: (1) salaried female Boeing employees, excluding executives and engineers represented by the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace, and (2) female employees represented by the International Association of Machinists.

Class members will receive a notice setting forth more details about the settlement, including how to submit a claim form. Class members seeking more information may also contact Michael Helgren, Esq., of McNaul, Ebel, Nawrot, Helgren & Vance, P.L.L.C., at (206) 467-1816.

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