

**BEFORE THE MERIT EMPLOYEE RELATIONS BOARD
OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE**

IN THE MATTER OF THE CLASSIFICATION MAINTENANCE REVIEW OF:

ERIN CURTISS,

Appellant,

and

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL, DIVISION OF
FISH AND WILDLIFE,**

Employer.

)
) **MERB Docket No. 25-08-956C**
)
) **DECISION AND ORDER**
)
) **INDEPENDENT REVIEWER’S**
) **MODIFIED RECOMMENDATION**
) **ACCEPTED**
)
)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE SPECIALIST

On or about August 4, 2025, Erin Curtiss (“Appellant”) filed a Classification Appeal with the Merit Employee Relations Board (“Board”), asserting the Classification Maintenance Review determination reclassifying her former classification of Administrative Specialist II to an Administrative Specialist (both at Pay Grade 8) was in error.¹ Ms. Curtiss asserted her job duties met the criteria of an Office Manager (Pay Grade 10) and requested the Maintenance Review determination be reviewed. The appeal also included input from and the signatures of Appellant’s supervisor, division director, and personnel representative.

¹ 29 Del. C. §5915(c): Any maintenance review classification determination may be appealed to the Merit Employee Relations Board by any affected employee or agency within 30 calendar days of notification. The Merit Employee Relations Board shall hear all maintenance review classification appeals before it in chronological order, beginning with the oldest such appeal unless all parties are in agreement with other such arrangements.

Chapter 59 of Title 29 of the Delaware Code, Merit System of Personnel Administration, Section 5915, Classification; uniformity; appeal of classification, establishes the process for considering the appeal of a maintenance classification determination issued by the Department of Human Resources (“DHR”), Division of Classification and Compensation.

This appeal was assigned to the Independent Reviewer (“IR”) hired by the Board for evaluation.² Upon receiving the appeal, the Independent Reviewer (who is trained and experienced in job analysis) reviewed the appeal (including documentation provided therewith), documents provided by the Division of Classification and Compensation on which it relied to reach its determination, the relevant classification specifications, and also interviewed the Appellant.

The IR issued his Recommendation finding,

Consistent with the written decision on MERB 25-08-968C, the preponderance of the information presented does not support alignment with the Office Manager classification, and the appeal is denied. It is strongly recommended that the Senior Administrative Specialist classification be considered as an alternative classification to recognize the work performed by the Employee, and that a future maintenance review or critical position assessment be conducted to explore the creation of a more technical program focused role to support operations across multiple divisions.

The IR’s recommendation was forwarded to the parties on May 5, 2026. By email dated May 6, 2026, the Appellant accepted the IR’s Recommendation to reclassify her position to Senior Administrative Specialist. By email dated June 2, 2026, the Secretary of the Department of Human Resources accepted, “the IR’s determination of denying this appeal, but instead DHR recommends the alternative of Senior Administrative Specialist, PG 9, which is an increase in pay grade.”

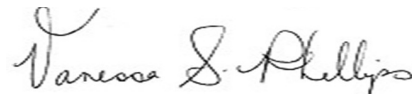
² The Board acknowledges there was a delay between the submission of the appeal and issuance of the Independent Reviewer’s decision which was due to the large volume of pending Classification Maintenance Review Appeals.

Consequently, both the Appellant and the Secretary accepted the modified recommendation.

Section 5915(f) states, “ If the findings of the independent reviewer are accepted by the employee and the Secretary, the Board shall also accept the findings.”

WHEREFORE, the modified Recommendation of the Independent Reviewer is hereby accepted.

SO ORDERED, THIS 18TH DAY OF JUNE, 2026.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vanessa S. Phillips".

VANESSA S. PHILLIPS, CHAIR