

(b) The Secretary shall issue a decision as promptly as possible after receipt of the briefs of the parties. The Secretary may affirm, modify, or set aside, in whole or in part, the decision on appeal and shall issue a statement of

reasons and bases for the action(s) taken. Such decision by the Secretary shall be final agency action within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. 704.

Signed at Washington, DC this 16th day of January, 2003.

**Ann L. Combs,**

*Assistant Secretary, Pension and Welfare Benefits Administration, U.S. Department of Labor.*

[FR Doc. 03-1431 Filed 1-23-03; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4510-29-P**