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ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Washington, DC 20515-6115**

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CHAIRMAN

April 27, 2007

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The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room 5516  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We have received numerous serious allegations of misconduct against Inspector General Johnnie Frazier and senior members of his staff. The allegations, outlined in detail in the attached April 27, 2007, letter to the Inspector General, relate to travel fraud, contracting irregularities, wasteful expenditures, favoritism, pre-selection of Senior Executive Service (SES) candidates, retaliation against whistleblowers, destruction of evidence, and obstruction of justice. Taken together, we are troubled about the overall management, professionalism, independence, and effectiveness of the Office of Inspector General (OIG).

In such a situation, it is appropriate that Congress step in to ensure accountability. Accordingly, pursuant to Rules X and XI of the United States House of Representatives, the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations have initiated a broad review of the operations of the Department's OIG. In order to assist us, we ask that you immediately contact our staff to arrange a series of interviews of employees and contractors of the Department. In addition, we hereby request that the Department provide to the Committee, within two weeks from the date of this letter, any and all records, as defined in the attachment, within your responsibility or control as Secretary of Commerce, including any communications with any officials within the OIG relating to:

- (1) Travel or proposed travel, including travel cards, records from the Combined Airline Ticket Office and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), for Mr. Frazier since he was named Inspector General, as well as for the following individuals within the last five (5) years:
  - Elizabeth Barlow, Acting Deputy Inspector General
  - William “Bill” Bedwell, former head of Audits, Atlanta (retired)
  - Edward Blansitt, Assistant Inspector General for Investigations
  - Carolyn Croak, Acting Counsel to the Inspector General
  - Kyle Fields, Management Assistant
  - Jill Gross, Assistant Inspector General for Inspections
  - Allison Lerner, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits
  - Anthony Mayo, former Assistant Inspector General for Investigations (retired)
  - Thomas Hung Phan, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Administration
  - Jessica Rickenbach, Assistant Inspector General for Administration
  - Belinda Robinson, Assistant to the Inspector General
  - Vernon Robinson, Special Agent, Atlanta
  - Michael Sears, former Assistant Inspector General for Audits (retired)
  - David Sheppard, Supervisory Auditor, Seattle
  - Keith Teamer, Supervisory Criminal Investigator, Atlanta
- (2) Renovation, construction, maintenance or upgrade to the offices and/or common areas of the OIG, and any other office improvements including purchases of furniture and equipment for the OIG for the last five (5) years;
- (3) Complaints, claims, lawsuits, and allegations filed against or relating to the Inspector General or any employees of the OIG, as well as all records related to the response thereto by any employees or offices of the Department within the last five (5) years;
- (4) Sole source acquisition requests and contracts made without competition relating to the OIG for the last five (5) years;
- (5) Meetings between senior officials of the Department and the Inspector General, including meeting agendas, schedules, calendars, and notes;
- (6) The time, attendance, leave, security control logs, key-card access records, and all backup records within the last ten (10) years for the Inspector General and the following individuals:
  - Elizabeth Barlow, Acting Deputy Inspector General
  - William “Bill” Bedwell, former head of Audits, Atlanta (retired)

- Edward Blansitt, Assistant Inspector General for Investigations
- Carolyn Croak, Acting Counsel to the Inspector General
- Kyle Fields, Management Assistant
- Jill Gross, Assistant Inspector General for Inspections
- Allison Lerner, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits
- Anthony Mayo, former Assistant Inspector General for Investigations (retired)
- Thomas Hung Phan, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Administration
- Jessica Rickenbach, Assistant Inspector General for Administration
- Belinda Robinson, Assistant to the Inspector General
- Vernon Robinson, Special Agent, Atlanta
- Michael Sears, former Assistant Inspector General for Audits (retired)
- David Sheppard, Supervisory Auditor, Seattle
- Keith Teamer, Supervisory Criminal Investigator, Atlanta

(7) Performance ratings, reviews, or feedback regarding the Inspector General and the following individuals:

- Elizabeth Barlow, Acting Deputy Inspector General
- William “Bill” Bedwell, former head of Audits, Atlanta (retired)
- Edward Blansitt, Assistant Inspector General for Investigations
- Carolyn Croak, Acting Counsel to the Inspector General
- Kyle Fields, Management Assistant
- Jill Gross, Assistant Inspector General for Inspections
- Allison Lerner, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audits
- Dean Mannis, Assistant Counsel, Office of Inspector General
- Anthony Mayo, former Assistant Inspector General for Investigations (retired)
- Thomas Hung Phan, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Administration
- Jessica Rickenbach, Assistant Inspector General for Administration
- Belinda Robinson, Assistant to the Inspector General
- Vernon Robinson, Special Agent, Atlanta
- Michael Sears, former Assistant Inspector General for Audits (retired)
- David Sheppard, Supervisory Auditor, Seattle
- Keith Teamer, Supervisory Criminal Investigator, Atlanta.

In responding to this request for records, please be advised that the terms “records” and “relating to” are defined in the attachment to this letter. Also, when complying with this request, we expect that you will search the relevant files within the appropriate offices of the Department, including the Office of General Counsel, NIST, and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer.

The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez  
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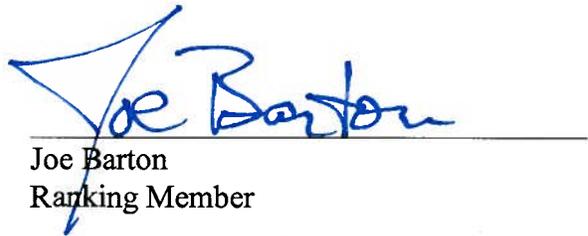
In addition, pursuant to our April 13, 2007, letter to you, no records, documents, data or information called for by this request shall be destroyed, modified, removed, transferred, or otherwise made inaccessible to the Committee.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this critical matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Steven C. Rangel with the Committee Majority staff at (202) 226-2424 or Alan Slobodin with the Committee Minority Staff at (202) 225-3641.

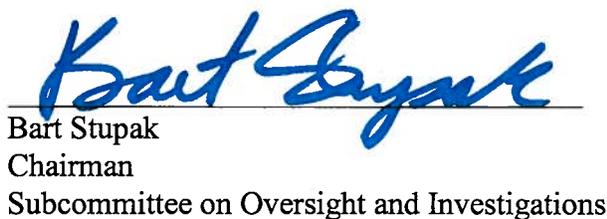
Sincerely,



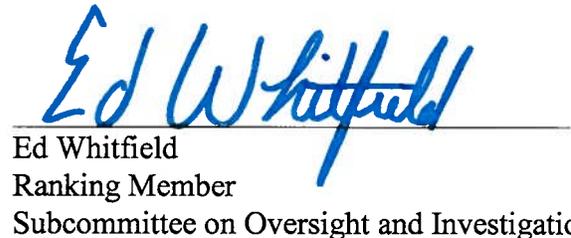
John D. Dingell  
Chairman



Joe Barton  
Ranking Member



Bart Stupak  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations



Ed Whitfield  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Attachment

## ATTACHMENT

1. The term "records" is to be construed in the broadest sense and shall mean any written or graphic material, however produced or reproduced, of any kind or description, consisting of the original and any non-identical copy (whether different from the original because of notes made on or attached to such copy or otherwise) and drafts and both sides thereof, whether printed or recorded electronically or magnetically or stored in any type of data bank, including, but not limited to, the following: correspondence, memoranda, records, summaries of personal conversations or interviews, minutes or records of meetings or conferences, opinions or reports of consultants, projections, statistical statements, drafts, contracts, agreements, purchase orders, invoices, confirmations, telegraphs, telexes, agendas, books, notes, pamphlets, periodicals, reports, studies, evaluations, opinions, logs, diaries, desk calendars, appointment books, tape recordings, video recordings, e-mails, voice mails, computer tapes, or other computer stored matter, magnetic tapes, microfilm, microfiche, punch cards, all other records kept by electronic, photographic, or mechanical means, charts, photographs, notebooks, drawings, plans, inter-office communications, intra-office and intra-departmental communications, transcripts, checks and canceled checks, bank statements, ledgers, books, records or statements of accounts, and papers and things similar to any of the foregoing, however denominated.
2. The terms "relating," or "relate" as to any given subject means anything that constitutes, contains, embodies, identifies, deals with, or is in any manner whatsoever pertinent to that subject, including but not limited to records concerning the preparation of other records.