

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115
Majority (202) 225-2927
Minority (202) 225-3641
October 12, 2017

April Stephenson
Acting Inspector General
Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Ms. Stephenson:

We are writing today to request that you conduct a review of Department of Energy (DOE) adherence to policies and procedures for Secretary travel and whether DOE's applicable oversight controls are sufficient to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse. This request follows numerous troubling reports of Secretary Perry's use of a private plane and government aircraft at the taxpayers' expense. Secretary Perry's use of non-commercial aircraft is just the latest example of repeated and blatant abuse of taxpayer funds by the Trump Administration.

Secretary Perry has reportedly incurred tens of thousands of dollars on noncommercial flights on both charter and government aircraft.¹ According to Department of Energy documents, on May 17, Secretary Perry traveled on a Gulfstream IV aircraft from Reagan National Airport in Washington, DC to an airfield in Olathe, Kansas.² DOE authorized up to \$35,000 for this trip,³ despite the fact that the Kansas City International Airport is served by several airlines with nonstop service from Reagan National Airport and is within 45 minutes of the private airfield. It is unclear why Secretary Perry would require such costly travel in instances where more economical options were readily available.

Our Committee has a longstanding interest in ensuring effective Department controls regarding leadership and staff travel and reducing the risk of fraud, waste, and abuse. Therefore, in light of these recent reports, we ask that you determine whether Secretary Perry's travels were

¹ *Perry Defends Travel, as Inquiry Widens*, Houston Chronicle (Oct. 10, 2017).

² Memorandum from Department of Energy Chief of Staff Brian McCormack to Department of Energy Deputy General Counsel Eric Fygi (May 11, 2017).

³ *Id.*

in compliance with all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures. We request that your review include a determination of the following:

1. For each occasion where Secretary Perry or any other non-career DOE officials utilized government aircraft or privately chartered aircraft since January 2017, please determine the purpose of the trip and whether the trip was solely dedicated to the official government purpose. If any trip was not solely for official government purposes, please list the other purpose of the trip.
2. To what extent were all applicable federal travel regulations, federal acquisition rules, and Department travel policies and procedures appropriately followed for all Secretary Perry's travel and all other non-career DOE officials' travel to date?
 - a. In each of the instances in which a government aircraft or privately chartered flight was used, were the appropriate travel authorizations, cost estimates, justifications, and approvals performed?
 - b. In each of the instances in which a government aircraft or privately chartered flight was used, were all justifications approved according to all applicable Department policies and procedures?
 - c. For each of the government aircraft or privately chartered flights taken by Secretary Perry or other non-career DOE officials to date, what was the total cost of travel for Secretary Perry, other non-career DOE officials, and all other individuals onboard? Who were the other passengers on board each flight? What was the cost for each individual onboard for each government aircraft or privately chartered flight?
 - d. For each of the government aircraft or privately chartered flights taken by Secretary Perry and other non-career DOE officials to date, who was in charge of booking the flights? Were all relevant policies and procedures followed for each of the passengers onboard and by anyone involved with booking or planning the travel? Were the appropriate policies and procedures followed for any passengers who were not federal government employees?
 - e. In any instances in which regulations, policies, or procedures were not appropriately followed, what was the approximate cost incurred to the government as a result?
 - f. Is there a mechanism for Secretary Perry to reimburse taxpayers for the costs incurred?
3. Did any DOE personnel raise concerns internally about repeated use of government aircraft or privately chartered flights by Secretary Perry or other non-career DOE

officials? If so, how were such concerns addressed?

4. To what extent has DOE conducted oversight of executive travel, including travel by government aircraft or privately chartered flight by Secretary Perry or other non-career DOE officials? Have any violations been identified, and if so, what actions were taken in response?

American taxpayers deserve assurances that their tax dollars are not wasted by the government's highest officials. We appreciate your prompt and thorough review of these issues. If you have questions on this request, please contact Jon Monger of the Democratic Committee staff at (202) 225-3641.

Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member



Bobby L. Rush
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy



Diana DeGette
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight
and Investigations

Cc: The Honorable Greg Walden, Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
The Honorable Fred Upton, Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
The Honorable Tim Murphy, Chairman, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations