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**INSPECTORS GENERAL: IMPLEMENTING  
THOUSANDS OF OPEN RECOMMENDATIONS  
COULD SAVE TAXPAYERS ALMOST \$26 BILLION**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inspectors General (IGs) play a vital role in reducing waste, fraud, and abuse in the federal government. They conduct independent audits and investigations and make recommendations to protect the interests of taxpayers and improve the effectiveness of government. But their work produces few results if federal agencies ignore or reject their findings and recommendations. This report — the first governmentwide compilation of its kind — finds that thousands of IG recommendations, representing billions of dollars in waste and abuse, remain unimplemented.

The Oversight Committee asked the nation's IGs to identify all recommendations made between January 1, 2001, and December 31, 2008, that had not been implemented by federal agencies. The Committee also requested information about the potential monetary benefits that would result from implementing these recommendations. The Committee received responses from 63 IGs.

The information obtained by the Committee shows that the Bush Administration has failed to implement more than 13,800 IG recommendations made since 2001. Under the Inspector General Act, federal agencies are supposed to complete final action on IG recommendations within one year. Yet the information provided to the Committee indicates that almost half (48%) of the open recommendations reviewed were made before 2008, and more than a quarter (27%) were made before 2007.

The information provided by the IGs also indicates that federal agencies could save taxpayers \$25.9 billion by implementing open IG recommendations. The five agencies that could save the most money by implementing open recommendations are the Social Security Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Defense, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Examples of unimplemented IG recommendations with potential monetary benefits include:

- In April 2006, the Social Security Administration IG estimated that the agency could save more than \$2 billion annually by ceasing payments to people who no longer meet the eligibility criteria for disability benefits due to medical improvement or employment status.
- In July 2007, the Defense Department IG estimated that the Pentagon could recoup \$837 million in overpayments by establishing effective recovery audits for military telecommunications contracts.
- In February 2007, the Department of Homeland Security IG concluded that FEMA could recover \$16 million in excessive billings and questionable costs resulting from poor management of a contract for base camp services associated with Hurricane Katrina.

In addition to costing taxpayers billions of dollars, the failure of federal agencies to implement IG recommendations poses serious risks to the security, health, and safety of the American people. Thousands of unimplemented recommendations would improve national and homeland

security, public health and safety, environmental protection, and Americans' overall quality of life. These include:

- **Recommendations to strengthen national and homeland security**, including proposals to better manage the wars and reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan; prevent terrorist attacks on U.S. soil; protect the nation's food supply from tampering; and secure the nation's borders.
- **Recommendations to improve the health and safety of the American public**, including proposals to strengthen the nation's food safety net; ensure worker health and safety; provide health care for the nation's veterans; respond efficiently to natural disasters; and maintain the safety of the nation's infrastructure.
- **Recommendations to improve America's environment**, including those that would protect air and water quality; strengthen management of the nation's forests, parks, and other public lands; safely dispose of nuclear and other toxic waste; and protect natural resources on or near the nation's defense bases.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In 1978, Congress passed the Inspector General Act, creating statutory inspectors general (IGs) for the major federal agencies.<sup>1</sup> Currently, 58 IGs fall under the authority of the Inspector General Act. Separate legislation provides discrete but parallel authority to nine other IGs. In all, Congress has created IGs for 67 federal departments, agencies, and other entities.<sup>2</sup>

The Inspector General Act describes the primary objectives of an IG as conducting independent and objective audits, investigations, and inspections; preventing and detecting waste, fraud, and abuse; promoting economy, effectiveness, and efficiency; reviewing pending legislation and regulation; and keeping the agency head and Congress informed of its work and its findings.<sup>3</sup>

After conducting audits, investigations, and inspections, IGs typically issue written reports to present their recommendations to agency officials, who have an opportunity to review and comment on these reports before they are released. According to the Inspector General Act, each agency is required to decide whether it agrees with the IG's findings and recommendations within six months of the release of a final report. If the agency fails to complete final action on any recommendation within one year, the IG must disclose the delay in semi-annual reports to Congress.<sup>4</sup>

## II. PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

Each year, IGs make thousands of recommendations for saving taxpayer funds and improving the operations of government. Whether these savings are realized and government operations improved depends on the actions of the agency. The purpose of this report is to assess the record of federal agencies in implementing IG recommendations.

In December 2007, the Committee sent a letter to 63 IGs requesting a list of recommendations made between January 1, 2001, and December 31, 2007, that had not been implemented by agency officials or by Congress.<sup>5</sup> The IGs responded with a summary of their open recommendations and the monetary and nonmonetary benefits of implementing the recommendations. In December 2008, the Committee asked the IGs to update their responses to include recommendations through the end of 2008.<sup>6</sup> Sixty-three IGs provided partial or full responses to this new Committee request.

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<sup>1</sup> Inspector General Act of 1978, Pub. L. No. 95-452.

<sup>2</sup> Congressional Research Service, *Statutory Offices of Inspector General: Past and Present* (Sept. 25, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Inspector General Act of 1978, Pub. L. No. 95-452.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., Letter from Chairman Henry A. Waxman to the Honorable Gregory H. Friedman, Inspector General, Department of Energy (Dec. 7, 2007) (online at [www.oversight.house.gov/story.asp?ID=1717](http://www.oversight.house.gov/story.asp?ID=1717)). The Committee did not send a letter to the IG for the Department of Health and Human Services because this IG produces an annual compendium of unimplemented recommendations.

<sup>6</sup> Between the Committee's first request in December 2007 and its second request in 2008, Congress created the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction and new IGs for the Government Accountability Office and Architect of the Capitol. The Committee did not ask these new IGs to provide

Several of the IGs provided the Committee with a subset of their unimplemented recommendations. For example, they reported only their most “significant” unimplemented recommendations or excluded recommendations made in grantee audits or recommendations that were less than six months old. Because of these omissions, the findings in this report likely understate the full extent of the unimplemented recommendations and potential cost savings.

### III. FINDINGS

#### A. Thousands of Recommendations Remain Unimplemented

According to the information provided to the Committee, federal agencies have not implemented 13,847 recommendations made by IGs since January 1, 2001. Although the Inspector General Act requires federal agencies to complete final action on IG recommendations within one year, almost half (48%) of the unimplemented recommendations (6,668) were made before 2008. In addition, 27% of the unimplemented recommendations (3,772) were made before 2007 and 16% (2,251) before 2006. Approximately 10% of the unimplemented recommendations were made between 2001 and 2004.

The information provided to the Committee indicates that the Departments of Defense, Labor, and Housing and Urban Development each have more than 1,000 open recommendations and that roughly half of these recommendations were made in 2007 or earlier. Table 1 sets forth the ten agencies reporting the most unimplemented recommendations.

An appendix sets forth a list by agency of the number of IG recommendations made between 2001 and 2008 and the number that remain unimplemented.

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information to the Committee on unimplemented recommendations. The Committee also did not ask the IG for the Central Intelligence Agency to provide updated data.

**Table 1. Ten Agencies with the Most Unimplemented Recommendations<sup>7</sup>**

|   | <b># of Open Recommendations</b> | <b>% of Open Recommendations Made Before 2008</b> |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Department of Labor                         | 1,526                            | 47%   |
| Department of Housing and Urban Development | 1,335                            | 50%   |
| Department of Defense                       | 1,047                            | 52%   |
| Department of State                         | 894                              | 37%   |
| Department of Homeland Security             | 870                              | *   |
| Department of Agriculture                   | 747                              | 50%   |
| U.S. Agency for International Development   | 644                              | 21%   |
| Department of Education                     | 639                              | 60%   |
| Social Security Administration              | 595                              | 61%   |
| Department of Interior                      | 592                              | 63%   |

\* The Department of Homeland Security IG did not provide the Committee with data on recommendations made in calendar year 2008.

Sixty of the IGs were able to provide the Committee with the total number of recommendations they made between January 1, 2001, and December 31, 2008, including those that have been implemented and those that have not. These IGs made more than 98,000 recommendations between 2001 and 2008, 14% of which remained unimplemented at the end of 2008.

### **B. The Federal Government Could Recover Almost \$26 Billion by Implementing Open IG Recommendations**

The information provided by the IGs indicates that the federal government could achieve \$25.9 billion in cost savings or new revenue if agencies implemented open recommendations with estimated monetary benefits. Recommendations made in 2007 or earlier account for three-fourths (\$20.3 billion) of these potential savings.

Two agencies, the Social Security Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services, could save approximately \$16.3 billion by implementing open IG recommendations. The Departments of Defense and Transportation could each save more than a billion dollars by implementing open recommendations. Table 2 lists all of the agencies with open IG recommendations that could save taxpayers money.

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<sup>7</sup> The IGs for the Department of Health and Human Services, Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. Postal Service only provided data on "significant" open recommendations. One or more of these agencies may fall in the top 10 for open recommendations if all recommendations are included. The Department of Homeland Security IG did not provide the Committee with data on recommendations made in calendar year 2008; therefore, its total for open recommendations is low.

**Table 2. Agencies that Could Save Money by Implementing Open IG Recommendations<sup>8</sup>**

|  | Estimated Savings |   | Estimated Savings       |
|--|-------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Agency for International Development           | \$176,968,526     | Federal Communications Commission                 | \$1,345,673             |
| Amtrak   | \$135,300,000     | Federal Maritime Commission                       | \$40,800                |
| Appalachian Regional Commission                | \$440,015         | General Services Administration                   | \$673,247,380           |
| Capitol Police                                 | \$2,800,000       | Government Printing Office                        | \$8,495                 |
| Corporation for National and Community Service | \$490,670         | National Aeronautics and Space Administration     | \$7,240,000             |
| Corporation for Public Broadcasting            | \$5,632,326       | National Endowment for the Arts                   | \$969,564               |
| Department of Agriculture                      | \$58,371,009      | National Endowment for the Humanities             | \$100,000               |
| Department of Commerce                         | \$29,800,000      | National Labor Relations Board                    | \$65,558                |
| Department of Defense                          | \$1,511,401,000   | National Science Foundation                       | \$206,000               |
| Department of Education                        | \$883,441,438     | Nuclear Regulatory Commission                     | \$350,589               |
| Department of Energy                           | \$835,900,049     | Office of Personnel Management                    | \$40,673,802            |
| Dept. of Health and Human Services             | \$7,704,000,000   | Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation              | \$4,778,543             |
| Department of Homeland Security                | \$131,767,999     | Postal Service                                    | \$656,189,857           |
| Department of Housing and Urban Development    | \$996,943,986     | Railroad Retirement Board                         | \$4,245,771             |
| Department of Interior                         | \$55,230,944      | Securities and Exchange Commission                | \$134,940               |
| Department of Justice                          | \$62,906,030      | Small Business Administration                     | \$45,214,721            |
| Department of Labor                            | \$6,151,857       | Smithsonian Institution                           | \$189,563               |
| Department of State                            | \$47,970,730      | Social Security Administration                    | \$8,639,699,935         |
| Department of the Treasury                     | \$29,400,000      | Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction | \$3,180,000             |
| Department of Transportation                   | \$1,467,845,280   | Tennessee Valley Authority                        | \$4,347,879             |
| Department of Veterans Affairs                 | \$99,120,444      | Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration | \$678,895,665           |
| Environmental Protection Agency                | \$948,974,949     | <b>Total</b>                                      | <b>\$25,951,981,987</b> |

Many of the specific recommendations made by IGs could save millions or even billions of dollars. The IGs highlighted for the Committee some of the recommendations they have made over the past eight years that could save the most significant amount of money but remain unimplemented. They include the following examples:

- In April 2006, the Social Security Administration IG estimated that the agency could save more than \$2 billion annually by ceasing payments to people who no longer meet the

<sup>8</sup> The IGs for the Department of Health and Human Services, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Postal Service only provided data on “significant” open recommendations. The Department of Homeland Security IG did not provide the Committee with data on recommendations made in calendar year 2008. The IGs for the Department of Interior and the Office of Personnel Management excluded questioned costs from their totals for potential savings. Data for the U.S. Agency for International Development also includes savings from recommendations made to the Millennium Challenge Corporation.



eligibility criteria for disability benefits due to medical improvement or employment status.<sup>9</sup>

- In July 2007, the Defense Department IG estimated that the Pentagon could recoup \$837 million over five years by establishing effective recovery audits to identify overpayments to military telecommunications contractors.<sup>10</sup>
- In March 2007, the Department of Transportation IG estimated that the Federal Highway Administration could put \$725 million to better use by ensuring that states conduct effective value engineering studies on all federal-aid highway projects.<sup>11</sup>
- In March 2007, the Department of Education IG recommended that management determine whether the Bureau of Indian Affairs had used more than \$300 million in granted funds appropriately and recover any funds used for unauthorized purposes.<sup>12</sup>
- In September 2005, the Amtrak IG estimated that the agency could save \$100 million annually by adopting a modern maintenance approach based on reliability-centered maintenance, which requires sound technical and economic justifications for maintenance activities.<sup>13</sup>
- In September 2007, the Department of Housing and Urban Development IG estimated that the agency could save \$45 million within the next year by ensuring that manufactured housing meets Federal Housing Administration standards for safe and sound foundations.<sup>14</sup>
- In February 2007, the Department of Homeland Security IG recommended that FEMA recover \$16 million in excessive billings and questionable costs resulting from poor management of a contract for base camp services associated with Hurricane Katrina.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General, *Congressional Response Report: Overpayments in the Social Security Administration's Disability Programs* (Apr. 3, 2006) (A-01-04-24065).

<sup>10</sup> Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General, *Identification and Reporting of Improper Payments through Recovery Auditing* (July 9, 2007) (D-2007-110).

<sup>11</sup> Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General, *Final Report on Value Engineering in FHWA's Federal-Aid Highway Program* (Mar. 28, 2007) (MH-2007-040).

<sup>12</sup> Department of Education, Office of Inspector General, *Department of Education's Oversight of the Department of Interior's Administration of IDEA, Part B Funds* (Mar. 30, 2007) (ED-OIG/A06G0002).

<sup>13</sup> Amtrak, Office of Inspector General, *Amtrak Mechanical Maintenance Operations: System-wide Review Recommends New Maintenance Approach* (Sept. 6, 2005) (E-05-04).

<sup>14</sup> Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General, *More Than 80 Percent of Recently Insured Title II Manufactured Housing Loans Are on Homes With Substandard Foundations* (Sept. 24, 2007) (2007-KC-0004).

<sup>15</sup> Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, *Interim Review of Contract Costs, Clearbrook, LLC* (Feb. 2007) (DD-07-06); E-mail from Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, to Majority Staff, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (July 3, 2008) (referencing a May 2008 memorandum from FEMA to the Homeland Security IG stating that FEMA does not plan to pursue recovery of these funds).

## C. The Federal Government Could Improve Its Core Programs

In addition to identifying recommendations that could save billions of dollars, the IGs identified many recommendations that could improve the way the government is run and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of government agencies. Although there are no monetary savings attached to these recommendations, they relate to core governmental functions, including homeland and national security, public health and safety, and environmental protection, among others.

### 1. National and Homeland Security

The information provided to the Committee shows that federal agencies have failed to implement hundreds of recommendations by IGs to strengthen national security and prevent terrorist attacks on U.S. soil. Examples of national and homeland security recommendations that have not been implemented are:

- In May 2003, the IG for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission issued a report concluding that the Commission's limited oversight does not provide adequate assurance that all licensees properly control and account for special nuclear material, such as plutonium and uranium.<sup>16</sup> In a December 2008 memorandum to NRC management, the IG raised concerns about "continued delays" in promulgating rules to address these security concerns. NRC estimates it may not complete the rulemaking until July 2011, eight years after the report's release.<sup>17</sup>
- In February 2004, the U.S. Department of Agriculture IG released a report determining that the Farm Service Agency had not adequately addressed the vulnerability of agricultural commodities, including bulk grains and rice, to adulteration and destruction.<sup>18</sup> As of December 2008, the Farm Service Agency and the IG have been unable to reach agreement on two of the report's recommendations.<sup>19</sup>
- In June 2005, the Department of Homeland Security IG found that U.S. Customs and Border Protection does not consistently enforce federal export controls over chemical and

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<sup>16</sup> Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Office of Inspector General, *Audit of NRC's Regulatory Oversight of Special Nuclear Materials* (May 2003) (OIG-03-A-15). See also Government Accountability Office, *NRC and DHS Need to Take Additional Steps to Better Track and Detect Radioactive Materials* (June 19, 2008) (GAO-08-598); Government Accountability Office, *Nuclear Security: Federal and State Action Needed to Improve Security of Sealed Radioactive Sources* (Aug. 6, 2003) (GAO-03-804) (raising similar concerns about the security of radioactive material and noting that the Commission had not implemented half of GAO's recommendations).

<sup>17</sup> E-mail from Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Office of Inspector General, to Majority Staff, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (Jan. 5, 2009); Memorandum from Stephen D. Dingbaum, Assistant Inspector General for Audits, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Office of Inspector General, to R. William Borchardt, Executive Director for Operations, Nuclear Regulatory Commission (Dec. 22, 2008).

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General, *Homeland Security Issues for USDA Grain and Commodities Inventories* (Feb. 2004) (500990013KC).

<sup>19</sup> E-mail from U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General, to Majority Staff, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (Dec. 2, 2008).

biological commodities at U.S. ports of exit. The IG recommended that the agency evaluate its export controls program, including current resources and staffing needs, and make adjustments necessary to accomplish its enforcement responsibilities.<sup>20</sup> According to the IG, corrective actions will not be completed until 2012, seven years after the report's release.<sup>21</sup>

- In July 2006, the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction released a survey of the U.S. Embassy's anti-corruption program and found fundamental problems that hindered effective implementation of U.S. anti-corruption efforts, such as a lack of coordination and leadership.<sup>22</sup> In a July 2008 follow-up, the IG determined that seven of the report's recommendations remained open, leaving "much to be accomplished to fully establish and implement a comprehensive and effective program."<sup>23</sup>

## 2. Public Health and Safety

The information provided to the Committee indicates that federal agencies have failed to implement hundreds of recommendations by IGs to protect public health and safety, such as providing quality health care for the nation's veterans, responding effectively to natural disasters, and ensuring the safety of government-sponsored housing, schools, and other buildings.

Examples of public health and safety recommendations that have not been implemented are:

- In July 2005, the Department of Veterans Affairs IG found that the Veterans Health Administration did not follow established procedures when more than 2,000 veterans waited longer than 30 days for appointments.<sup>24</sup> In a September 2007 follow-up report, the IG found that the problems persisted.<sup>25</sup> The Veterans Health Administration is taking no further corrective action on the reports' unimplemented recommendations.<sup>26</sup>
- In September 2005, the Department of Homeland Security IG released a report expressing concerns about FEMA's multi-billion dollar program to update and digitize the nation's flood maps. The report warned that inaccurate and obsolete flood maps may

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<sup>20</sup> Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, *Controls Over the Export of Chemical and Biological Commodities* (June 2005) (OIG-05-21).

<sup>21</sup> E-mail from Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, to Majority Staff, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (July 3, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Joint Survey of the U.S. Embassy-Iraq's Anticorruption Program* (July 2006) (SIGIR 06-021).

<sup>23</sup> Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, *Anticorruption Efforts in Iraq: U.S. and Iraq Take Actions but Much Remains To Be Done* (July 2008) (SIGIR 08-023); E-mail from Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, to Majority Staff, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (Dec. 11, 2008).

<sup>24</sup> Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General, *Audit of the Veterans Health Administration's Outpatient Scheduling Procedures* (July 2005) (04-02887-169).

<sup>25</sup> Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General, *Audit of the Veterans Health Administration's Outpatient Waiting Times* (Sept. 2007) (07-00616-199).

<sup>26</sup> E-mail from Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General, to Majority Staff, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (July 10, 2008); see also Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General, *Semiannual Report for April 1, 2008 to September 30, 2008* (Nov. 25, 2008).

place homeowners and residents at physical and financial risk.<sup>27</sup> FEMA has not implemented six recommendations from this report as of December 2008.<sup>28</sup>

- In May 2007, the Department of the Interior IG visited 13 schools run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and found severe structural problems with the potential to injure or kill students and faculty, including crumbling walls and outdated electrical systems.<sup>29</sup> Although the agency's management concurred with the IG's recommendations, it has not produced a plan to identify and mitigate health and safety hazards or target dates for accomplishing specific steps.<sup>30</sup>

### 3. Environmental Protection

The information provided to the Committee also indicates that federal agencies have failed to implement recommendations to improve protections for the nation's air, water, and endangered species. Examples of environmental protection recommendations that have not been implemented are:

- In June 2002, the Defense Department IG released an evaluation of the effectiveness of Pentagon programs involving endangered species, unexploded ordnance, air quality, and other issues at test and training ranges. The IG recommended that the Defense Department implement a comprehensive community outreach plan to address these issues.<sup>31</sup> The final instruction on community outreach and involvement will not be published until March 2009, almost seven years after the initial report's publication.<sup>32</sup>
- In March 2005, the IG for the Environmental Protection Agency issued a report identifying five key concerns that hamper the ability to hold major stationary sources of air pollution accountable for meeting air quality requirements.<sup>33</sup> Agency officials disagreed with two recommendations that would improve pollution monitoring and give the agency more power to issue sanctions. Four recommendations remain open.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, *Challenges in FEMA's Flood Map Modernization Program* (Sept. 2005) (OIG-05-44).

<sup>28</sup> E-mail from Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, to Majority Staff, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (Dec. 2, 2008).

<sup>29</sup> Department of the Interior, Office of Inspector General, *Flash Report - Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Indian Education: Schools in Need of Immediate Action* (May 2007) (C-IN-BIA-0008-2007).

<sup>30</sup> E-mail from Department of the Interior, Office of Inspector General, to Majority Staff, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (Sept. 12, 2008) and follow-up phone conversation (Dec. 2, 2008); Memo from Jack Rouch, Regional Audit Manager, Office of Inspector General, Department of the Interior, to the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget, Department of the Interior (Aug. 23, 2007).

<sup>31</sup> Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General, *DoD Environmental Community Involvement Programs at Test and Training Ranges* (June 2002) (D-2002-122).

<sup>32</sup> E-mail from Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General, to Majority Staff, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (Sept. 10, 2008).

<sup>33</sup> Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Inspector General, *Substantial Changes Needed in Implementation and Oversight of Title V Permits If Program Goals Are To Be Fully Realized* (Mar. 2005) (2005-P-00010).

<sup>34</sup> E-mail from Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Inspector General, to Majority Staff, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (Dec. 1, 2008).

- In December 2005, the Department of Agriculture IG released a report finding that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service needs a formal process to monitor and control field releases of genetically engineered organisms.<sup>35</sup> Three years after this report's release, the department still has not implemented 17 recommendations to strengthen monitoring of genetically engineered crops planted in the open environment.<sup>36</sup>

#### 4. Procurement Reform

The IGs also highlighted government contracting as a subject area in which recommendations have not been implemented. Examples of unimplemented procurement recommendations are:

- In an October 2004 report on the Mine Safety and Health Administration, the Department of Labor IG found a lack of commitment to procurement principles and a management structure that allowed program staff to exert undue influence over the procurement process.<sup>37</sup> Management did not agree with the IG's recommendation to rescind and reassign this procurement authority. In March 2005, the IG found irregularities in the Department's award of a sole-source contract and noted inadequate separation of procurement duties.<sup>38</sup> Management disagreed with the IG's recommendation to create an independent acquisition office.<sup>39</sup>
- In May 2005, the Department of Energy IG issued a report finding that a construction project to eliminate surplus Russian and U.S. nuclear materials was substantially behind schedule and over budget.<sup>40</sup> The Department has failed to implement three of the IG's recommendations to finalize the design of the Pit Disassembly and Conversion Facility in order to contain costs and stabilize the construction schedule.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General, *Controls Over Issuance of Genetically Engineered Organism (GEO) Release Permits* (Dec. 2005) (506010008TE).

<sup>36</sup> E-mail from U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General, to Majority Staff, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (Dec. 2, 2008).

<sup>37</sup> Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, *Mine Safety and Health Administration Procurements Showed a Pattern of Disregard for Federal and DOL Acquisition Rules and Requirements* (Oct. 2004) (25-05-001-06-001).

<sup>38</sup> Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, *Award and Management of Contracts for Encryption Software Were Significantly Flawed* (Mar. 2005) (05-05-005-07-720).

<sup>39</sup> E-mail from Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, to Majority Staff, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (Dec. 2, 2008).

<sup>40</sup> Department of Energy, Office of Inspector General, *National Nuclear Security Administration's Pit Disassembly and Conversion Facility* (May 2005) (IG-0688).

<sup>41</sup> E-mail from Department of Energy, Office of Inspector General, to Majority Staff, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (Dec. 4, 2008). See also Government Accountability Office, *Department of Energy: Major Construction Projects Need a Consistent Approach for Assessing Technology Readiness to Help Avoid Cost Increases and Delays* (Mar. 2007) (GAO-07-336) (citing poor management and lax contractor oversight as the primary factors driving schedule delays and cost overruns).

## IV. CONCLUSION

IGs play a critical role in fighting waste, fraud, and abuse in federal agencies and identifying opportunities to make government more effective and more efficient in fulfilling its responsibilities to the American people. Through audits and investigations, IGs each year identify serious management challenges and make thousands of recommendations to resolve these problems. Implementing the nearly 14,000 open recommendations identified in this report could cut waste and abuse by almost \$26 billion and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of core government programs.

## APPENDIX. NUMBER OF UNIMPLEMENTED INSPECTOR GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS, BY YEAR ISSUED

|  | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | Total<br>Open<br>Recs. | All Recs.<br>Made,<br>2001-2008 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Agency for International Development <sup>42</sup> | 3    | 0    | 3    | 3    | 13   | 18   | 96   | 508  | 644                    | 4,719                           |
| Amtrak <sup>43</sup>                               | *    | *    | *    | *    | *    | *    | *    | *    | 180                    | 1,415                           |
| Appalachian Regional Commission                    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 3    | 3    | 5    | 1    | 13   | 25                     | 413                             |
| Capitol Police                                     | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 47   | 61   | 108                    | 168                             |
| Commodity Futures Trading Commission               | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 1                      | 66                              |
| Consumer Product Safety Commission                 | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 8    | 8                      | 138                             |
| Corp. for National and Community Service           | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 3    | 2    | 5                      | 1,693                           |
| Corporation for Public Broadcasting                | 3    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 8    | 33   | 35   | 79                     | 288                             |
| Denali Commission                                  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 2    | 11   | 14   | 27                     | 59                              |
| Dept. of Agriculture                               | 5    | 7    | 26   | 26   | 52   | 111  | 150  | 370  | 747                    | 3,610                           |
| Dept. of Commerce                                  | 0    | 4    | 0    | 1    | 2    | 10   | 24   | 32   | 73                     | 832                             |
| Dept. of Defense                                   | 7    | 18   | 25   | 57   | 38   | 168  | 235  | 499  | 1,047                  | 5,699                           |
| Dept. of Education                                 | 15   | 32   | 34   | 33   | 52   | 105  | 112  | 256  | 639                    | 3,437                           |
| Dept. of Energy                                    | 0    | 2    | 5    | 2    | 10   | 19   | 24   | 118  | 180                    | 2,993                           |
| Dept. of Health and Human Services <sup>44</sup>   | 22   | 11   | 8    | 12   | 14   | 38   | 21   | 47   | 173                    | 725                             |
| Dept. of Homeland Security <sup>45</sup>           | 0    | 0    | 28   | 71   | 162  | 174  | 295  | 140  | 870                    | 3,606                           |
| Dept. of Housing and Urban Development             | 4    | 17   | 38   | 72   | 37   | 132  | 362  | 673  | 1,335                  | 6,716                           |
| Dept. of Interior                                  | 0    | 10   | 38   | 20   | 96   | 71   | 140  | 217  | 592                    | 3,310                           |
| Dept. of Justice                                   | 0    | 2    | 9    | 8    | 29   | 26   | 88   | 199  | 361                    | 2,636                           |
| Dept. of Labor <sup>46</sup>                       | 25   | 27   | 48   | 55   | 214  | 166  | 187  | 804  | 1,526                  | 5,818                           |
| Dept. of State                                     | 3    | 8    | 11   | 27   | 24   | 67   | 187  | 567  | 894                    | 10,027                          |
| Dept. of the Treasury                              | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 2    | 8    | 28   | 39                     | 1,212                           |
| Dept. of Transportation                            | 3    | 11   | 11   | 6    | 13   | 34   | 69   | 192  | 339                    | 2,241                           |
| Dept. of Veterans Affairs                          | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 6    | 3    | 8    | 192  | 209                    | 7,299                           |
| Election Assistance Commission                     | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 2    | 7    | 62   | 71                     | 76                              |
| Environmental Protection Agency <sup>47</sup>      | 4    | 8    | 8    | 19   | 5    | 20   | 38   | 5    | 107                    | *                               |
| Equal Employment Opportunity Commission            | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 4    | 29   | 34                     | 42                              |
| Export-Import Bank of the United States            | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0                      | 0                               |
| Farm Credit Administration                         | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 3    | 3                      | 107                             |
| Federal Communications Commission                  | 0    | 0    | 2    | 3    | 2    | 0    | 14   | 24   | 45                     | 846                             |
| Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation              | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 9    | 6    | 16                     | 902                             |

<sup>42</sup> Data for U.S. AID also includes recommendations made to the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

<sup>43</sup> The Amtrak IG did not provide year-by-year data on open recommendations, only an aggregate total.

<sup>44</sup> Data includes only "significant" recommendations.

<sup>45</sup> The Homeland Security IG did not provide data for calendar year 2008, only the first three months of fiscal year 2008.

<sup>46</sup> Data for 2008 also includes the first three months of the Department's 2009 fiscal year.

<sup>47</sup> The EPA IG did not provide the total number of recommendations made between 2001 and 2008. Data for open recommendations includes only "significant" recommendations.

|   | 2001       | 2002       | 2003       | 2004       | 2005       | 2006         | 2007         | 2008         | Total Open Recs. | All Recs. Made, 2001-2008 |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Federal Election Commission                                     | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 10           | 43           | 19           | 72               | 194                       |
| Federal Housing Finance Agency                                  | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0            | 0            | 53           | 53               | 288                       |
| Federal Labor Relations Authority <sup>48</sup>                 | *          | *          | *          | *          | *          | *            | *            | *            | 133              | *                         |
| Federal Maritime Commission                                     | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 3            | 0            | 28           | 31               | 199                       |
| Federal Reserve Board   | 0          | 0          | 1          | 0          | 3          | 6            | 1            | 8            | 19               | 90                        |
| Federal Trade Commission  | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 0            | 2            | 16           | 19               | 198                       |
| General Services Administration <sup>49</sup>                   | 2          | 5          | 6          | 5          | 5          | 9            | 46           | 135          | 213              | *                         |
| Government Printing Office <sup>50</sup>                        | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 8            | 18           | 30           | 56               | 214                       |
| International Trade Commission                                  | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 4          | 0            | 0            | 16           | 20               | 149                       |
| Legal Services Corporation                                      | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0            | 0            | 0            | 0                | 0                         |
| Library of Congress   | 0          | 0          | 2          | 2          | 0          | 4            | 16           | 34           | 58               | 639                       |
| National Aeronautics and Space Admin.                           | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 1          | 6            | 31           | 42           | 81               | 1,108                     |
| National Archives   | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 17           | 14           | 102          | 134              | 455                       |
| National Credit Union Administration                            | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0            | 14           | 28           | 42               | 477                       |
| National Endowment for the Arts                                 | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0            | 5            | 34           | 39               | 340                       |
| National Endowment for the Humanities                           | 0          | 8          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 2            | 9            | 3            | 22               | 481                       |
| National Labor Relations Board                                  | 0          | 0          | 2          | 0          | 0          | 0            | 4            | 6            | 12               | 133                       |
| National Science Foundation <sup>51</sup>                       | 3          | 1          | 2          | 0          | 0          | 7            | 3            | 45           | 61               | 465                       |
| Nuclear Regulatory Commission                                   | 2          | 0          | 4          | 2          | 19         | 9            | 28           | 62           | 126              | 891                       |
| Office of Personnel Management                                  | 0          | 0          | 2          | 15         | 18         | 55           | 122          | 76           | 288              | 3,601                     |
| Peace Corps   | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 3            | 27           | 95           | 125              | 3,824                     |
| Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation                            | 0          | 0          | 5          | 3          | 14         | 23           | 19           | 56           | 120              | 662                       |
| Postal Regulatory Commission                                    | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0            | 0            | 9            | 9                | 22                        |
| Postal Service <sup>52</sup>                                    | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 3          | 9            | 36           | 138          | 186              | 1,183                     |
| Railroad Retirement Board                                       | 13         | 14         | 5          | 4          | 43         | 17           | 50           | 35           | 181              | 602                       |
| Securities and Exchange Commission                              | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 7          | 2            | 27           | 122          | 159              | 863                       |
| Small Business Administration                                   | 0          | 2          | 1          | 30         | 8          | 14           | 17           | 40           | 112              | 1,229                     |
| Smithsonian Institution   | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 2          | 5            | 22           | 24           | 54               | 442                       |
| Social Security Administration                                  | 29         | 45         | 50         | 31         | 41         | 71           | 95           | 233          | 595              | 2,717                     |
| Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction <sup>53</sup> | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 4          | 46           | 17           | 37           | 104              | 344                       |
| Tennessee Valley Authority                                      | 0          | 0          | 0          | 0          | 1          | 5            | 13           | 110          | 129              | 2,124                     |
| Treasury Inspector General for Tax Admin.                       | 5          | 0          | 5          | 17         | 13         | 7            | 44           | 126          | 217              | 3,290                     |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>148</b> | <b>232</b> | <b>379</b> | <b>530</b> | <b>962</b> | <b>1,521</b> | <b>2,896</b> | <b>6,866</b> | <b>13,847</b>    | <b>98,317</b>             |

<sup>48</sup> The Federal Labor Relations Authority IG did not provide a year-by-year breakdown of open recommendations or a total for recommendations made between 2001 and 2008.

<sup>49</sup> The General Services Administration IG did not provide the total number of recommendations made between 2001 and 2008.

<sup>50</sup> Data for 2008 also includes the first three months of the Government Printing Office's 2009 fiscal year. The figure for total recommendations made does not include 2001-2004, for which data was not available.

<sup>51</sup> Data for 2008 also includes the first three months of the Foundation's 2009 fiscal year.

<sup>52</sup> Data includes only "significant" recommendations.

<sup>53</sup> Data for 2008 also includes the first three months of SIGIR's 2009 fiscal year.