



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
441 G STREET NW  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000**

2007 APR -6 10:54  
March 29, 2007

Office of Small Business

Honorable John Kerry  
United States Senate  
304 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-6350

Dear Senator Kerry:

Thank you for your letter dated March 1, 2007, regarding GAO-07-205 entitled Hurricane Katrina – Agency Contracting Data should be More Complete Regarding Subcontracting Opportunities for Small Businesses, requesting that I or a senior member of my staff reinforce the importance of subcontracting plans and ensure independent Inspector General reviews.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) generally agrees with the Government Accountability Office's report and will take the necessary steps to improve its subcontracting practices. I am committed to ensuring that USACE maintains complete and accurate subcontracting information for all applicable contracts. We will hold our large business partners accountable in fulfilling their small business obligations as well. Our contracting officers and small business specialists will ensure that proposed subcontracting goals, from large businesses, are realistic and attainable, but challenging. Our large business partners who demonstrate their commitment to the small business community will be rewarded higher scores during proposal evaluations. When subcontracting plans are not required, the contracting officer will ensure proper justifications are contained in the contract file. As you have requested, the Director of Contracting or I will reinforce the above mentioned small business subcontracting practices by re-emphasizing the importance of subcontracting plans.

I will continue to encourage and welcome independent reviews of our small business program. To illustrate this commitment, in January 2007, I directed the USACE Inspector General to conduct an evaluation of our Small Business Program Office. At the end of this inspection, the Inspector General will provide a report to me containing their findings, observations and recommendations for any corrective actions.

USACE has long considered the small business community an important partner in the success of its mission. Historically, USACE has been and continues to be one of the Department of Army's strongest small business supporters as demonstrated by its stellar accomplishments in small business prime contract awards. We engage the small business community not because federal statutes require us to do so, but rather because it makes good business sense. Our

continued successful small business partnership will ensure a vibrant and robust cadre of small businesses that mirror the characteristics contained in my visions of USACE – Relevant, Ready, Responsive and Reliable.

If you or your constituents need any further assistance or additional information on our small business programs, please contact Mr. Anthony Bell, Chief of the Office of Small Business at (202) 761-8789.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl A. Strock', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Carl A. Strock  
Lieutenant General, US Army  
Commanding