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U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

May 30, 2012

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Mary Kendall
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W. – Mail Stop 4428
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Ms. Kendall:

According to the Inspector General Act of 1978 (“IG Act”), each Inspector General is responsible for conducting, supervising, and coordinating audits and investigations relating to the programs and operations of their respective agency or department. Although intended to be an independent watchdog against waste, fraud, and abuse, an Inspector General is also expected to keep the department head and Congress fully informed about fraud and other serious problems, to recommend corrective actions, and to report on progress made implementing the corrective actions.

Under the Obama Administration, the Department of the Interior has announced several high-profile initiatives, in particular ones touting renewable energy development on federal lands (both onshore and offshore), affecting scarce water resources, and promoting increased scientific integrity at the Department. It is imperative that the Office of Inspector General (“IG”) conduct proper oversight over these new programs and policies and report to Congress and to the Department on any deficiencies, fraud, waste, or abuse in these areas.

Based on a review of publicly available IG reports, including the most recent Semiannual Report to Congress, it is unclear whether your office has undertaken any program reviews, audits, evaluations, or inspections of the Department’s renewable energy initiatives. Similarly, the IG does not appear to have issued a report evaluating one of the Department’s main water initiatives – restoration of the Klamath Basin – since 2004. On the issue of scientific integrity, the IG issued a report in April 2010 calling upon the Department to issue a scientific integrity policy. Secretary Salazar established a new policy in January 2011. However, it is unclear how the Department is implementing the policy and how the IG will review and evaluate the Department’s efforts in this area.

In order to better understand these three Departmental initiatives – and any IG’s review, evaluation, or inspection of them – please provide the following information by June 7, 2012:

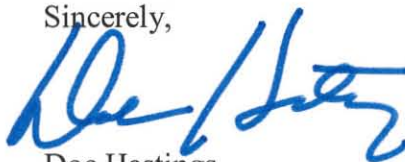
1. A list of all audits, inspections, program evaluations, investigations, or other IG actions initiated from January 1, 2009 through the present concerning the following topics:
 - a. Department programs and policies involving renewable energy on federal lands (both onshore and offshore);
 - b. Restoration of the Klamath Basin, including any reviews involving the adequacy of the science supporting the Department’s restoration plan; and
 - c. Reviews of the Department’s implementation of its January 2011 scientific integrity policy.

For each IG action identified, (including actions initiated but not completed) please also include whether any draft report was provided to the Department for review and comment, the present status of the IG’s action, and the date any final report was issued, if applicable.

2. Please provide a list of all claims or allegations of violations of the Department’s scientific integrity policies, or any claims or allegations of any other policy protecting the rights of Department employees to communicate their professional views on science, that have been reviewed or investigated by the IG from January 1, 2009 through the present. For each IG action, please provide the date of the claim, a brief description of the allegation, the Bureau or Office that was involved in the allegation, a description of any actions taken by the IG to review or investigate the claim, and the final disposition of the claim.

Please contact Byron Brown or Machalagh Carr, Office of Oversight and Investigations, at (202) 225-2761 with any questions regarding this request, or to make arrangements for the production. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Doc Hastings
Chairman