




Memorandum

**U.S. Department of
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Audit Announcement—
Review of Congressional Earmarks Within
Department of Transportation Programs
Project No. 06A3020A000

Date: November 17, 2006

From: David A. Dobbs 
Assistant Inspector General
for Aviation and Special Program Audits

Reply to
Attn. of: JA-10

To: Assistant Secretary
for Budget and Programs/CFO

In response to a request from Senator Tom Coburn, Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, and International Security, (see attachment) we are initiating a review of congressional earmarks within the Department of Transportation (DOT).

Consistent with Senator Coburn's request, the objectives for this review are to determine (1) the total number and cost of congressional earmarks within DOT programs for fiscal year 2006, (2) whether earmarks are included in DOT's annual planning and project evaluation processes, and (3) the effects of earmarks on DOT's mission and goals.

Our work will be conducted at DOT offices in Washington, DC, and at selected field locations as necessary. We plan to begin the audit the week of November 27, 2006, and will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. The Program Director for this review is Scott Macey, and the Project Manager is Robert Falter. If you have any questions or require additional information concerning this audit, please call Mr. Falter at (202) 366-2004 or Mr. Macey at (415) 744-0434.

Attachment

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cc: Martin Gertel

TOM COBURN, M.D.
OKLAHOMA

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3604

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August 23, 2006

Todd J. Zinser
Acting Inspector General
Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, S.W.; Room 9210
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Inspector General Zinser,

As you may know, there has been growing interest in the cost, impact, and—in some cases—the ethics of Congressional earmarks.

I am requesting that your office conduct an independent analysis for the most recent fiscal year for which information is available of:

- 1) The total number and cost, including the cost of the earmark itself and related costs such as staff time and administration, of Congressional earmarks within the programs you monitor;
- 2) What oversight is conducted on earmarks and how this compares to the oversight conducted on other expenditures such as grants and contracts; and
- 3) The overall impact of earmarks on the advancing the primary mission and goals of the Department.

For the purposes of this request, a Congressional earmark should be defined as a provision of law, a directive, or item represented in any table, chart or text contained within a joint explanatory statement or a report accompanying an appropriations or authorization bill that specifies the identity of an entity, program, project or service and the amount of the assistance to be received.

Thank you for your attention to this request. If you have any questions about this request, please feel free to call me directly or contact Roland Foster of my staff at 224-5754.

Sincerely,



Tom Coburn, M.D.
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management,
Government Information, and International Security