



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

July 24, 2013

The Honorable Darrell E. Issa
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-6143

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The Department of Energy shares the Committee's deep concern regarding the allegations in the Inspector General's July 16 Management Alert of highly improper personnel actions at the Bonneville Power Administration, including hiring practices that appear to have effectively disadvantaged veterans and other applicants. Perhaps even more concerning is the IG's report that BPA officials proposed or executed personnel actions against employees who have cooperated in the IG's review. The IG's Management Alert recognized that the Department "initiated immediate corrective actions which were fully responsive to [the Inspector General's] findings and recommendations" so far.¹ The Department looks forward to a full accounting of the facts once the IG's ongoing investigation is complete so that the Department can evaluate the situation and, as necessary, build on the steps already taken. We recognize the Committee's interest in this matter as well, and share your objective of remedying the situation at BPA.

We would like to correct one misunderstanding that arose in your July 17, 2013, letter, attributing to Deputy Secretary Poneman oral instructions to Acting BPA Administrator Mainzer that no BPA personnel were to speak with congressional investigators. In fact, Deputy Secretary Poneman gave no such instructions. Rather, Bonneville was informed that this was a serious matter and that any external questions were to be coordinated with the appropriate Headquarters offices. At the same time, it has always been the Department's policy that any and all DOE employees are free to speak out, voice concerns, or lodge complaints without fear of retaliation, including with Congress. Bonneville employees have been reminded of this right in a recent communication.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric J. Fygi".

Eric J. Fygi
Deputy General Counsel

cc: The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member

Elliot Mainzer,
Acting Administrator, Bonneville Power Administration

¹ DOE/IG-0891, Management Alert, "Allegations Regarding Prohibited Personnel Practices at the Bonneville Power Administration," July 2013.

