

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 1, 2024

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is to advise that I am exercising my authority to designate an Acting Inspector General of the Department of Commerce. I have directed that Jill Baisinger, who is currently serving as the Chief of Staff in the Office of Inspector General at the Department of the Interior, shall serve concurrently as Acting Inspector General of the Department of Commerce, effective 30 days from today.

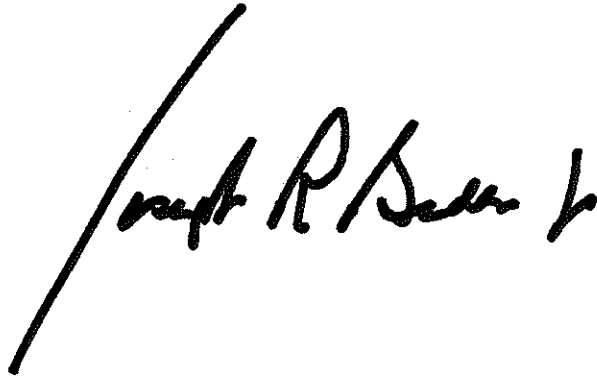
In January, the Inspector General of the Department of Commerce resigned and the Deputy Inspector General began performing the functions and duties of the Inspector General in an acting capacity.

I have determined that during this period of transition, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) at the Department of Commerce would benefit from leadership brought in from outside of the office. In a letter to the President dated March 18, 2024, the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology (Committee) stated that they had reached the same conclusion after a 10-month investigation. The attached letter from Counsel to the President Ed Siskel, which I have incorporated here by reference, provides additional details regarding the Committee's investigation.

Jill Baisinger is well positioned to provide independent and strong leadership to the OIG at the Department of Commerce. She has an exemplary track record in the Office of Inspector General at the Department of the Interior and previously at the Office of Inspector General at the Department of State. Her leadership experience, deep understanding of the mission

of Inspectors General, and expertise in oversight and investigations will help the OIG perform its vital role for the Department of Commerce.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert R. Bader". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Chairman
Committee on Science, Space,
and Technology
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

This letter provides additional detail regarding the President's decision to designate a new Acting Inspector General of the Department of Commerce.

For over ten months, the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology (Committee) has conducted a bipartisan investigation into allegations of whistleblower retaliation and misconduct by senior leaders of the Office of Inspector General at the Department of Commerce (DOC OIG). In the midst of that investigation, the Inspector General resigned, and Deputy Inspector General Roderick Anderson began performing the duties of the Inspector General on an acting basis.

On March 18, 2024, the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee wrote the attached letter to the President informing him that evidence reviewed by the Committee makes "clear that much of the senior leadership of the DOC OIG – including Acting Inspector General Roderick Anderson – was entangled in the allegations that had been brought to the Committee's attention." According to the letter, the Committee "reviewed credible evidence that some senior officials participated in alleged misconduct, other senior officials claimed to be the victims of it, and some may have both furthered alleged misconduct and been subject to it themselves."

Given these preliminary investigative findings, the Chairman and Ranking Member stated that they "do not believe that any senior official within the Department of Commerce OIG is able to lead the office." They urged the President "to designate an Acting Inspector General who is not currently serving within the DOC OIG."

The President has determined that during this period of transition, DOC OIG would benefit from independent leadership from outside of the office. He has directed Jill Baisinger to serve as Acting Inspector General of the Department of Commerce, effective 30 days from today. Jill Baisinger is an experienced attorney who currently serves as the Chief of Staff in the Office of Inspector General of the Department of the Interior. She satisfies the eligibility requirements for service as Acting Inspector General under 5 U.S.C. § 403(h)(2)(C).

Sincerely,

Edward N. Siskel
Counsel to the President

The Honorable Mike Johnson

Page 2

cc: The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable James Comer, Chairman
United States House Committee on Oversight and Accountability

The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Ranking Member
United States House Committee on Oversight and Accountability

The Honorable Gary Peters, Chairman
United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Rand Paul, Ranking Member
United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Chairwoman
United States House Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Ranking Member
United States House Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Frank Lucas, Chairman
United States House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren Ranking Member
United States House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Chair
United States Senate Committee Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The Honorable Ted Cruz, Ranking Member
United States Senate Committee Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Enclosure

FRANK D. LUCAS, Oklahoma
CHAIRMAN

ZOE LOFGREN, California
RANKING MEMBER

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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March 18, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

Over the past ten months, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology (Committee) has conducted a bipartisan investigation into allegations of whistleblower retaliation and misconduct by senior leaders of the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General (DOC OIG).¹ Congress takes whistleblower retaliation seriously, especially when an Inspector General is alleged to be the perpetrator. The OIG serves an important purpose in protecting against waste, fraud, and abuse. For this reason, allegations of misconduct within OIGs towards their own staff fundamentally undermine their credibility.

Over the course of the Committee's investigation, which included depositions, staff-level meetings, transcribed interviews, and document review, it became clear that much of the senior leadership of the DOC OIG – including Acting Inspector General Roderick Anderson – was entangled in the allegations that had been brought to the Committee's attention. The Committee has reviewed credible evidence that some senior officials participated in alleged misconduct, other senior officials claimed to be the victims of it, and some may have both furthered alleged misconduct and been subject to it themselves. The muddled nature of the situation reflects the dysfunctional professional environment within the DOC OIG during IG Gustafson's tenure.

In the wake of IG Gustafson's resignation, Deputy Inspector General Roderick Anderson serves as the Acting Inspector General for the Department of Commerce. Given the Committee's preliminary investigatory findings, we do not believe that any senior official within the Department of Commerce OIG is able to lead the office. Therefore, to ensure the DOC OIG can fulfill its statutory mission until the nomination and confirmation of a permanent Inspector General, we request that you designate an Acting Inspector General who is not currently serving within the

¹ Press Release, Lucas and Lofgren Tell Commerce IG to Stop Withholding Documents, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology (Jul. 31, 2023), <https://science.house.gov/press-releases?ID=A7831E03-7CA9-4A57-9C38-4CB62CC1BE36>.

DOC OIG. The office will struggle to move forward until a qualified individual from outside the OIG arrives to serve as Acting Inspector General, and we urge you to act promptly to identify and select such an individual. We appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Frank Lucas
Chairman
House Committee on Science,
Space, and Technology



Zoe Lofgren
Ranking Member
House Committee on Science,
Space, and Technology

cc:

Gina M. Raimondo
Secretary
Department of Commerce

Roderick Anderson
Acting Inspector General
Department of Commerce

Mark L. Greenblatt
Chairperson
Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency