

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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July 7, 2023

The Honorable Peggy Gustafson
Inspector General
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue N.W.
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Inspector General Gustafson:

We write to request an immediate response to our last correspondence with your office. The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology (“the Committee”) has been investigating claims of whistleblower retaliation in the Department of Commerce Office of the Inspector General. We were alarmed to learn that in the course of intaking the Committee’s June 6, 2023,¹ letter, you disseminated the unredacted letter to undisclosed recipients. In order to assess this breach in proper whistleblower protection protocol and to ensure that mitigating measures were taken, on June 15, 2023, we sent you a letter regarding the potentially improper disclosure of a whistleblower’s identity.² The Committee gave a response deadline of June 20, 2023. Considering the brevity of the request and the urgency of these allegations, this timeline was entirely reasonable. We are now over two weeks past that deadline and have not received any information responsive to our request.

As an Inspector General, your failure to protect whistleblowers is unacceptable. Furthermore, your tardiness in responding to the Committee’s letter calls into question whether

¹ Letter from Frank Lucas, Chairman, and Zoe Lofgren, Ranking Member, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, to Peggy Gustafson, Inspector General, Dep’t of Commerce (June 6, 2023), <https://republicans-science.house.gov/cache/files/b/9/b93b772c-d24b-42db-9d64-5d9b50c2d301/6FABDDBE5B70BB367A408DC404505DF0.2023-06-06-fl-zl-to-commerce-oig-doc-request-redacted.pdf>.

² Letter from Frank Lucas, Chairman, and Zoe Lofgren, Ranking Member, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, to Peggy Gustafson, Inspector General, Dep’t of Commerce (June 15, 2023), <https://republicans-science.house.gov/cache/files/d/6/d6369214-71ca-4726-929a-1139dea16f1e/0A8AB05B2403939CA65B70F61036CA4B.2023-06-15-fl-zl-to-commerce-oig-disclosure-of-wb-identity-.pdf>.

you are taking this matter seriously. Please immediately provide a thorough response to the Committee's June 15, 2023,³ letter.

Sincerely,



Frank Lucas
Chairman
Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology



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

cc: Mark Greenblatt, Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency;
Gina Raimondo, Secretary of the Department of Commerce;
Henry J. Kerner, Special Counsel of the Office of the Special Counsel

³ *Id.*