

COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND  
TECHNOLOGY**  
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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**Statement of Oversight Subcommittee Chairman Paul Broun (R-Georgia)  
Hearing on Top Challenges for Science Agencies: Reports from the Inspectors General Part 2**

**Chairman Broun:** Good afternoon. Let me begin first by thanking our witnesses for their patience and flexibility. We've had several exchanges over the last couple of weeks as we had to change the hearing start time not once, but twice. I appreciate our witnesses' willingness to work with us.

The title of today's hearing is "Top Challenges for Science Agencies: Reports from the Inspectors General - Part 2." This is the second of two hearings we scheduled to hear from the Offices of Inspectors General representing agencies within this Committee's jurisdiction. The object of these hearings is to learn about the major performance and management challenges facing each agency from the perspective of each Inspector General.

The DOE IG's office is a regular guest at hearings before this Committee. We follow your work closely, and pay attention to your thorough analysis. For example, during testimony provided at a Subcommittee hearing last year, your colleague explained that the Department "awarded grants of nearly \$300 million for Clean Cities projects and about \$400 million for Transportation Electrification efforts." And while both programs required fund recipients to comply with federal regulations governing financial assistance awards, as noted in testimony provided by your office back then, you identified "needed improvements in financial management for both programs." Since then, the Department does not seem to have improved its management abilities, as further highlighted in a report your office issued last month about LG Chem. This Michigan company received nearly \$150 million dollars in Recovery Act funds. Yet, not only did the company fail to meet basic project goals, its employees actually got paid for watching movies and playing board games. These are serious concerns about serious amounts of taxpayer money that require this Committee's attention.

As for the EPA, we always have questions about their actions and decisions. The Integrated Risk Information System, or IRIS, is a perennial topic of discussion, even when we were in the Minority. IRIS is on the GAO's high-risk series, and continues to be on the IG's management challenges list for the agency.

Another issue that this Committee has been involved with for several months is EPA's draft Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment. EPA has not provided clear answers about the purpose, cost, or relevance of an assessment that is based on a hypothetical mining plan. Concerns have been raised about this assessment, prompting one peer reviewer to describe it as "hogwash."

We've also heard concerns about the integrity and usefulness of EPA's second peer review of the assessment. These concerns, along with other potential problems regarding conflict of interest and proper process at other advisory and peer review bodies at the Agency, will require the IG's diligent attention as they ultimately impact important regulatory decisions at EPA.

The Department of Interior also faces many challenges in the future, not least of which is how it conducts science and incorporates that science into Department decisions. The Department is embroiled in scientific integrity cases involving: polar bear research; the Klamath River dam removal decision; the Delta Smelt issue regarding California's central valley water; the manipulation of peer reviewers' comments to justify an offshore drilling moratorium; and the treatment of science in deciding to extend the operating agreement for an oyster company on a National Seashore, just to name a few. Because of the Department's track record, an uncertain process for handling allegations between the IG and the Agency, and questions about the IG's independence, I see scientific integrity as a fundamental challenge facing the Agency moving forward. This challenge affects the use of federal lands, Endangered Species Act listings that influence property owners, and countless other important national interests tied to resources and wildlife.

As Inspectors General, you all have the important responsibility of conducting and supervising audits and investigations; providing leadership, recommending policies, and preventing and detecting waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement at agencies. We rely on your diligence and independence to assist our oversight responsibilities. That's why I look forward to receiving your testimonies, and hearing your answers to my questions later this hour. Thank you.