

XAP 111894



GSA Office of the Administrator

December 7, 2006

The Honorable Barack Obama
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Obama:

I appreciate hearing your concerns regarding the General Services Administration's (GSA's) Office of Inspector General. It is critically important that the Inspector General (IG) is an independent and objective part of GSA so that he can conduct audits and investigations, promote efficiencies, and provide a means for keeping Congress and me fully informed about any problems and deficiencies at GSA.

A top priority for me is greater transparency at GSA. The IG is an important part of this openness. Please be assured that I am not and should not decide which audits or investigations the IG pursues. That would be inappropriate. Regarding GSA requesting and paying for pre-award audits by the IG from non-appropriated funds, GSA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of Inspector General "for audit services related to the conducting of pre-award contract audits" on October 18, 2006. Similar agreements have occurred in recent years.

However, I am working hard to balance our budget, and distributing this effort evenly and fairly is challenging because most of our funding is not through direct appropriations. The fiscal year 2008 request is far from complete, but I look forward to discussing it with you in detail after the President sends it to Congress for consideration. Regarding our fiscal year 2007 appropriations request for the IG, the President requested \$44 million in this area, which is a \$1.3 million increase over last year and an almost \$10 million increase from 10 years ago. I am eager to work closely with you as our appropriations bill for fiscal year 2007 is finalized.

Again, thank you for letting me know your concerns. I hope this information is helpful.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lurita Doan".

Lurita Doan
Administrator