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U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

February 21, 2013

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JEFFREY DUNCAN
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to request that you act without further delay to nominate a permanent Inspector General for the Department of the Interior (“Department”). The operations and management of the Department’s Office of Inspector General (“IG”) are in serious need of independent leadership.

Nearly four years ago to the day, you appointed the Department’s previous Inspector General, Earl Devaney, to lead the Recovery, Accountability and Transparency Board, leaving the Department without a permanent, independent watchdog. Since that time, there have been too many instances where the Department’s IG office has been mismanaged by Deputy Inspector General Mary Kendall, serving as acting Inspector General, and IG Chief of Staff Stephen Hardgrove. For too long, their accommodation of the Department’s leadership has compromised and undermined the professional work of the IG’s career staff. It is time to end the decline in trust that has resulted from their administration of the IG and provide the office with a clear leader empowered with the authority that flows from the permanence and independence of a Presidential nomination and Senate confirmation.

For over two years, the House Committee on Natural Resources (“Committee”) has been conducting oversight of the IG, and today a report prepared by the Committee’s Office of Oversight and Investigations Majority staff is being released to document these efforts. This report details that Ms. Kendall has openly expressed the desire to receive your nomination to become permanent IG while she and Chief of Staff Hardgrove administered the IG’s oversight role in a manner that can best be described as privately accommodating to senior Department officials and your Administration. This was a distinct departure from the assertive, public calling to account style practiced previously by the IG’s office during prior Administrations.

Instances of mismanagement by Ms. Kendall and Mr. Hardgrove include: not pursuing investigations involving political appointees or Administration priorities; informing senior Department officials of problems without conducting formal investigations and not issuing reports to Congress and the public; not adequately documenting the management of IG investigations and operations; serving in an appointed policy role in conflict with the IG’s

investigative duties; preventing an investigator from seeking information from a White House official; and providing inaccurate and misleading information to Congress.

Under the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, an Inspector General is expected to be a politically independent watchdog responsible for identifying fraud, waste and abuse, and to report management problems to the Department head and Congress so that they may ensure such problems are appropriately addressed. Regrettably, Ms. Kendall has not appropriately upheld this standard and it is not appropriate for her to remain in charge of the IG's office any longer.

Again, I urge you to act without further delay to nominate a well-qualified, uncompromised individual to serve as a permanent Inspector General for the Department of the Interior.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Doc Hastings", written in a cursive style.

Doc Hastings
Chairman