

DAVID VITTER
LOUISIANA

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Environment and Public Works
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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

WASHINGTON, D.C.
HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
SUITE SH-516
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-4623
FAX: (202) 228-5061

BATON ROUGE
858 CONVENTION STREET
BATON ROUGE, LA 70802
(225) 383-0331
FAX: (225) 383-0952
Website with E-Mail Access:
vitter.senate.gov

August 27, 2013

The Honorable Arthur A. Elkins, Jr.
Inspector General
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Inspector General
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Mr. Elkins,

On August 23, 2013, the Department of Justice filed an information with the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, charging a high level Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) official with theft of government property under 18 U.S.C. § 641.¹ According to the information, John C. Beale, former Deputy Administrator within the Office of Air and Radiation, “knowingly stole and converted for his own use money and property of the United States, to wit, \$886,186” from 2000 to April 30, 2013.² I understand the case will proceed through the proper judicial channels. However, serious questions remain unanswered regarding EPA’s internal processes that enabled such fraud to occur.

Based on the information, Mr. Beale acquired the money and property “in the form of salary, benefits, and certain Retention Incentive Bonuses for which Beale had not earned.”³ As such, this matter raises a number of questions about the integrity of the process that administers EPA’s workforce payroll and benefits. In the case of the EPA, it seems that critical components of the process were vulnerable to abuse, directly contributing to massive fraud for over a decade. As workforce payroll costs comprise roughly 25% of EPA’s annual budget,⁴ the integrity of its system is directly relevant to decisions pending before Congress, namely consideration of Fiscal Year 2014 Appropriations and the implementation of the Budget Control Act of 2011 (“Sequester”).

¹ *United States v. Beale*, No. 1:13-cr-00247-ESH (D. D.C. filed Aug. 23, 2013).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ See U.S. ENVTL. PROT. AGENCY, FY 2014 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN AND CONGRESSIONAL JUSTIFICATION (Apr. 2013), <http://nepis.epa.gov/Exe/ZyPDF.cgi?Dockey=P100GJVE.PDF>; see also OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GEN., U.S. ENVTL. PROT. AGENCY, REPORT NO. 11-P-0031, EPA NEEDS TO STRENGTHEN INTERNAL CONTROLS FOR DETERMINING WORKFORCE LEVELS, at 1 (Dec. 20, 2010), <http://www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2011/20101220-11-P-0031.pdf>.

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Accordingly, I request the EPA Office of Inspector General (OIG) immediately launch an investigation into the Agency's policies and processes that facilitated Mr. Beale's fraud, and to make recommendations to ensure that this does not happen again.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please contact Kristina Moore with the Committee on Environment and Public Works at (202) 224-6176.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Vitter". The signature is stylized with a large initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David Vitter
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works