

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

MICHAEL L. ALEXANDER, STAFF DIRECTOR
NICHOLAS A. ROSSI, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

George E. Northcroft
Acting Regional Administrator, Region 10
General Services Administration
400 15th Street SW #10A
Auburn, WA 98001

May 17, 2012

Dear Acting Administrator Northcroft:

We are writing to follow up on a number of concerns that have been raised by the Inspector General's Management Deficiency Report on the 2010 Western Regions Conference (April 2, 2012). As you know, the IG uncovered numerous violations of contracting regulations and policies and the Federal Travel Regulation, as well as purchase card irregularities, by General Services Administration (GSA) employees. The waste, excessive spending, and possible fraud uncovered as a result of this investigation and continuing investigations cause us grave concern. These issues are even more troubling given GSA's unique and lead role in contracting and management of travel and conference planning.

In light of the array of problems uncovered by the WRC investigation, we seek to understand whether there is a wider problem at GSA. We are encouraged by Acting Administrator Tangherlini's leadership and aggressive actions to right the ship at the national level. We also appreciate that there are many GSA employees across the country at all levels of the GSA organization who take their responsibility to be good stewards of taxpayer money very seriously. Indeed, we understand from the IG that numerous GSA employees have stepped forward in the aftermath of the WRC investigation to report abuses to the IG hotline and we applaud and encourage these actions.

To help inform our assessment, please provide the information requested below about activities in your region by June 1, 2012.

1. What was the overall budget for your regional office for each of fiscal years 2008 – 2012?
2. What was the total amount spent on travel by your regional office for each of fiscal years 2008 - 2012?
 - a. Who manages the travel budget in your region, including approving expenditures and ensuring the budget is not exceeded? Please provide this individual's official title.
 - b. To whom does this person report? Please provide this individual's official title.

- c. What steps do you take to ensure that travel taken by employees in your region is consistent with the Federal Travel Regulation?
 - d. Under what circumstances, if any, does headquarters approve travel expenditures for your region?
3. For each conference or meeting in which your region incurred total travel and other costs in excess of \$10,000 during fiscal years 2008 – 2012, please provide:
 - a. a description of the conference or meeting, including the title, if any, and the purpose of the conference or meeting;
 - b. the location of the conference or meeting;
 - c. the number of employees from your region that attended the conference or meeting; and
 - d. the total amount spent by the region on the conference or meeting, including associated travel, catering, and other contract costs.
4. For each conference or meeting identified in response to question 3 that was sponsored by your region, in whole or in part, please –
 - a. list any vendor contracts related to the conference or meeting that were made through sole source awards and indicate the dollar value of each such contract; and
 - b. indicate the number of preparatory trips taken, if any, before the conference or meeting (*e.g.*, to scout locations), the number of employees on each such trip, and the associated travel and catering costs for each such trip.
5. What is total amount of GSA funds obligated by contract in your region during each of Fiscal Years 2008-2012?
 - a. How much of this contract spending relates to conferences?
 - b. How much of this contract spending relates to overhead and administration for your region (rather than the programmatic mission)?
 - c. Does your regional office have a regional procurement officer?
 - d. If the answer to question 5c is “yes,” to whom does the regional procurement officer report?
 - e. If the answer to question 5c is “yes,” does the regional procurement officer have a direct reporting relationship to anyone at GSA headquarters?
 - f. How many contracting officers are there in your region?
 - g. Who in your regional office manages contract warrants?
 - h. To whom do the contracting officers in your region report?
 - i. Is the person to whom the contracting officers in your region report a program manager or a procurement official?
 - j. Who in your region oversees contract officer training and certifications?
6. For Fiscal Years 2008-2012, did your region host any function or event in which awards were distributed and catering costs exceeded \$2,000?
 - a. For each of these events, please provide the date of the event, a description of the awards given, the cost of the awarded items, and the amount spent on catering and commemorative items (such as coins or plaques).

7. How many individuals in your region are authorized purchase card holders?
 - a. Is training up to date and complete for each cardholder?
 - b. How often are purchase card expenses audited in your region?
 - c. Who conducts audits of purchase card expenditures?

We appreciate your prompt attention to this information request and look forward to your timely response. If you have any questions, please contact us or have your staff contact Jon Kraden on the majority staff at (202) 224-2627 or Jonathan_Kraden@hsgac.senate.gov or Julie Dunne on minority staff at (202) 228-3141 or Julie_dunne@hsgac.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Joseph I. Lieberman
Chairman



Susan M. Collins
Ranking Member