



November 7, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Harry Reid
Democratic Leader
United States Senate

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Senator Reid,

We write in our capacities as Chair and Vice Chair of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) regarding the pending nominations in the U.S. Senate for eight vacant Inspector General positions. CIGIE is comprised of the 73 Federal IGs and representatives from several other Executive Branch agencies. Congress created this independent entity in 2008 to, among other things, help address waste, fraud and abuse, and promote economy and efficiency in Federal programs and operations.

Of the 73 IG positions, 36 are selected through nomination by the President and confirmation by the Senate. Currently, nine of these 36 Presidentially-appointed, Senate-confirmed IG positions are vacant, with nominees pending before the Senate for the following eight IG positions: the Central Intelligence Agency (vacant 646 days), the Department of Commerce (vacant 523 days), the Department of Defense (vacant 303 days), the Department of Energy (vacant 405 days), the Department of Interior (vacant 1773 days), the Export-Import Bank of the United States (vacant 864 days), the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) (vacant 1139 days), and the Office of Personal Management (vacant 262 days). Notably, two of the eight nominees – Jay Lerner to be the IG at FDIC and Peggy Gustafson to be the IG at the Department of Commerce – are pending on the Senate Executive Calendar after being approved by the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee (for Mr. Lerner); the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee (for Ms. Gustafson); and the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (for both Mr. Lerner and Ms. Gustafson).

On March 15, 2015, all of the Members of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee signed a bipartisan letter to the President urging him to swiftly nominate candidates for the then-seven vacant Presidentially-appointed IG positions. As the letter noted, “[p]ermanent leadership in IG offices is vital for guaranteeing IG independence, promoting transparency and accountability in government operations, and ensuring that Federal taxpayer dollars are well spent.” Indeed, in the over three decades since passage of the Inspector General Act of 1978, IGs have saved taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars and improved the programs and operations of the Federal government through their independent oversight.


Unfortunately, today one-quarter of the Presidentially-nominated IG positions remain vacant. A sustained absence of permanent leadership for any office, particularly one entrusted with the important and challenging mission of an Office of Inspector General (OIG), is neither prudent nor reflective of good governance. Moreover, no matter how able or experienced an acting Inspector General may be, a permanent IG has the ability to exercise more authority in setting new policies and procedures and, by virtue of the authority provided for in the IG Act, inevitably will be seen as having greater independence. As such, a timely process for addressing vacant IG positions is crucial to an OIG's success, as well as that of his or her agency.

On behalf of the Inspector General community, we ask that the Senate consider these eight highly qualified nominees for confirmation because, as the Members of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee noted in their letter to the President, confirmed IG leadership is vital to ensuring effective oversight for the American people.

Sincerely,



Michael E. Horowitz
CIGIE Chair
Inspector General
Department of Justice



Allison C. Lerner
CIGIE Vice Chair
Inspector General
National Science Foundation