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Description of document: Department of Labor (DOL) Inspector General (OIG) response to a Congressional request for "agency"-specific information on climate change, 2013

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Source of document: Disclosure Officer
Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave., N.W., Room S-5506
Washington, DC 20210
Fax: (202) 693-7020

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September 9, 2013

This is in response to your August 3, 2013 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request addressed to this agency for copies of documents and/or any other responses provided to the Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change in response to their February 25, letter request to the OIG signed by Co-Chairs Henry A. Waxman, Sheldon Whitehouse, Edward J. Markey, and Benjamin L. Cardin. Your request was received on August 13, 2013 and assigned FOIA case number 213071.

Enclosed are all records responsive to your request. We hope you find this information helpful.

Finally, fees were not charged for this request. If you have any questions, please contact this office at (202) 693-5116. We hope you find this information helpful.

Sincerely,


Kimberly Pacheco
Disclosure Officer

Enclosures:
Four pages



MAR 28 2013

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
Co-Chair
Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy & Commerce

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Co-Chair
Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight, Senate
Committee on Environment and Public Works

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
Co-Chair
Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources

The Honorable Ben Cardin
Co-Chair
Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change
Chairman
Subcommittee on Water and Wildlife, Senate
Committee on Environment and Public Works

Dear Co-Chairmen:

I write in response to your letter dated February 25, 2013, in which you requested that my office assess the Department of Labor's (DOL or Department) efforts to address the fiscal exposure presented by climate change.

On March 7, 2013, the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency organized a conference call between your staff and various Office of Inspector General (OIG) representatives to discuss how OIGs could best respond to your request. As a result of this discussion, it was decided that by March 29, 2013, each OIG would provide you a summary of its plan to address your questions, and the time required to complete this work.

My office has started a project to collect the information requested by the Task Force. Our preliminary research has found that, in accordance with Executive Order 13514, "Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance," the Department issued its annual Sustainability Plan on June 29, 2012. The plan identified significant challenges in sustainability related to the age of the Department's 125 Job Corps Center buildings, as well as the construction of DOL's headquarters in Washington, D.C. Nonetheless, DOL reported in its plan that it is making progress by using 36 million fewer gallons of water in 2011 and reducing its electrical

usage by 3% annually. The plan also states that since Fiscal Year 2006, DOL has reduced annual conventional petroleum consumption (gasoline and diesel) by 9.7%, representing 312,766 fewer fuel gallons burned annually.

With respect to your request that the OIG identify the existing requirements in legislation, regulation, executive order, and other directives governing climate change that apply to DOL, we will obtain and verify information from DOL regarding relevant legislation and other directives. Other than Job Corps centers, DOL owns little property. However, it may have responsibilities for implementing federal energy efficiency policies in buildings that it occupies, such as DOL's headquarters. We will determine the inventory of property the Department occupies in its various regional, district and field offices, and identify those facilities for which the Department is responsible for implementing federal energy efficiency policies. We will then review the actions the Department has reported taking to meet its obligations and evaluate the extent to which it has met those obligations.

With respect to your request that we assess DOL's authority to reduce emissions of heat-trapping pollution and address the effects of climate change, we will review authorizing legislation and meet with officials from the major agencies within the Department to identify agencies' authorities to affect climate change and any additional steps they may be able to take to reduce emissions or strengthen resiliency.

We will provide the final report of our findings to you when we complete our work. Please feel free to contact me at (202) 693-5100 regarding this response. Alternatively, your staff may contact Christopher Seagle, Acting Director of Congressional Liaison and Communications, at (202) 693-5231.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel R. Petrole". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Daniel R. Petrole
Deputy Inspector General

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 25, 2013

The Honorable Daniel Petrole
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue N.W., Room S5502
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Mr. Petrole:

Earlier this month, the Government Accountability Office added climate change to its High Risk List. GAO found that climate change “presents a significant financial risk to the federal government.” According to GAO, “[t]he federal government is not well organized to address the fiscal exposure presented by climate change.” As the co-chairs of the Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change, we are seeking your help in assessing whether the U.S. Department of Labor is doing everything it can to confront this growing threat.

There are existing requirements that federal agencies carry out policies to address climate change. In 2007, Congress enacted the Energy Independence and Security Act, which requires federal agencies to reduce the energy intensity of federal buildings 30% by 2015, to achieve even greater reductions when renovating existing buildings or constructing new ones, and to designate an energy manager to conduct evaluations and commissioning processes. In 2009, the President issued Executive Order 13514, which directs federal agencies to establish a greenhouse gas emission reduction target for 2020, to reduce vehicle fleet petroleum use by 30% by 2020, and to ensure that 95% of applicable contracts meet sustainability requirements. The order also required the agencies to “evaluate agency climate-change risks and vulnerabilities to manage the effects of climate change on the agency’s operations and mission in both the short and long term.” In 2010, the President announced that the federal government will reduce its greenhouse gas pollution by 28% by 2020 as a result of targets submitted under Executive Order 13514.

Additionally, the President issued a memorandum requiring agencies to enhance their building energy efficiency through performance-based contracts totaling a minimum of \$2 billion across the federal government. Federal agencies also recently released their latest Strategic Sustainability Performance plans, which for the first time include their plans “to reduce the vulnerability of Federal programs, assets, and investments to the impacts of climate change, such as sea level rise or more frequent or severe extreme weather.”

As the first part of our request, we ask that you (1) identify the existing requirements in legislation, regulation, executive order, and other directives that apply to the government entity you oversee, (2) assess whether it is meeting these requirements, and (3) if it is not fully meeting the requirements, make recommendations for improving its performance.

In his State of the Union address, the President recognized that additional action by federal agencies is needed to combat climate change. The President called upon federal agencies to "identify additional executive actions from across the administration to help reduce pollution, prepare our cities and nation for the worsening effects of climate change, and accelerate the transition to more sustainable sources of energy." This call to action presents an opportunity and obligation for agencies to develop strategies to meet the challenge of preventing and responding to climate change.

As the second part of our request, we seek your assessment of (1) the authorities the government entity you oversee has to reduce emissions of heat-trapping pollution, (2) its authorities to make the nation more resilient to the effects of climate change, and (3) the most effective additional steps it could take to reduce emissions or strengthen resiliency.

Because this is now a timely matter before both the executive and legislative branches, we ask that you provide answers to these questions as expeditiously as possible, ideally no later than March 29, 2013. If you have any questions, you can contact Kiren Gopal of Rep. Waxman's House Energy and Commerce Committee staff at Kiren.Gopal@mail.house.gov or Emily Enderle of Sen. Whitehouse's staff at Emily_Enderle@whitehouse.senate.gov.

Thank you for your assistance.

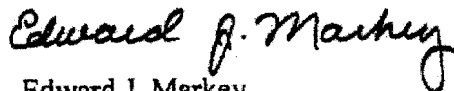
Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Co-Chair
Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change
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