



OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

AUG 25 2011

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment & Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Inhofe:

This is in response to your letter dated August 16, 2011 concerning the Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigation regarding Dr. Charles Monnett of the former Minerals Management Service, now the Bureau of Ocean Energy, Management, and Regulatory Enforcement (BOEMRE).

As a matter of practice, the OIG does not, typically, comment on ongoing investigations. This investigation, however, has been subject to much public speculation as a result of the public release of interview transcripts and press statements by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), which serves as legal representative to Dr. Monnett. While the OIG will not respond to specific statements issued by PEER, we are willing to share some background information about this investigation that we hope will quell speculation and assure interested parties of the OIG's objectivity, professionalism, and independence in investigating this matter.

In March 2010, the OIG received credible allegations from a seasoned, career Department of the Interior (DOI) employee, that acts of scientific misconduct may have been committed by one or more DOI employees. These allegations were received by the OIG nearly a year prior to the issuance of DOI's policy and protocols regarding the Integrity of Scientific and Scholarly Activities. We are, however, in contact with the Department's Office of Scientific Integrity on this matter, and are developing protocols for coordination on such matters in the future.

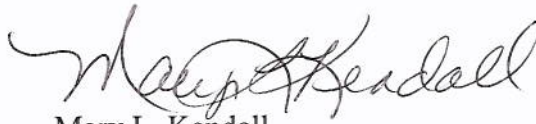
The OIG is not new to investigating allegations of scientific misconduct, but neither does the OIG hold itself out as technically expert in any area of scientific discipline. The OIG investigates allegations of scientific misconduct by following the facts wherever they lead. We will determine what the process is that governs the scientific activities at issue, whether there was any deviation from the process, and if so, how and the extent to which such deviation may have affected the results. The OIG does not, however, opine on the substance of the underlying science.

As is our practice, the OIG has kept the Department apprised of issues, uncovered during the course of our investigation, which may impact the immediate management and operations of the Department. In this case, we notified the Department of some procurement integrity matters with which Dr. Monnett was associated.

Although we would like to be able to respond to allegations by PEER and other outside entities about the integrity of the OIG and its investigation, we cannot. Our investigation is not complete, and until it is, it would be unfair to all parties involved for the OIG to comment about its results. As we have done in many previous cases, we will issue our final Report of Investigation only when the investigation is complete, regardless of notoriety or public pressure. We are confident, however, that all interested parties will find that when they are armed with all the facts, they are better positioned to draw reasoned conclusions and, if necessary, to address any scientific integrity issues.

If you have any questions, please contact Kris Kolesnik, Associate Inspector General for External Affairs, at 202-513-0326.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary L. Kendall". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Mary L. Kendall
Acting Inspector General