



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

AUG 31 2020

The Honorable Mark L. Greenblatt
Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Inspector General Greenblatt:

I am writing in response to your Office's delivery on July 30, 2020, of a Final Report titled, "Report of Investigation – *Statements Made to Congress Regarding the Bureau of Land Management's Office Relocation* (Case Number: OI-PI-20-0099-I)." According to Department of the Interior (Department) procedures, I understand the report will be transmitted to Congress on August 31, 2020. This letter acknowledges receipt and sets forth the Department's response to the report.

The Office of the Inspector General's (OIG) report confirms that the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals (Joseph Balash) and the Deputy Director for the Bureau of Land Management (William Perry Pendley) told the truth in their written and oral testimonies before Congress in 2019. The findings put to rest any questions on this matter.

Unremarkably, this OIG report concludes that the relevant statements made by the Department were found to have been made in good faith and to be "accurate." Additionally, it confirms that the Department and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) had "longstanding" plans (circa Sept/Oct 2016) to move BLM personnel from 20 M Street to another facility. As a result of these plans, the General Services Administration did not initiate negotiations with the landlord for a new lease.

Consistent with longstanding practice, the OIG report does not include any statement on the actions of Congress in relation to this investigation. On this subject matter, it is clear that some politicians weaponized the BLM's relocation. Their conduct is intimately tied to the creation of this report. Members of Congress are indeed entitled to their opinion and their motive, but they are not entitled to have merit when the facts do not support it. I respect and appreciate the mission of the OIG and trust that you will continue to look at your operations to ensure that taxpayer resources are focused on matters firmly outside the arena of policy-based interbranch disputes.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the findings of your office's report and to share my response. I consider this matter closed.

Sincerely,

Todd D. Willens
Chief of Staff

CC: The Honorable Katherine MacGregor, Deputy Secretary
The Honorable Daniel Jorjani, Solicitor