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CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON
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United States Senate

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Rickey R. Hass, Inspector General
U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Inspector General
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Inspector General Haas,

We write to seek an update from your office about your review or investigation into past reports of, and ongoing allegations of, waste, fraud and abuse within the Desert Southwest Region (DSW) of the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA).

In November 2015, an internal WAPA audit into the use of Government Purchase Cards (GPCs) revealed ineffective annual management reviews; inadequate oversight and monitoring at various levels; and ineffective or non-existent internal control activities. According to that internal audit, electronics, gift cards, vehicles, and other items were routinely purchased for the personal use of an employee. It is unclear what, if any, employees and managers were held responsible for these actions.

Customer groups of WAPA have faced year after year increases in their power rates, and while WAPA has cooperated with our offices to this point on cost transparency, more work is needed. As you know we have pursued legislative solutions to address customer concerns, including a study of termination provisions included in this year's Energy and Water Appropriations Bill and a cost database included in the Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2016. Further legislative actions could be forthcoming based on the results of your investigations.

We request a briefing from your office on any past reviews or current investigations of these or related issues with DSW. We also urge you to examine whether similar allegations exist across WAPA and its other regions.

Sincerely,


John McCain
United States Senator


Jeff Flake
United States Senator