The Honorable Michael Young  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Acting Secretary:

I am writing to request information regarding leadership positions and other critical staffing at the U.S. Department of Agriculture during this period of Presidential transition. As the Senate considers President Trump’s nominees for cabinet posts, we must also ensure that the federal government remains open and provides necessary services to the American people. In order to meet these oversight obligations, the United States Congress, the IG community and the public must first know who is leading decision-making and operations at federal agencies.

While the confirmation process remains ongoing, it is unclear when Senate leadership will schedule floor votes to confirm several of President Trump’s cabinet nominees or who is directing critical decisions at our federal agencies in their absence. Despite this uncertainty, the Trump administration has already deployed hundreds of political appointees to federal agencies to begin work. A spokesperson for the Trump administration reported that: “We have approximately 520 individuals on the beachhead teams and they have worked with the agencies to go in any time after 12:01 [p.m.] on Friday — each team has worked out their own timing.”¹ Media reports also indicate that the White House has hired senior aides within federal agencies to monitor the administration’s Cabinet secretaries once confirmed.² According to a report by Politico, these aides “have already been responsible for hiring at some departments and crafting the blueprint of Trump policy before the Cabinet members win Senate confirmation to take office.”³ After this spate of hiring, critical details remain unclear to the American public.


including who comprises the agency “beachhead teams” and other political appointments and what function these appointees serve relative to the individuals currently in acting positions at federal agencies, pending confirmation of the President’s nominees for cabinet positions.

Already, without Senate-confirmed secretaries, federal agencies in the Trump Administration are making decisions that could adversely impact significant numbers of Americans. For example, on January 20, 2017, the Department of Housing and Urban Development reversed a decision to help expand access to affordable housing to thousands of American families by announcing that it had “suspended indefinitely” a reduction of Mortgage Insurance Premiums for Federal Housing Administration insured loans.\(^4\) That same day, the Department of Justice stated that it would request a delay in a federal case examining the constitutionality of a Texas voter identification law.\(^5\) On January 21, 2017, the Department of Interior suspended its official Twitter account after the Department tweeted images depicting the National Mall during the inauguration of President Donald Trump and President Barack Obama.\(^6\) The Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Agriculture also put in place formal policies restricting certain communications with the American public.\(^7\) Media reports were unclear regarding which agency officials were involved in directing any of these decisions.

Although with any Presidential transition federal agencies maintain continuity of leadership with acting agency and program heads, as of this writing, some agencies, such as the Department of Agriculture, have not updated their leadership webpages to reflect current agency leadership appointed in an acting capacity. It is critically important that Congress and the Inspector General are aware of, and able to communicate with all Departmental leadership, even in these early days of the new administration. More importantly, the American people need to know who is accountable for the decisions made by federal agencies, especially in the absence of a Senate-confirmed secretary. In order to better understand the Department’s current leadership structure please provide the following information to my office not later than close of business on February 6, 2017:

1. A list of and contact information (phone and email address) for the Department’s senior leadership team including, but not limited to: (a) officials appointed in an acting capacity


\(^6\) The Interior Department Was Ordered to Suspend Twitter Accounts After Trump Inauguration Tweets, Fortune (website) (Jan. 21, 2017) (fortune.com/2017/01/21/interior-department-twitter-donald-trump-inauguration/).

pending confirmation of a presidentially appointed, Senate confirmed (PAS) official; (b) officials appointed as members of the Trump Administration’s “beachhead” team; and (c) any political appointees hired as senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary;

2. List when the members of the Department’s “beachhead” team and senior advisors began working at the Department, and explain whether any or all members of the Department’s “beachhead team” or senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary have received required ethics training and submitted applicable ethics disclosures;

3. Provide all documents referring or relating to the roles and responsibilities of each member of the Department’s senior leadership team including, but not limited to: (a) officials appointed in an acting capacity pending confirmation of a PAS official; (b) officials appointed as members of the Trump Administration’s “beachhead” team; and (c) any political appointees hired as senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary; and

4. Explain whether the Department has in place appropriate Delegation of Authority documents or any other documents outlining authorities for acting officials, members of the “beachhead” team, and senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary.

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Should you have any questions regarding this inquiry, please contact Donald Sherman on my staff at Donald_Sherman@hsgac.senate.gov or by phone at (202) 224-2627. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this request. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

The Honorable Phyllis K. Fong
Inspector General
January 30, 2017

The Honorable Ellen Herbst
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Madam Acting Secretary:

I am writing to request information regarding leadership positions and other critical staffing at the U.S. Department of Commerce during this period of Presidential transition. As the Senate considers President Trump’s nominees for cabinet posts, we must also ensure that the federal government remains open and provides necessary services to the American people. In order to meet these oversight obligations, the United States Congress, the IG community and the public must first know who is leading decision-making and operations at federal agencies.

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\(^7\) Federal Agencies Ordered to Restrict their Communications, Washington Post (Jan. 24, 2017) (www.washingtonpost.com/politics/federal-agencies-ordered-to-restrict-their-communications/2017/01/24/9d9a6a4e-26f-11e6-8a6b11-63c4d4f5a63_story.html?utm_term=0e5636fa6e0&wpisrc=n1_draw&wpmm=1).
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Sincerely,

Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

The Honorable Peggy E. Gustafson
Inspector General
Philip H. Rosenfelt  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Mr. Acting Secretary:

I am writing to request information regarding leadership positions and other critical staffing at the U.S. Department of Education during this period of Presidential transition. As the Senate considers President Trump’s nominees for cabinet posts, we must also ensure that the federal government remains open and provides necessary services to the American people. In order to meet these oversight obligations, the United States Congress, the IG community and the public must first know who is leading decision-making and operations at federal agencies.

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Footnotes:


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[Signature]

Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

The Honorable Kathleen S. Tighe
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Education
Adam J. Szubin  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Mr. Acting Secretary:

I am writing to request information regarding leadership positions and other critical staffing at the U.S. Department of the Treasury during this period of Presidential transition. As the Senate considers President Trump's nominees for cabinet posts, we must also ensure that the federal government remains open and provides necessary services to the American people. In order to meet these oversight obligations, the United States Congress, the IG community and the public must first know who is leading decision-making and operations at federal agencies.

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Sincerely,

Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

The Honorable Eric M. Thorson
Inspector General
U.S. Department of the Treasury
Dr. Grace M. Bochenek  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Madam Acting Secretary:

I am writing to request information regarding leadership positions and other critical staffing at the U.S. Department of Energy during this period of Presidential transition. As the Senate considers President Trump’s nominees for cabinet posts, we must also ensure that the federal government remains open and provides necessary services to the American people. In order to meet these oversight obligations, the United States Congress, the IG community and the public must first know who is leading decision-making and operations at federal agencies.

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Ranking Member
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
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Ms. April G. Stephenson
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Department of Energy
K. Jack Haugrud
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Acting Secretary:

I am writing to request information regarding leadership positions and other critical staffing at the U.S. Department of the Interior during this period of Presidential transition. As the Senate considers President Trump’s nominees for cabinet posts, we must also ensure that the federal government remains open and provides necessary services to the American people. In order to meet these oversight obligations, the United States Congress, the IG community and the public must first know who is leading decision-making and operations at federal agencies.

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cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
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Ms. Mary L. Kendall
Deputy Inspector General
U.S. Department of the Interior
The Honorable Sally Q. Yates
Acting Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Madam Acting Attorney General:

I am writing to request information regarding leadership positions and other critical staffing at the U.S. Department of Justice during this period of Presidential transition. As the Senate considers President Trump's nominees for cabinet posts, we must also ensure that the federal government remains open and provides necessary services to the American people. In order to meet these oversight obligations, the United States Congress, the IG community and the public must first know who is leading decision-making and operations at federal agencies.

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including who comprises the agency “beachhead teams” and other political appointments and what function these appointees serve relative to the individuals currently in acting positions at federal agencies, pending confirmation of the President’s nominees for cabinet positions.

Already, without Senate-confirmed leadership, federal agencies in the Trump Administration are making decisions that could adversely impact significant numbers of Americans. For example, on January 20, 2017, the Department of Housing and Urban Development reversed a decision to help expand access to affordable housing to thousands of American families by announcing that it had “suspended indefinitely” a reduction of Mortgage Insurance Premiums for Federal Housing Administration insured loans. That same day, the Department of Justice stated that it would request a delay in a federal case examining the constitutionality of a Texas voter identification law. On January 21, 2017, the Department of Interior suspended its official Twitter account after the Department tweeted images depicting the National Mall during the inauguration of President Donald Trump and President Barack Obama. The Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Agriculture also put in place formal policies restricting certain communications with the American public. Media reports were unclear regarding which agency officials were involved in directing any of these decisions.

Although with any Presidential transition federal agencies maintain continuity of leadership with acting agency and program heads, as of this writing, some agencies, such as the Department of Agriculture, have not updated their leadership webpages to reflect current agency leadership appointed in an acting capacity. It is critically important that Congress and the Inspector General are aware of, and able to communicate with all Departmental leadership, even in these early days of the new administration. More importantly, the American people need to know who is accountable for the decisions made by federal agencies, especially in the absence of Senate-confirmed leadership. In order to better understand the Department’s current leadership structure please provide the following information to my office not later than close of business on February 6, 2017:

1. A list of and contact information (phone and email address) for the Department’s senior leadership team including, but not limited to: (a) officials appointed in an acting capacity

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6 The Interior Department Was Ordered to Suspend Twitter Accounts After Trump Inauguration Tweets, Fortune (website) (Jan. 21, 2017) (fortune.com/2017/01/21/interior-department-twitter-donald-trump-inauguration/).

pending confirmation of a presidentially appointed, Senate confirmed (PAS) official; (b) officials appointed as members of the Trump Administration’s “beachhead” team; and (c) any political appointees hired as senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary;

2. List when the members of the Department’s “beachhead” team and senior advisors began working at the Department, and explain whether any or all members of the Department’s “beachhead team” or senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary have received required ethics training and submitted applicable ethics disclosures;

3. Provide all documents referring or relating to the roles and responsibilities of each member of the Department’s senior leadership team including, but not limited to: (a) officials appointed in an acting capacity pending confirmation of a PAS official; (b) officials appointed as members of the Trump Administration’s “beachhead” team; and (c) any political appointees hired as senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary; and

4. Explain whether the Department has in place appropriate Delegation of Authority documents or any other documents outlining authorities for acting officials, members of the “beachhead” team, and senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary.

Please confirm that you have also provided the above requested information to the Department’s Office of Inspector General not later than close of business on February 6, 2017.

Should you have any questions regarding this inquiry, please contact Donald Sherman on my staff at Donald_Sherman@hsgac.senate.gov or by phone at (202) 224-2627. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this request. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

The Honorable Michael E. Horowitz
Inspector General
Edward C. Hugler  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20210  

Dear Mr. Acting Secretary:

I am writing to request information regarding leadership positions and other critical staffing at the U.S. Department of Labor during this period of Presidential transition. As the Senate considers President Trump’s nominees for cabinet posts, we must also ensure that the federal government remains open and provides necessary services to the American people. In order to meet these oversight obligations, the United States Congress, the IG community and the public must first know who is leading decision-making and operations at federal agencies.

While the confirmation process remains ongoing, it is unclear when Senate leadership will schedule floor votes to confirm several of President Trump’s cabinet nominees or who is directing critical decisions at our federal agencies in their absence. Despite this uncertainty, the Trump administration has already deployed hundreds of political appointees to federal agencies to begin work. A spokesperson for the Trump administration reported that: “We have approximately 520 individuals on the beachhead teams and they have worked with the agencies to go in any time after 12:01 [p.m.] on Friday — each team has worked out their own timing.”\(^1\) Media reports also indicate that the White House has hired senior aides within federal agencies to monitor the administration’s Cabinet secretaries once confirmed.\(^2\) According to a report by Politico, these aides “have already been responsible for hiring at some departments and crafting the blueprint of Trump policy before the Cabinet members win Senate confirmation to take office.”\(^3\) After this spate of hiring, critical details remain unclear to the American public.


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1. A list of and contact information (phone and email address) for the Department’s senior leadership team including, but not limited to: (a) officials appointed in an acting capacity


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pending confirmation of a presidentially appointed, Senate confirmed (PAS) official; (b) officials appointed as members of the Trump Administration’s “beachhead” team; and (c) any political appointees hired as senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary;

2. List when the members of the Department’s “beachhead” team and senior advisors began working at the Department, and explain whether any or all members of the Department’s “beachhead team” or senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary have received required ethics training and submitted applicable ethics disclosures;

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Sincerely,

Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

The Honorable Scott S. Dahl
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Labor
January 30, 2017

The Honorable Thomas A. Shannon, Jr.
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Acting Secretary Shannon:

I am writing to request information regarding leadership positions and other critical staffing at the U.S. Department of State during this period of Presidential transition. As the Senate considers President Trump’s nominees for cabinet posts, we must also ensure that the federal government remains open and provides necessary services to the American people. In order to meet these oversight obligations, the United States Congress, the IG community and the public must first know who is leading decision-making and operations at federal agencies.

While the confirmation process remains ongoing, it is unclear when Senate leadership will schedule floor votes to confirm several of President Trump’s cabinet nominees or who is directing critical decisions at our federal agencies in their absence. Despite this uncertainty, the Trump administration has already deployed hundreds of political appointees to federal agencies to begin work. A spokesperson for the Trump administration reported that: “We have approximately 520 individuals on the beachhead teams and they have worked with the agencies to go in any time after 12:01 [p.m.] on Friday — each team has worked out their own timing.”

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Although with any Presidential transition federal agencies maintain continuity of leadership with acting agency and program heads, as of this writing, some agencies, such as the Department of Agriculture, have not updated their leadership webpages to reflect current agency leadership appointed in an acting capacity. It is critically important that Congress and the Inspector General are aware of, and able to communicate with all Departmental leadership, even in these early days of the new administration. More importantly, the American people need to know who is accountable for the decisions made by federal agencies, especially in the absence of a Senate-confirmed secretary. In order to better understand the Department’s current leadership structure please provide the following information to my office not later than close of business on February 6, 2017:

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pending confirmation of a presidentially appointed, Senate confirmed (PAS) official; (b) officials appointed as members of the Trump Administration’s “beachhead” team; and (c) any political appointees hired as senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary;

2. List when the members of the Department’s “beachhead” team and senior advisors began working at the Department, and explain whether any or all members of the Department’s “beachhead team” or senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary have received required ethics training and submitted applicable ethics disclosures;

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Should you have any questions regarding this inquiry, please contact Donald Sherman on my staff at Donald_Sherman@hsigac.senate.gov or by phone at (202) 224-2627. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this request. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

The Honorable Steve A. Linick
Inspector General
Michael P. Huerta  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Acting Secretary:

I am writing to request information regarding leadership positions and other critical staffing at the U.S. Department of Transportation during this period of Presidential transition. As the Senate considers President Trump’s nominees for cabinet posts, we must also ensure that the federal government remains open and provides necessary services to the American people. In order to meet these oversight obligations, the United States Congress, the IG community and the public must first know who is leading decision-making and operations at federal agencies.

While the confirmation process remains ongoing, it is unclear when Senate leadership will schedule floor votes to confirm several of President Trump’s cabinet nominees or who is directing critical decisions at our federal agencies in their absence. Despite this uncertainty, the Trump administration has already deployed hundreds of political appointees to federal agencies to begin work. A spokesperson for the Trump administration reported that: “We have approximately 520 individuals on the beachhead teams and they have worked with the agencies to go in any time after 12:01 [p.m.] on Friday — each team has worked out their own timing.” Media reports also indicate that the White House has hired senior aides within federal agencies to monitor the administration’s Cabinet secretaries once confirmed. According to a report by Politico, these aides “have already been responsible for hiring at some departments and crafting the blueprint of Trump policy before the Cabinet members win Senate confirmation to take office.” After this spate of hiring, critical details remain unclear to the American public including who comprises the agency “beachhead teams” and other political appointments and

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\(^7\) *Federal Agencies Ordered to Restrict their Communications*, Washington Post (Jan. 24, 2017) (www.washingtonpost.com/politics/federal-agencies-ordered-to-restrict-their-communications/2017/01/24/9daa6aa4-c26f-11e6-ba11-63c4b4fb5a63_story.html?utm_term=.0e56356fa6e0&wpisrc=nl_draw&wpmn=1).


officials appointed as members of the Trump Administration’s “beachhead” team; and (c) any political appointees hired as senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary;

2. List when the members of the Department’s “beachhead” team and senior advisors began working at the Department, and explain whether any or all members of the Department’s “beachhead team” or senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary have received required ethics training and submitted applicable ethics disclosures;

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Should you have any questions regarding this inquiry, please contact Donald Sherman on my staff at Donald_Sherman@hsgac.senate.gov or by phone at (202) 224-2627. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this request. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

The Honorable Calvin L. Scovel III
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Transportation
Catherine R. McCabe  
Acting Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Madam Acting Administrator:

I am writing to request information regarding leadership positions and other critical staffing at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) during this period of Presidential transition. As the Senate considers President Trump's nominees for cabinet posts, we must also ensure that the federal government remains open and provides necessary services to the American people. In order to meet these oversight obligations, the United States Congress, the IG community and the public must first know who is leading decision-making and operations at federal agencies.

While the confirmation process remains ongoing, it is unclear when Senate leadership will schedule floor votes to confirm several of President Trump’s cabinet nominees or who is directing critical decisions at our federal agencies in their absence. Despite this uncertainty, the Trump administration has already deployed hundreds of political appointees to federal agencies to begin work. A spokesperson for the Trump administration reported that: “We have approximately 520 individuals on the beachhead teams and they have worked with the agencies to go in any time after 12:01 [p.m.] on Friday — each team has worked out their own timing.” Media reports also indicate that the White House has hired senior aides within federal agencies to monitor the administration’s Cabinet secretaries once confirmed. According to a report by Politico, these aides “have already been responsible for hiring at some departments and crafting the blueprint of Trump policy before the Cabinet members win Senate confirmation to take office.”


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Although with any Presidential transition federal agencies maintain continuity of leadership with acting agency and program heads, as of this writing, some agencies, such as the Department of Agriculture, have not updated their leadership webpages to reflect current agency leadership appointed in an acting capacity. It is critically important that Congress and the Inspector General are aware of, and able to communicate with all Departmental leadership, even in these early days of the new administration. More importantly, the American people need to know who is accountable for the decisions made by federal agencies, especially in the absence of Senate-confirmed leadership. In order to better understand EPA’s current leadership structure please provide the following information to my office not later than close of business on February 6, 2017:

1. A list of and contact information (phone and email address) for the Department’s senior leadership team including, but not limited to: (a) officials appointed in an acting capacity

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Sincerely,

Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

The Honorable Arthur A. Elkins, Jr.
Inspector General
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Norris W. Cochran  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Mr. Acting Secretary:

I am writing to request information regarding leadership positions and other critical staffing at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services during this period of Presidential transition. As the Senate considers President Trump’s nominees for cabinet posts, we must also ensure that the federal government remains open and provides necessary services to the American people. In order to meet these oversight obligations, the United States Congress, the IG community and the public must first know who is leading decision-making and operations at federal agencies.

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2. List when the members of the Department’s “beachhead” team and senior advisors began working at the Department, and explain whether any or all members of the Department’s “beachhead team” or senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary have received required ethics training and submitted applicable ethics disclosures;

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Sincerely,

Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

The Honorable Daniel R. Levinson
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Craig T. Clemmensen  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
451 7th Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20410

Dear Mr. Acting Secretary:

I am writing to request information regarding leadership positions and other critical staffing at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development during this period of Presidential transition. As the Senate considers President Trump’s nominees for cabinet posts, we must also ensure that the federal government remains open and provides necessary services to the American people. In order to meet these oversight obligations, the United States Congress, the IG community and the public must first know who is leading decision-making and operations at federal agencies.

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including who comprises the agency "beachhead teams" and other political appointments and what function these appointees serve relative to the individuals currently in acting positions at federal agencies, pending confirmation of the President’s nominees for cabinet positions.

Already, without Senate-confirmed secretaries, federal agencies in the Trump Administration are making decisions that could adversely impact significant numbers of Americans. For example, on January 20, 2017, the Department of Housing and Urban Development reversed a decision to help expand access to affordable housing to thousands of American families by announcing that it had "suspended indefinitely" a reduction of Mortgage Insurance Premiums for Federal Housing Administration insured loans.\(^4\) That same day, the Department of Justice stated that it would request a delay in a federal case examining the constitutionality of a Texas voter identification law.\(^5\) On January 21, 2017, the Department of Interior suspended its official Twitter account after the Department tweeted images depicting the National Mall during the inauguration of President Donald Trump and President Barack Obama.\(^6\) The Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Agriculture also put in place formal policies restricting certain communications with the American public.\(^7\) Media reports were unclear regarding which agency officials were involved in directing any of these decisions.

Although with any Presidential transition federal agencies maintain continuity of leadership with acting agency and program heads, as of this writing, some agencies, such as the Department of Agriculture, have not updated their leadership webpages to reflect current agency leadership appointed in an acting capacity. It is critically important that Congress and the Inspector General are aware of, and able to communicate with all Departmental leadership, even in these early days of the new administration. More importantly, the American people need to know who is accountable for the decisions made by federal agencies, especially in the absence of a Senate-confirmed secretary. In order to better understand the Department’s current leadership structure please provide the following information to my office not later than close of business on February 6, 2017:

1. A list of and contact information (phone and email address) for the Department’s senior leadership team including, but not limited to: (a) officials appointed in an acting capacity


\(^6\) The Interior Department Was Ordered to Suspend Twitter Accounts After Trump Inauguration Tweets. Fortune (website) (Jan. 21, 2017) (fortune.com/2017/01/21/interior-department-twitter-donald-trump-inauguration/).

\(^7\) Federal Agencies Ordered to Restrict their Communications, Washington Post (Jan. 24, 2017) (www.washingtonpost.com/politics/federal-agencies-ordered-to-restrict-their-communications/2017/01/24/9daa6a4a4-c26f-11e6-ba11-63c4b4fb5a63_story.html?utm_term=.0e56356fa6e0&wpisrc=nl_draw&wpmm=1).
pending confirmation of a presidentially appointed, Senate confirmed (PAS) official; (b) officials appointed as members of the Trump Administration’s “beachhead” team; and (c) any political appointees hired as senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary;

2. List when the members of the Department’s “beachhead” team and senior advisors began working at the Department, and explain whether any or all members of the Department’s “beachhead team” or senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary have received required ethics training and submitted applicable ethics disclosures;

3. Provide all documents referring or relating to the roles and responsibilities of each member of the Department’s senior leadership team including, but not limited to: (a) officials appointed in an acting capacity pending confirmation of a PAS official; (b) officials appointed as members of the Trump Administration’s “beachhead” team; and (c) any political appointees hired as senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary; and

4. Explain whether the Department has in place appropriate Delegation of Authority documents or any other documents outlining authorities for acting officials, members of the “beachhead” team, and senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary.

Please confirm that you have also provided the above requested information to the Department’s Office of Inspector General not later than close of business on February 6, 2017.

Should you have any questions regarding this inquiry, please contact Donald Sherman on my staff at Donald_Sherman@hsgac.senate.gov or by phone at (202) 224-2627. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this request. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

The Honorable David A. Montoya
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Joseph P. Loddo  
Acting Administrator  
U.S. Small Business Administration  
409 3rd Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20416

Dear Mr. Acting Administrator:

I am writing to request information regarding leadership positions and other critical staffing at the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) during this period of Presidential transition. As the Senate considers President Trump’s nominees for cabinet posts, we must also ensure that the federal government remains open and provides necessary services to the American people. In order to meet these oversight obligations, the United States Congress, the IG community and the public must first know who is leading decision-making and operations at federal agencies.

While the confirmation process remains ongoing, it is unclear when Senate leadership will schedule floor votes to confirm several of President Trump’s cabinet nominees or who is directing critical decisions at our federal agencies in their absence. Despite this uncertainty, the Trump administration has already deployed hundreds of political appointees to federal agencies to begin work. A spokesperson for the Trump administration reported that: “We have approximately 520 individuals on the beachhead teams and they have worked with the agencies to go in any time after 12:01 [p.m.] on Friday — each team has worked out their own timing.”¹ Media reports also indicate that the White House has hired senior aides within federal agencies to monitor the administration’s Cabinet secretaries once confirmed.² According to a report by Politico, these aides “have already been responsible for hiring at some departments and crafting the blueprint of Trump policy before the Cabinet members win Senate confirmation to take office.”³ After this spate of hiring, critical details remain unclear to the American public.


including who comprises the agency “beachhead teams” and other political appointments and what function these appointees serve relative to the individuals currently in acting positions at federal agencies, pending confirmation of the President’s nominees for cabinet positions.

Already, without Senate-confirmed leadership, federal agencies in the Trump Administration are making decisions that could adversely impact significant numbers of Americans. For example, on January 20, 2017, the Department of Housing and Urban Development reversed a decision to help expand access to affordable housing to thousands of American families by announcing that it had “suspended indefinitely” a reduction of Mortgage Insurance Premiums for Federal Housing Administration insured loans. That same day, the Department of Justice stated that it would request a delay in a federal case examining the constitutionality of a Texas voter identification law. On January 21, 2017, the Department of Interior suspended its official Twitter account after the Department tweeted images depicting the National Mall during the inauguration of President Donald Trump and President Barack Obama. The Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Agriculture also put in place formal policies restricting certain communications with the American public. Media reports were unclear regarding which agency officials were involved in directing any of these decisions.

Although with any Presidential transition federal agencies maintain continuity of leadership with acting agency and program heads, as of this writing, some agencies, such as the Department of Agriculture, have not updated their leadership webpages to reflect current agency leadership appointed in an acting capacity. It is critically important that Congress and the Inspector General are aware of, and able to communicate with all Departmental leadership, even in these early days of the new administration. More importantly, the American people need to know who is accountable for the decisions made by federal agencies, especially in the absence of Senate-confirmed leadership. In order to better understand SBA’s current leadership structure please provide the following information to my office not later than close of business on February 6, 2017:

1. A list of and contact information (phone and email address) for the Department’s senior leadership team including, but not limited to: (a) officials appointed in an acting capacity

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6 The Interior Department Was Ordered to Suspend Twitter Accounts After Trump Inauguration Tweets, Fortune (website) (Jan. 21, 2017) (fortune.com/2017/01/21/interiordepartment-twitter-donald-trump-inauguration/).

pending confirmation of a presidentially appointed, Senate confirmed (PAS) official; (b) officials appointed as members of the Trump Administration’s “beachhead” team; and (c) any political appointees hired as senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary;

2. List when the members of the Department’s “beachhead” team and senior advisors began working at the Department, and explain whether any or all members of the Department’s “beachhead team” or senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary have received required ethics training and submitted applicable ethics disclosures;

3. Provide all documents referring or relating to the roles and responsibilities of each member of the Department’s senior leadership team including, but not limited to: (a) officials appointed in an acting capacity pending confirmation of a PAS official; (b) officials appointed as members of the Trump Administration’s “beachhead” team; and (c) any political appointees hired as senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary; and

4. Explain whether the Department has in place appropriate Delegation of Authority documents or any other documents outlining authorities for acting officials, members of the “beachhead” team, and senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary.

Please confirm that you have also provided the above requested information to the Department’s Office of Inspector General not later than close of business on February 6, 2017.

Should you have any questions regarding this inquiry, please contact Donald Sherman on my staff at Donald_Sherman@hsac.senate.gov or by phone at (202) 224-2627. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this request. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Claire McCaskill
Ranking Member
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Senate Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Committee

Mr. Hannibal “Mike” Ware
Acting Inspector General
U.S. Small Business Administration
Robert D. Snyder
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Acting Secretary:

I am writing to request information regarding leadership positions and other critical staffing at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs during this period of Presidential transition. As the Senate considers President Trump’s nominees for cabinet posts, we must also ensure that the federal government remains open and provides necessary services to the American people. In order to meet these oversight obligations, the United States Congress, the IG community and the public must first know who is leading decision-making and operations at federal agencies.

While the confirmation process remains ongoing, it is unclear when Senate leadership will schedule floor votes to confirm several of President Trump’s cabinet nominees or who is directing critical decisions at our federal agencies in their absence. Despite this uncertainty, the Trump administration has already deployed hundreds of political appointees to federal agencies to begin work. A spokesperson for the Trump administration reported that: “We have approximately 520 individuals on the beachhead teams and they have worked with the agencies to go in any time after 12:01 [p.m.] on Friday — each team has worked out their own timing.” Media reports also indicate that the White House has hired senior aides within federal agencies to monitor the administration’s Cabinet secretaries once confirmed. According to a report by Politico, these aides “have already been responsible for hiring at some departments and crafting the blueprint of Trump policy before the Cabinet members win Senate confirmation to take office.”


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1. A list of and contact information (phone and email address) for the Department’s senior leadership team including, but not limited to: (a) officials appointed in an acting capacity

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2. List when the members of the Department’s “beachhead” team and senior advisors began working at the Department, and explain whether any or all members of the Department’s “beachhead team” or senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary have received required ethics training and submitted applicable ethics disclosures;

3. Provide all documents referring or relating to the roles and responsibilities of each member of the Department’s senior leadership team including, but not limited to: (a) officials appointed in an acting capacity pending confirmation of a PAS official; (b) officials appointed as members of the Trump Administration’s “beachhead” team; and (c) any political appointees hired as senior advisors within the Office of the Secretary; and

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Chairman
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Inspector General
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs