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ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

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September 15, 2005

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The Honorable Michael Chertoff  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Naval Security Station  
Washington, D.C. 20393

The Honorable Richard L. Skinner  
Acting Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Naval Security Station  
Washington, D.C. 20393

Dear Secretary Chertoff and Inspector General Skinner:

As Chairmen of the Committee on Government Reform and the Committee's Subcommittee on Financial Management, respectively, we want to make certain that the funds appropriated for Hurricane Katrina relief efforts are spent properly and effectively. Congress has already appropriated more than \$60 billion for the immediate relief effort, and this amount is, no doubt, only the beginning. These funds must be spent in a way that ensures that the people in the affected areas of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama are able to recover from the terrible effects of Katrina.

The emergency circumstances, however, also provide an opportunity for fraud and mismanagement that would deprive the affected people of the full benefit of the funds to be spent on the recovery. The inspectors general have long stood as a bulwark against such fraud and mismanagement.

As part of the Second Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act (H.R. 3673) passed last week, Congress provided \$15,000,000 to the Office of the Inspector General at the Department of Homeland Security to increase its auditing and investigative capabilities.

In this light, coordination of the work of inspectors general will be critical. While the Department of Homeland Security ("DHS") has the greatest responsibilities for the funds currently appropriated, other departments and agencies are and will be involved in

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the recovery, including the Department of Defense, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, to name a few.

It is our understanding that the DHS Office of Inspector General recently established a special inspectors general working group for homeland security that includes the participation of many of the major agencies to be involved in the recovery effort. Accordingly, we ask that you utilize this pre-established working group to assist in the coordination of Federal inspectors general on the expenditure of Katrina relief funds.

It is important that such coordination begin as quickly as possible, and we hope you will be willing to take on this responsibility immediately. Therefore, we ask that you submit to the Committee by September 20, 2005, a plan to coordinate the work of the inspectors general. That report should also inform the Committee whether you believe that additional resources or authority are necessary to allow appropriate coordination.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Tom Davis  
Chairman



Todd R. Platts  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Financial  
Management