

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 6, 2017

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Subcommittee on the Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall,

As the Subcommittee finalizes the Fiscal Year 2018 funding for the agencies in its purview, we urge you to support adequate funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Inspector General (OIG). FY18 funding for the EPA OIG should be no less than the funding the office received in FY17, adjusted for inflation.

The EPA OIG plays a critical role promoting EPA's core mission of fighting pollution and ensuring that agency officials adhere to ethical standards and that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely. Since the beginning of the year, the EPA OIG has begun working on at least 41 audits, evaluations, reviews, and other oversight actions, on topics including EPA's efforts to protect children from asbestos exposure in schools, whether drinking water agencies notify the public when there are contamination risks, chemical data reporting under the Toxic Substance Control Act, and an audit of Administrator Pruitt's travel expenses. In 2018, the EPA OIG plans, among other things, a review of the threats directed at the agency and its staff, which is timely given the reported increase in the number of EPA security officers assigned to Administrator Pruitt.

The Senate Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill would reduce EPA OIG funding by four percent, as would the relevant House appropriations bill. While this is an improvement over the President's requested budget, which would cut funding for the EPA OIG by almost 10 percent and reduce OIG staffing by approximately 25 percent, it is still not adequate to ensure that OIG will be able to effectively perform its important mission.

We urge the Subcommittee to avoid reducing the appropriated funds for the EPA OIG and support adequate funding for the office. Such funding will allow this crucial office to do its job protecting taxpayer dollars and our environment.


Sincerely,

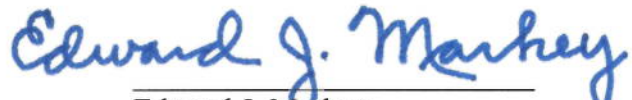



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

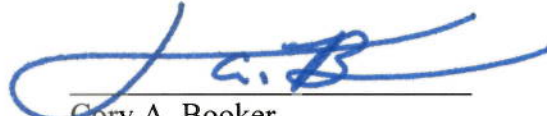


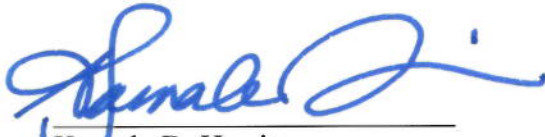
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator


Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

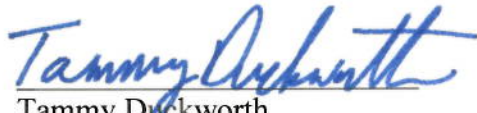

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