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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

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June 9, 1999

The Honorable Nikki Tinsley  
Inspector General  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
401 M Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Inspector General Tinsley:

The purpose of this letter is to express my concern with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA/Agency) untimely response to Inspector General (IG) work products and ask that you notify my office in the event of future Agency delays in responding to any IG reports, investigations, evaluations, audits or other work products. The efficiency and effectiveness of EPA's environmental programs are vital to protecting our human health and safeguarding our natural environment. Without appropriate Agency accountability and participation in the Inspector General process we cannot ensure our families, neighborhoods and natural resources are safeguarded and protected.

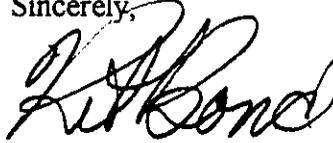
Specifically, it has been reported to me that EPA Region III delayed by several months response to your Mid-Atlantic Audit Division's draft audit report on the Center for Chesapeake Communities (CCC). As I understand it, the traditional time your office provides the Agency to respond to draft reports is 30 days. In this case, EPA received a draft copy of the CCC report in November 1998 and did not respond with comments until March 1999. The serious and substantial IG findings of EPA and CCC grant mismanagement and conflict of interest published in the report leads one to speculate as to why the Agency sought to delay release of this report. Regardless of the reason, a three month EPA delay in responding to Inspector General findings is clearly unacceptable.

Timely Agency response to IG audit reports will, in all likelihood, continue to be an issue. As you are aware, EPA is required to provide the IG a written response to the CCC audit report by the end of June. EPA likewise will have many more opportunities to respond to future IG draft and final audit findings.

Hon. Nikki Tinsley  
Page 2

Thus, to ensure the audit process remains a robust accountability tool, I ask you to notify immediately Emilia DiSanto of my staff at 224-5175 in the case of any future Agency response delays. Thank you in advance for your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Bond", written in a cursive style.

Christopher S. Bond

cc: Carol Browner, Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency