

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 5, 2024

The Honorable Phyllis K. Fong
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

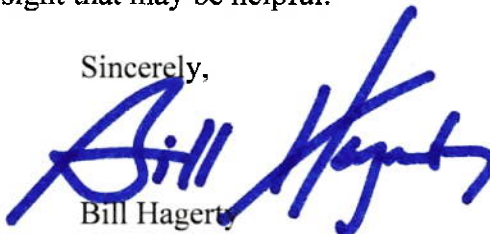
Dear Inspector General Fong:

As we move into a presidential transition period, I wrote to Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack on November 4, 2024, to: (1) remind him of his statutory transfer-of-funds-authority and change-of-program requirements under the *Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024* (Public Law 118-47), which were extended by the *Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025* (Public Law 118-83), and which will continue to apply with the same force during the transition; and (2) reiterate that compliance with these requirements must be a priority for the outgoing administration, given the criminal and administrative consequences of failing to do so. (See attachment.)

I therefore request that, after January 20, 2025, your Office of the Inspector General submit a report to Congress to assess the extent to which the Department of Agriculture complied with these requirements under appropriations laws, including all instances in which the Department failed to comply.

As the Biden Administration works to transfer the power and authorities of the President of the United States and the Executive Branch in a timely, transparent, and lawful manner, adherence to these legal obligations is imperative. Please let me know if I can provide any additional information, assistance, or oversight that may be helpful.

Sincerely,



Bill Hagerty
United States Senator

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November 4, 2024

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

As we move into a presidential transition period, I write today to remind you of your statutory transfer-of-funds-authority and change-of-program requirements under the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024* (Public Law 118-42), which will continue to apply with the same force during the transition. Compliance with these requirements must be a priority for the outgoing administration, given the criminal and administrative consequences of failing to do so.

As you know, the federal government is currently operating on a continuing resolution, the *Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025* (Public Law 118-83), which extends the requirements of Public Law 118-42 through December 20, 2024. The appropriations acts in Public Law 118-42 contain numerous limitations on transferring funds or altering programs or activities, including but not limited to Section 716 of Division B, which details very specific instructions and limitations regarding transfers of funds between agencies and accounts, as well as changes to programs, projects, or activities and reprogramming of funds.

Federal law requires compliance with these requirements. The *Antideficiency Act*, 31 U.S.C. §§ 1341 and 1517, prohibits federal employees from obligating or expending federal funds in violation of appropriations laws. Federal employees who violate the *Antideficiency Act* are subject to both administrative and criminal sanctions, including suspension from duty without pay, removal from office, and fines, imprisonment, or both.

As the Biden Administration works to transfer the power and authorities of the President of the United States and the Executive Branch in a timely, transparent, and lawful manner, adherence to these legal obligations is imperative. Please let me know if I can provide any additional information, assistance, or oversight that may be helpful.

Sincerely,



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cc: **The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate**
The Honorable Susan Collins, Vice Chair, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate
The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman, Committee on Appropriations, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Shalanda D. Young, Director, Office of Management and Budget
The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro, Comptroller General of the United States