

Project On Government Oversight

Exposing Corruption Exploring Solutions www.POGO.org

May 27, 2010

Mr. Willard D. Blalock
Chairman
Interagency Suspension and Debarment Committee

Sent By E-mail: Willard.Blalock@Navy.Mil

Dear Mr. Blalock:

Founded in 1981, the Project On Government Oversight (POGO) investigates and exposes corruption and other misconduct in order to achieve a more accountable federal government. POGO has a keen interest in government contracting matters, especially matters related to the suspension and debarment system and attempts to hold contractors accountable.

Pursuant to Public Law 110-417, Sec. 873(a)(7), the Interagency Suspension and Debarment Committee (ISDC) is required to submit to Congress an annual report of the progress in the suspension and debarment system, agency participation in the ISDC, and agency summaries of "activities and accomplishments in the Governmentwide debarment system." We are writing to inquire whether the FY 2009 report has been released. With the sharp decline in suspensions and debarments, and a recent congressional inquiry into the Department of Justice's (DOJ) actions in such cases, the ISDC report can't arrive quickly enough.

According to the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, there were 4,986 suspensions or debarments of contractors and individuals in FY 2008, which is half as many as five years ago. For years, POGO has held a concern that federal agencies under-utilize suspension and debarment, particularly against large contractors that supply the majority of the \$530 billion worth of goods and services to the federal government each year.

Additionally, on May 19, 2010, House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Edolphus Towns wrote a letter to Attorney General Eric Holder expressing concerns that criminal and civil settlements between DOJ and federal contractors are preventing federal agencies from suspending or debarring poorly performing contractors. In certain instances, some contractors subject to these settlement agreements continue to break the law. The Government Accountability Office also issued a report (GAO- 09-174) finding that even contractors that were suspended or debarred still received new contract awards in violation of the law.

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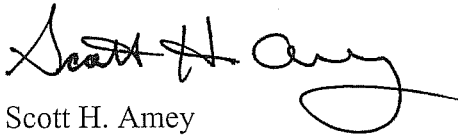
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POGO would like to find out when ISDC plans to release its annual report. Additionally, we would like to obtain a copy of that report when it is submitted to Congress. We appreciate your time and consideration and we look forward to reading the report. If you have any questions or would like to discuss these issues further, please contact me at 202-347-1122.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott H. Amey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Scott H. Amey

cc: Chairman Levin
Ranking Member McCain
Chairman Lieberman
Ranking Member Collins
Senator McCaskill
Chairman Skelton
Ranking Member McKeon
Chairman Towns
Ranking Member Issa
Chairman Waxman
Representative Maloney