



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
Washington, DC 20240

AUG 30 2006

The Honorable Maurice Hinchey
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hinchey:

This is in response to your August 9, 2006 letter requesting that the Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigate allegations that Bureau of Land Management (BLM) officials have compromised the integrity of BLM's resource management planning process and have "eroded the protection of federal lands in the State of Utah." Specifically, you raised concerns about top BLM officials making commitments to "fix" several resource management plans that would reduce restrictions on access to public lands. In your letter, you also discuss BLM's campaign to put a "public relations spin" on its oil and gas leasing program.

The OIG has opened an investigation into these concerns, and we will advise your office of the results. We appreciate you communicating these concerns to us. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or, your staff may contact Katie Balestra, OIG Congressional Liaison, at (202) 208-5745.

Sincerely,

for Earl E. Devaney
Inspector General