

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

July 21, 2025

Caryl Brzymialkiewicz
Acting Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW - Mail Stop 4428
Washington, D.C. 20240

Janet M. Sorensen
Acting Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Room 117-W Jamie Whitten Bldg.
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Acting Inspectors General Brzymialkiewicz and Sorenson:

I am writing today to request an investigation into the Dragon Bravo Fire in Northern Arizona. The fire was allowed to burn for days before necessary action was taken to prevent it from threatening – and ultimately destroying – the cherished and irreplaceable historic lodge, cabins, and other buildings on the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park. Thanks to the rapid response of crews on the ground, no lives have been lost to this wildfire, which continues to burn uncontained. However, rebuilding infrastructure at the North Rim will take years and cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

Given the severe consequences, there is a clear need to examine the decision-making process at every level to understand how this was allowed to happen. While managed fire practices are a necessary tool in many circumstances to reduce hazardous fuel loads and achieve other management objectives, it appears they were the wrong approach in this case given the exceptionally hot, dry, and volatile conditions on the ground.

Understanding that incident management was initiated by federal agency staff at the local and regional level, politically appointed leaders at the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture should have received daily reports from the ignition of the fire on July 4th and should have informed the White House of developments. The ultimate decision-making authority lies with administration leadership. Given the conditions on the ground at the time this fire started, and the catastrophic outcome, it is reasonable to question whether that authority was exercised responsibly. Further, given the administration's proposal to consolidate all wildland fire programs under the Department of the Interior, the lack of direction and leadership is alarming. I am concerned that after-action reviews and other institutionalized mechanisms of independently investigating incidents like these are subject to scientific and political interference from an administration with a well-established track record of such behavior.

I am requesting a full inquiry into the drivers of the fire and its consequences. The inquiry should answer questions that include, but are not limited to:

1. Whether and when senior officials at the White House, as well as the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, including Secretaries Burgum and Rollins were aware of the fire as it progressed;
2. Whether they raised any concerns or objections to the proposal to allow the fire to continue burning given the hot and dry conditions on the ground and lack of containment; and
3. Whether sufficient resources were available to contain the fire and if not, why not?

I look forward to your response. Thank you for your ongoing public service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jared Huffman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jared Huffman
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources