



OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

The Honorable Raul Grjalva
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
US House of Representatives

APR 16 2018

The Honorable Donald McEachin
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Dear Congressmen Grijalva and McEachin,

This is in response to your letter of October 2, 2017, in which you request an investigation into Secretary Ryan Zinke's use of taxpayer funds for Travel.

We have completed an investigation into allegations of waste by Department of the Interior (DOI) Secretary Ryan Zinke. Our investigation focused on whether Zinke's use of chartered flights and flights on U.S. military aircraft followed relevant law, policy, rules, and regulations. In addition, we examined the purpose of each trip for which a noncommercial flight was used to determine whether the DOI had incurred travel expenses for non-DOI-related events and whether the use and costs of these flights were reasonable and/or unavoidable. A FOIA-redacted version of the Report of Investigation is attached – only privacy information has been removed, and descriptives are used in their place, allowing the full narrative to be explained.

We found that Zinke's use of chartered flights followed relevant law, policy, rules, and regulations. The uses and purposes of the flights also appeared reasonable for official DOI business, except for a June 2017 flight from Las Vegas, NV, to Kalispell, MT, following a speech Zinke gave at a National Hockey League team's developmental camp. We determined that DOI staff scheduled, reviewed, and approved this trip without complete information and the proper due diligence. Had a more thorough assessment been conducted, the DOI might have avoided using a chartered flight. While we recognize the value in the Secretary speaking to a variety of groups, we question the \$12,375 cost for a chartered flight to give a 12-minute speech with no nexus to the DOI.

We also reviewed the costs associated with Zinke's trips on Air Force One, Air Force Two, and other military aircraft, and found that the DOI obligated \$185,203.75 in fiscal year 2017 for these flights.

We are reviewing other issues pertaining to Zinke's travel, including the use of DOI-owned vehicles, in a separate investigation, which I believe will address the remaining concerns put forth in your letter.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-208-5745, or your staff may contact Nancy DiPaolo at 202-208-4357.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary L. Kendall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mary" and last name "Kendall" clearly distinguishable.

Mary L. Kendall
Deputy Inspector General