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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

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May 10, 2000

The Honorable Hubert T. Bell
Inspector General
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mail Stop MS-T5-D28
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear: Mr. Bell:

As you know, the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requires agencies to submit annual performance reports in March of each year. The performance report should address the agency's accomplishments under its GPRA performance plans for fiscal year (FY) 1999. This completes the first full cycle of GPRA implementation. Thus, we have arrived at a critical juncture in our efforts to adopt an effective results orientation for the federal government.

Agency performance reports will need careful scrutiny. Therefore, I request that your office conduct a review and analysis of your agency's FY 1999 performance report. I suggest that you consider both what the agency performance report contains about the agency's performance and what it should contain. In particular, does the report tell us now, and how can future reports tell us better, what your agency is doing to achieve real results that matter to the American people?

In 1998, Congress asked Inspectors General to examine agency efforts to develop and use performance measures for progress toward achieving key performance goals and significant program outcomes, and to verify and validate selected data sources and information collection and accounting systems that support agency plans and performance reports. The Inspectors General were also asked to identify key management challenges in each of their agencies.

Using these management challenges as a framework, as well as any additional subjects or criteria that you wish to include, please analyze the agency's FY 1999 performance report in terms of the following questions:

1. What performance goals and measures from the agency's FY 1999 performance plan relate directly to each of the management challenges?
2. According to the performance report, how did the agency perform under each of the

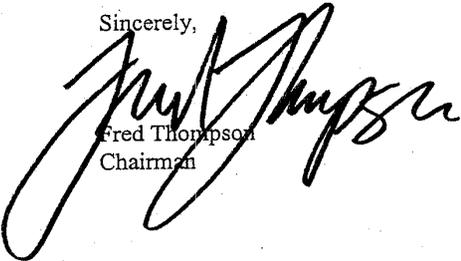
relevant goals and measures?

3. How valid and reliable is the data by which the agency judged its performance? Where data shortcomings exist, did the agency acknowledge them and indicate what steps it will take to correct them? -
4. Where an agency has not met a performance goal, does the report adequately explain why and describe a strategy to meet the goal in the future?
5. Where a goal from the FY 1999 performance plan is not covered in the performance report or has changed, did the agency adequately explain why?
6. What improvements has the agency made in its performance plan for FY 2001 that are relevant to the above issues?

I have asked GAO to analyze your agency's FY 1999 performance report. I have also asked the CRS to analyze the performance report. I encourage your office, the GAO, and the CRS to coordinate your work on the performance reports. Finally, I welcome any analysis or observations you care to make concerning your agency's performance report on issues other than those mentioned above.

Thank you for your attention to this request. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Robert Shea, of the Committee staff.

Sincerely,



Fred Thompson
Chairman

FT/rjs