



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

OFFICE OF THE
INSPECTOR GENERAL

August 18, 2015

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on
Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs
340 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Johnson:

I am writing in response to your June 23, 2015, letter requesting that I undertake an inquiry into the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) response process to analyze whether non-career NRC officials are involved in FOIA responses and, if so, whether such involvement resulted in any undue delay of a response to any FOIA request or the withholding of any document or portion of any document.

My staff conducted an evaluation of this issue and did not identify any evidence that NRC's FOIA process includes any inappropriate involvement by NRC political appointees in FOIA requests or responses or involvement that caused undue delay or withholding of information. To reach this conclusion, my staff reviewed applicable FOIA requirements and guidance; interviewed members of NRC's Commission staff and other staff involved with the FOIA process; and reviewed FOIA files. Additionally, I have attached a certification from NRC's Chief FOIA Officer that there was "no undue delay" by the Commission in responding to a FOIA request. The attached evaluation report contains additional information on the evaluation finding, scope, and methodology.

In addition, my staff conducted an audit of NRC's FOIA processes in 2014. The results were published as OIG-14-A-17, *Audit of NRC's Freedom of Information Act Processes*. That report made a number of recommendations for NRC to improve its processing of FOIA requests. The report provides context for the enclosed

memorandum report and serves as an additional resource for the Committee's oversight efforts.

Thank you for your support for a responsive and open FOIA process. If you have any questions, please contact me at 301-415-5930, or Stephen D. Dingbaum, Assistant Inspector General for Audits, at 301-415-5915.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hubert T. Bell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Hubert T. Bell
Inspector General

Enclosure: As stated