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ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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March 21, 2025

Mr. Jonathan Black
Chief Advisor for Strategic Planning and Program Oversight
Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Mr. Black:

Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, to testify at the hearing entitled “Examining the Biden Administration’s Energy and Environment Spending Push.”

Pursuant to the Rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the hearing record remains open for ten business days to permit Members to submit additional questions for the record, which are attached. The format of your responses to these questions should be as follows: (1) the name of the Member whose question you are addressing, (2) the complete text of the question you are addressing in bold, and (3) your answer to that question in plain text.

To facilitate the printing of the hearing record, please respond to these questions with a transmittal letter by the close of business on Friday, April 4, 2025. Your responses should be mailed to Calvin Huggins Legislative Clerk, Committee on Energy and Commerce, 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515 and e-mailed to Calvin.Huggins1@mail.house.gov.

Thank you again for your time and effort preparing and delivering testimony before the Subcommittee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Palmer", with a stylized, flowing script.

Gary Palmer
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

cc: Yvette Clarke, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Attachment

Additional Questions for the Record

The Honorable Buddy Carter

1. Mr. Black, in your opening statement you mentioned the fast nature in which funds moved at the Department of Energy. \$46 billion dollars in loans completed between December 2024 and January 2025. Do you have any idea what could have caused this change in policy at DOE?
2. I also want to ask you about the LPO and their vetting of loan applications. You stated that your investigation found that the LPO Credit Review Board had a “willingness to approve loan applications despite risks.” This is not free money. Do you feel that this policy has changed, or is this still an issue at DOE?

The Honorable Lizzie Fletcher

1. In your testimony, you discuss the risks of potential conflicts of interest within the DOE Loan Program Office (LPO). Specifically, you cite a December 2024 OIG interim report, which found that LPO does not ensure that “contracting officers and their representatives identify and evaluate potential conflicts of the third-party experts.” What negative impacts do conflicts of interest generally pose to the grant or loan-making process?
2. Elon Musk’s businesses have received at least \$38 billion in government funding. This funding included a \$465 million loan from LPO for Tesla at a critical moment for the business. Nearly two thirds of Elon Musk’s federal funding has come within the last five years, including \$6.3 billion in 2024 alone. Recently, the AP reported that Musk’s company Starlink may be poised to take over a \$2 billion Federal Aviation Administration contract to upgrade its information technology networks used to manage U.S. airspace. If third-party experts with conflicts of interest present a significant danger to LPO’s stewardship of federal funding, what dangers does any individual with seemingly unilateral authority to cut federal programs and staff at will create?