

**U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
Subcommittee on Oversight**

**HEARING CHARTER**

*Top Challenges for Science Agencies:  
Reports from the Inspectors General  
Part 1*

Thursday, February 28, 2013  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
2318 Rayburn House Office Building

**Purpose**

At 10:00 a.m. on February 28, 2013, the Subcommittee on Oversight will hold a hearing titled “Top Challenges for Science Agencies: Reports from the Inspectors General - Part 1.” This is the first of two such hearings planned prior to the Committee’s review of the Administration’s FY 2014 budget requests of these agencies. The hearing will provide Members of the Subcommittee the opportunity to receive testimony on the most serious performance and management challenges facing the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the Department of Commerce (DOC) from the perspective of the Inspectors General of the respective agency.

**Witnesses**

- **Mr. Paul K. Martin**, Inspector General, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Office of Inspector General
- **Ms. Allison C. Lerner**, Inspector General, National Science Foundation, Office of Inspector General
- **Mr. David Smith**, Deputy Inspector General, U.S. Department of Commerce, Office of Inspector General

**Overview**

Public Law 106–531 (the Reports Consolidation Act of 2000), requires agency Inspectors General (IG) to file annual reports that identify the most serious management and performance challenges facing their agencies.<sup>1</sup> These reports also assess agencies’ progress in their efforts to resolve the issues identified by the IGs.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Law 106-351, “Reports Consolidation Acts of 2000,” available at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-106publ531/html/PLAW-106publ531.htm>.

The NASA IG's report states, "In deciding whether to identify an issue as a top challenge, we consider the significance of the issue in relation to the Agency's mission; its susceptibility to fraud, waste, and abuse; whether the underlying causes are systemic in nature; and the Agency's progress in addressing the challenge."<sup>2</sup> The report identifies the following issues at NASA:<sup>3</sup>

- The Future of U.S. Human Space Flight
- Project Management
- Infrastructure and Facilities Management
- Acquisition and Contract Management
- Information Technology Security and Governance

The NSF IG's report states, "In accordance with the Reports Consolidation Act of 2000, I am submitting our annual statement summarizing what the Office of Inspector General considers to be the most serious management and performance challenges facing the National Science Foundation (NSF). We have compiled this list based on our audit and investigative work, general knowledge of the agency's operations and evaluative reports of others, including the Government Accountability Office and NSF's various advisory committees, contractors, and staff."<sup>4</sup> The NSF IG lists the following issues:<sup>5</sup>

- Establishing Accountability over Large Cooperative Agreements
- Improving Grant Administration
- Strengthening Contract Administration
- Ensuring Proper Stewardship of ARRA [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act] funds
- Managing the U.S. Antarctic Program
- Implementing Recommendations to Improve Workforce Management and the Workplace Environment
- Encouraging Ethical Conduct of Research
- Managing Programs and Resources in Times of Budget Austerity

According to the DOC IG's report, "The Department plays a pivotal role in implementing the President's initiatives for economic recovery and job creation and, like other federal agencies, faces significant financial uncertainties in the upcoming year. The report identifies what we consider, from our oversight perspective, to be the most significant management and performance challenges facing the Department,"<sup>6</sup> specifically, to:<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *2012 Report on NASA'S Top Management and Performance Challenges*, November 8, 2012, available at: <http://oig.nasa.gov/NASA2012ManagementChallenges.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> *Management Challenges for NSF in FY 2013*, October 15, 2012, available at: <http://www.nsf.gov/oig/2013MgmtChallenges.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> *Top Management Challenges Facing the Dept. of Commerce*, November 9, 2012, available at: <http://www.oig.doc.gov/Pages/Top-Management-Challenges-FY-2013.aspx>.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

- Stimulate economic growth in key industries, increase exports, and enhance stewardship of marine fisheries.
- Increase oversight of resources entrusted by the public and invest for long-term benefits.
- Strengthen security and investments in information technology.
- Implement framework for acquisition project management and improve contracts oversight.
- Reduce risks of cost overruns, schedule delays, and coverage gaps for NOAA's [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration] satellite programs.