CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS

Preparation and Retention of Congressional Testimony

APPROVAL/TRANSMITTAL

This new section has been revised to add a checklist for the Assistant Inspector General (AIG) (see exhibit A). This supersedes IG-1538 dated November 2000. Remove and destroy previous editions.

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ROGER C. VIADERO
Inspector General

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A. BACKGROUND. The Inspector General Act of 1978 requires the Inspector General (IG) to keep the Congress fully and currently informed about problems and deficiencies relating to the administration of programs and operations of the Department. Congressional hearings are an important means to fulfill this requirement. The IG provides annual budget testimony and the IG and other Office of Inspector General (OIG) officials are called upon to testify before Congress concerning various matters. Established procedures will promote efficient handling of hearing invitations, reduce duplication of effort, ensure full coordination, and help provide effective responses to challenging requests within short timeframes. In addition, timely access by OIG personnel to materials relating to previous and ongoing congressional testimony may become necessary; a centralized historical reference file will provide and facilitate such access.

B. POLICY. When an invitation to provide testimony at a congressional hearing is received in the immediate office of the IG, the request will be logged in, assigned, and forwarded immediately to the lead Assistant Inspector General (AIG) for the action, setting in motion the procedures detailed below. As they become available, copies of all materials relating to congressional testimony will be provided by the lead AIG for inclusion in a historical reference file to be maintained by the Director, Information Management Division (D/IMD), in the Policy Development and Information Branch (PD&IB), Policy Development and Resources Management (PD&RM).

C. PROCEDURES

1. IG

a. Determine and assign the lead AIG responsible for preparing the congressional testimony.

b. Immediate office staff will enter the request into the IG correspondence control system and promptly forward the request to the lead AIG. This is designed to ensure that all materials connected with congressional testimony are prepared, coordinated, cleared, and transmitted according to established procedures (i.e., tracked by control number through deadline). (See IG manuals, IG-2186 and IG-1531.)

c. If verbal contact is received from a congressional office notifying the IG of an imminent written request for testimony before the formal letter is received, the prospective lead AIG will be notified immediately in order to designate a representative to begin a dialogue with the appropriate congressional staff person.

d. Upon receipt of the hearing transcript from the congressional staff office, immediate office staff will forward it to the lead AIG for coordination and correction.

2. Lead AIG (See exhibit A- Checklist for Testimony)

a. If an initial request for congressional testimony, either in writing or by telephone, is received directly from a congressional office before contact with the immediate office of the IG, the contacted AIG will immediately forward the correspondence or telephone message to the immediate office of the IG in order that the prescribed procedures may be carried out systematically.

b. Early on, discuss the desires of the congressional committee (e.g., try to ascertain whether the primary interest centers on new issues or on historical issues to provide a flavor of the scope of problems) and offer to develop questions and answers for the committee.

c. Provide promptly to the Deputy IG, other AIGs, and Counsel, a copy of the invitation to testify and canvass them for relevant input bearing on the issues at hand. The D/IMD and PD&IB will retain a copy for planning purposes and to answer media inquiries. Request that the other OIG officials provide any needed materials or assistance regarding their mission area.

d. Draft both a version of the testimony for the record and a shorter text for oral delivery based on the number of minutes allowed by the congressional committee. The formatting specifications for these two distinct versions are contained in exhibit B (Formatting Guidelines for Congressional Testimony for the Record) and exhibit C (Formatting Guidelines for Congressional Testimony To Be Delivered Orally).

e. Provide promptly to the Deputy IG, other AIGs, Counsel, and PD&IB, a copy of all draft congressional testimony being developed for review and clearance. This is important because the other OIG officials may have unique insights into the issues. For example, the D/Resources Management Division may identify budgetary implications. PD&IB can offer editorial suggestions. In the course of final preparation of the testimony, a copy should be provided to PD&IB for review of stylistic and editorial consistency.

(C2)

f. Forward testimony to the IG and Deputy IG for final review and approval.

g. Discuss with the committee the matter of videotapes. If the committee requests any to be shown, ensure that additional copies are made before the hearing for distribution to the news media, etc. Determine whether the copies should be brought to the hearing or be made available afterwards. If OIG requests to show a video, ensure that the committee approves its presentation and, if so, coordinate with the committee for the availability of a tape machine and operator in the hearing room.

h. Identify, locate or create, and gather any tangible display items to be used. Existing items used in previous testimony are housed by PD&IB. Contact PD&IB to return any existing or newly created visuals to the repository after the hearing. Determine whether an easel or other display equipment will be necessary.

i. As requested, provide binders with backup materials to the IG or other officials scheduled to testify for their use in studying the issues.

j. Provide to the committee the requested number of copies of the testimony for the record and fulfill any other requirements within the timeframes stated in the letter of invitation.

k. Designate an individual at each congressional hearing to gather all materials disseminated by non-OIG participants, and provide a copy to PD&IB for inclusion in the file.

l. Provide a copy of the final version of the testimony for the record and the short version used by the IG or other OIG official delivering the testimony, videotapes used, and any other pertinent materials (e.g., corrected transcripts) to PD&IB for inclusion in the historical file.

m. Provide an electronic file of the testimony for the record via e-mail to the Chief, Information Resources Management Policy and Operations Branch (C/IRMP&OB), with a copy to the D/IMD, stating when the testimony will be delivered. The time of release for posting to the OIG Web site—as well as to fulfill requests from the public, media, other Government agencies, etc., for a paper copy—is to be coordinated with the completion of the hearing.

n. Coordinate with the IG any necessary corrections to the hearing transcript returned by the committee for review. Forward the corrected transcript to the D/IMD, PD&RM, for delivery to the committee.

(C)

3. AIG/PD&RM

a. Implement and administer the OIG historical reference file for congressional testimony, to be maintained by PD&IB.

b. Create and maintain both a paper and electronic index for the file.

c. Provide copies of materials in the file to OIG officials, as well as headquarters and regional offices, as requested.

d. PD&IB will lend editorial assistance on the text of congressional testimony upon request.

e. Prepare cover communications for the signature of the IG or Deputy IG to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, OMB Legislative Affairs Office, and any other appropriate subcabinet official advising them of the hearing and enclosing a copy of the IG's testimony to be delivered on the day of the hearing.

f. The D/IMD will deliver the reviewed and edited transcript back to the congressional committee.

4. C/IRMP&OB

a. Post the testimony for record to the OIG Web site immediately after the IG or other OIG official has completed testifying at the congressional hearing. Notify the lead AIG and the D/IMD via e-mail that this has been accomplished.

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Checklist for Testimony
(References are made to sections of IG-1538)

The lead AIG must:

1. Coordinate with the committee to ascertain desired focus, as appropriate (C2b).

2. Provide copies of the invitation to testify and canvass for relevant input (C2c).

3. Draft testimony for record and shorter (large-print) version for oral delivery (C2d, exhibits B and C).

4. Provide draft testimony promptly to the Deputy IG, other AIGs, Counsel, and IMD/PD&IB (C2e).

5. Provide testimony to the IG and Deputy IG for final review and approval (C2f).

6. Prepare and provide any videotapes/display items needed (C2g, h).

7. Provide any requested backup materials to IG, others (2Ci).

8. Provide the committee with the requested number of copies prior to their deadline (C2j).

9. Designate a person at the hearing to obtain copies of testimony given by other witnesses and forward them with all pertinent OIG materials to PD&IB for file (C2k, l).

10. E-mail testimony to the Chief, IRMP&OB with a copy to Division Director, IMD, which will be posted on the OIG Web Site upon completion of the hearing (2Cm).

11. OIG will later receive a transcript of the hearing from the Committee for review. Review and coordinate corrections of the transcript and forward to D/IMD, PD&RM for delivery to the committee (C2n).

12. D/IMD will prepare communications for the signature of the IG or Deputy IG to the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, OMB Legislative Office, and any other appropriate subcabinet official for the IG's testimony to be transmitted on the morning of the hearing (C3e).

TESTIMONY OF
ROGER C. VIADERO
INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BEFORE THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
FEBRUARY 10, 1999

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Add cover page with heading and OIG logo if desired

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am Roger Viadero, Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Thank you for inviting me to this hearing on Government programs at serious risk for waste, fraud, and abuse. Combating such activities is one of the primary concerns of every inspector general, and one I take very seriously.

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The USDA Office of Inspector General (OIG) is authorized to audit and investigate the administration and enforcement of all USDA programs and related laws and regulation. We have identified a number of management and performance issues facing USDA, including financial management, Federal crop insurance, Rural Rental Housing, and child care programs. I know you are particularly interested today in discussing problems we have found in the area of food safety and in the Food Stamp Program.

FOOD SAFETY

Food safety is a major concern and priority for USDA OIG. In everything we do, the well-being of people is paramount. The quality and wholesomeness of the Nation's food supply, from production to the consumer, are of special concern to OIG.

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Formatting Guidelines for Congressional Testimony To Be Delivered Orally

STATEMENT OF
ROGER C. VIADERO
INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BEFORE THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
FEBRUARY 10, 1999

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am Roger Viadero, Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Thank you for inviting me to this hearing on Government programs at serious risk for waste, fraud, and abuse.

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