



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
Washington, DC 20240

NOV 30 2007

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
230 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

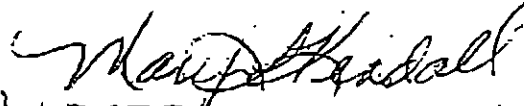
Dear Senator Wyden:

This is in response to your letter of November 30, 2007 in which you request that the Office of Inspector General (OIG) initiate an investigation to determine whether improper political influence affected a number of species and critical habitat decisions, the Northern Spotted Owl recovery plan, the Delta Smelt biological opinion, and the Marbled Murrelet status review.

As you know, my staff does not have scientific expertise, so we cannot pass judgment on the scientific adequacy of these decisions. Based on your request, however, the OIG will open an investigation into these various decisions, with a focus on whether improper political influence affected their respective outcomes.

We will proceed as quickly as practicable, and will keep your staff apprised of our progress.

Sincerely,


Earl E. Devaney
Inspector General