



OFFICE OF  
**INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

JUN 05 2019

Noah Bookbinder  
Executive Director  
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington  
1101 K St., NW, Suite 201  
Washington, DC, 20005

Dear Mr. Bookbinder,

This responds to your letter to our Office of Inspector General (OIG) concerning the record keeping practices of the Department of the Interior's Secretary. Specifically, you requested an OIG investigation into whether the Secretary has complied with the statutory requirements of the Federal Records Act.

As your letter noted, on April 1, 2019, the Chief Records Officer at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) wrote a letter on this subject to the Chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform. In that letter, Mr. Brewer said that NARA would meet with Interior officials and address any concerns about the Department's record keeping management practices and policies. Mr. Brewer also committed to keep the Committee Chairman apprised of his findings on the issue.

We have carefully reviewed your request for an OIG investigation and determined that the matter is best handled by NARA. The Federal Records Act specifically designates the Archivist with authority over violations of the Act and authorizes the Archivist to address violations with the agency and by written report to the President and Congress if satisfactory measures are not made (44 U.S.C. 2105). The Act further directs the Archivist to "assist the head of the agency in initiating action through the Attorney General for the recovery of records unlawfully removed and for other redress provided by law" (44 U.S.C. 2905). Based upon the commitment from NARA and the apparent interest in the issue of at least one congressional committee, we believe the matter you raise is being addressed.

If at some later date we determine that the Department is not complying with the Federal Records Act, then we can revisit the issue.

Sincerely,

Bruce Delaplaine  
General Counsel