

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

June 2, 2010

Via Electronic Transmission

The Honorable Hilda L. Solis
Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Solis:

As the Senior Senator from Iowa, I have a duty to conduct oversight into how federal entities spend taxpayer dollars, especially when fraud, waste, or abuse might be involved. I also serve as the Ranking Member of the Committee on Finance (Committee), which has exclusive jurisdiction over both federal taxation and our country's public debt. In both capacities, my duty to conduct oversight is more important than ever, with federal spending at unprecedented levels due in part to the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act).

Congress enacted the Recovery Act in an effort to stimulate economic activity and stave off further decline in the American economy. I opposed final passage of the Recovery Act because, as I said at the time, it was loaded down with spending to satisfy special interests rather than stimulate the economy. Pursuant to the Recovery Act, the Department of Labor (DOL) received over \$58 billion of taxpayer money to provide worker training for jobs and ease the burden of the recession on workers and employers.

Through Recovery Act funding, the Obama Administration (Administration) has focused on the development of "green jobs," which includes job training, technology investment, and promoting energy efficiency. According to the Administration, the Recovery Act contains more than \$80 billion in clean energy funding to promote economic recovery and develop clean energy jobs. However, it has come to my attention that the DOL is just now attempting to define what a "green job" is. Interestingly this comes more than a year after the Recovery Act was signed into law and after millions of dollars in funding have already been distributed for green jobs.

On March 16, 2010, DOL submitted a request for comments to the Federal Register. According to the Federal Register submission, the resulting definition "will assist policymakers in planning policy initiatives and understanding their impact on the labor market, and will facilitate the monitoring of labor market developments related to protecting the environment and conserving natural resources." I want to ensure that taxpayer dollars are protected against waste, fraud and abuse and am concerned that the

DOL step of establishing the key aspect of the program after millions of dollars have gone out the door may have come too late.

In light of the fact that the DOL is determining what constituted a “green job” only after the expenditure of Recovery Act dollars, I would like to understand what criteria the DOL used to give out millions in taxpayer dollars prior to the definition being established.

Accordingly, please respond to the following questions:

- 1) How much Recovery Act funding has the Department of Labor spent on “green job” initiatives to date?
- 2) Without a specific definition of a “green job”, how did DOL determine whether recipient funding applications and spending programs met necessary requirements for being green?
- 3) Once a definition of a “green job” is determined, what DOL review processes will be initiated to ensure that Recovery Act applications have met the requirements? And, how will DOL recoup any funding from programs/individuals that do not meet the “green job” definition?
- 4) How will DOL efforts to define “green jobs” affect other U.S. Government agencies that are providing Recovery Act funding for “green jobs”?

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter. I would appreciate receiving your response to this matter by June 16, 2010. Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Christopher Armstrong or Brian Downey of my Committee staff at (202) 224-4515. All documents responsive to this request should be sent electronically in PDF format to Brian_Downey@finance-rep.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member