



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

July 21, 2011

The Honorable Darrell E. Issa
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Issa and Ranking Member Grassley:

This responds to your letter to the Attorney General dated July 18, 2011. As an initial matter, we reject the unfounded allegations leveled at the Department and its personnel with regard to the Department's response to the Committee's Fast and Furious investigation. The facts refuting these allegations are set forth at length in our letter to you dated July 6, 2011.

Your most recent criticisms are predicated in large part on selected excerpts from what is represented to be the testimony of Acting Director Melson on July 4. As you know, we have not been provided with a transcript of the Acting Director's interview with Committee staff. In order to allow us to provide an informed response to your criticisms, we ask that you provide us with a transcript of Acting Director Melson's interview.

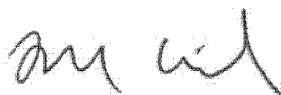
Other criticisms in your letter are premised on a misapprehension about the materials we have already provided the Committee. For example, your letter states that documents "relating to a key December 17, 2009 meeting between ATF, Arizona U.S. Attorney's Office officials, and a cooperating gun dealer . . . have yet to be provided or made available for review," and that this supposed failure of production demonstrates that the Department has withheld documents and failed to cooperate with your investigation. In fact, the documents you were referring to were physically produced or made available to the Committee weeks prior to your July 18, 2011 letter. The documents are Bates numbered HOCR-ATF A 001105 to 001107; HOCR-ATF A 001672 to 001673; and HOCR-ATF 001665 to 001667.

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In addition to providing the transcript to us, we request that you consider providing the transcript to the Department's Acting Inspector General, who is conducting an independent review of Operation Fast and Furious. Since you recently asked that we send copies of all documents we provide to the Committee to the Acting Inspector General, we ask that you consider whether you should provide her with a copy of the transcript of the Acting Director's interview.

The truth-seeking process will be enhanced if the Department is able to respond to your concerns in an informed manner, and we look forward to receiving your response regarding our request for a copy of the transcript of Acting Director Melson's interview.

Sincerely,



Ronald Weich
Assistant Attorney General

cc:

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. Senate