



April 3, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR: Karen Dunn Kelley
Deputy Secretary

FROM: Peggy E. Gustafson
Inspector General

SUBJECT: Request for Information Pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as Amended

On March 27, 2020, President Trump signed into law the “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act” or the “CARES Act,” Public Law No. 116-136. The Act provides assistance for individuals, families, and businesses affected by the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. President Trump has characterized CARES as “the single-biggest economic relief package in American history.” The legislation “will deliver urgently needed relief to our nation’s families, workers, and businesses.”¹ Indeed, the Congressional Budget Office expects that the economy will contract sharply during the second quarter of 2020 as a result of the continued disruption of commerce stemming from the spread of the novel coronavirus.²

It is my understanding that Department of Commerce (Department) bureaus receiving CARES Act funds must submit spending plans to the Department’s Chief Financial Officer by close of business today, Friday, April 3, 2020. The specific bureaus are the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), the Economic Development Administration (EDA), the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). In order to assist the Office of Inspector General (OIG) in its oversight of the Department and, more specifically, spending associated with the CARES Act, please transmit to my office the spending plans for MBDA, EDA, NIST, and NOAA by Monday, April 6. In addition, you may also produce any additional documentation or information deemed relevant to this request for information.

Further, you are obligated to cooperate with this request. Department Administrative Order 213-2, § 4.03 states that “[i]t is Department policy that all employees fully cooperate with the OIG so that each inspection and evaluation may be promptly conducted and brought to an appropriate conclusion,” and that “Departmental officials shall make every effort to assist the OIG in achieving the objective of effective inspections and evaluations.” Similarly, Department Organization Order 10-13, § 4.01 states that “[t]he officers and employees of the Department shall cooperate fully with the officials and employees of the OIG and shall provide such

¹ Remarks by President Trump at Signing of H.R.748, The CARES Act, March 27, 2020.

² Congressional Budget Office, Updating CBO’s Economic Forecast to Account for the Pandemic, April 2, 2020.

information, assistance, and support without delay as is needed for the OIG to properly carry out the provisions of the [Inspector General] Act [of 1978].”

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (202) 482-4661.