

From: White, Terri-A

Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2017 11:18 AM

To: Harris, Denise <Harris.Denise@epa.gov>

Cc: DiPasquale, Nicholas <dipasquale.nicholas@epa.gov>; Rodrigues, Cecil <rodrigues.cecil@epa.gov>; D'Andrea, Michael <DANDREA.MICHAEL@EPA.GOV>; Edward, James <edward.james@epa.gov>; Bisland, Carin <bisland.carin@epa.gov>; Esher, Diana <Esher.Diana@epa.gov>; Bigioni, Neil <bigioni.neil@epa.gov>; White, Lisa <WHITE.LISA@EPA.GOV>; Dietrich, Julie <dietrich.julie@epa.gov>; schaffer, joan <schafer.joan@epa.gov>

Subject: Re: Bay Journal

Cecil,

I agree with Nick's summary of the call, and would add that John Konkus also mentioned that "Holly" from CFO had some concerns; he said "on its face, this one is troubling and we will need to have a larger conversation in HQ with the Chief of Staff and Holly's input."

From: DiPasquale, Nicholas

Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2017 8:53 AM

To: Rodrigues, Cecil <rodrigues.cecil@epa.gov>

Cc: D'Andrea, Michael <DANDREA.MICHAEL@EPA.GOV>; Edward, James <edward.james@epa.gov>; Bisland, Carin <bisland.carin@epa.gov>; White, Terri-A <White.Terri-A@epa.gov>

Subject: Bay Journal

Importance: High

Cecil, we had a very disturbing call with John Konkus (OA-OPA) yesterday. Initially he raised some concerns about an OIG report and Washington Post article from 2012 which found that the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, which has a grant from CBPO to manage a public information program with the Bay Journal, did not meet all of the programmatic and financial requirements. The OIG report did not raise any issues related to the Bay Journal or any journalist issues. Al Todd took over as the executive director of ACB in 2011 and did an amazing job responding to the audit findings. The issue was more one of not providing adequate documentation, than of not meeting the purpose and intent of the grant. We provided that information to John.

Then John raised the question of whether EPA should be providing funding for a "newspaper." I tried to explain to him the role that EPA CBPO has under Sec. 117 of the CWA in providing support to the CBP partnership and that one of those functions was providing public information to the public. This is something that the program has done since the late 1980s. John questioned whether the Bay Journal has adequately indicated that it receives federal funds. We pointed out that they do, on page 2 of the print version under the Masthead, which is an industry standard. They also have the explanation of funding sources under the About Us tab on their website, again the industry standard. We told John that the Bay Journal has a reputation for providing independent and objective articles on a whole range of Bay issues. He said that it should not have weighed in on the Bay Program funding issue. I reminded him that the Executive Council actually weighed in by issuing a resolution calling on the President and Congress to fully fund the program.

Then John made the most outrageous comment of all in saying that "the American people have major concerns with newspapers and the media" and that this issue has gotten the attention of higher levels of the agency.

He asked what kind of time constraints we are under for getting the grant out. We told him we had to have the grant ready to go by September 8th. He said he would try to get a decision by the end of the week. I agreed to follow up with him in providing the OIG package, authorizing language from Sec. 117 and excerpts from the grant RFP and SOW.

Terri participated in the call and I would invite her to add any additional comments or observations.

Thanks, Nick

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