



# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

September 11, 2008

BILL NELSON  
FLORIDA

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne  
Secretary  
United States Department of Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Kempthorne:

Yesterday the Inspector General at the Department of the Interior exposed a perverse culture of corruption that plagues the Mineral Management Service (MMS), and specifically its Royalty-in-Kind Program.

The inspector general's report uncovered illegal drug use, illicit sex, and clearly inappropriate relationships between department employees and oil industry representatives. Further, it found that industry representatives provided MMS employees with "gratuities" that ranged from alcohol and gifts to ski trips and golf outings.

Besides being a sad commentary on the failures of certain public servants, this case shows us how the oil industry can also do business improperly. In fact, it raises lots of questions about the extent of the influence the oil and gas industry holds over our government.

Just as troubling, this is only the latest in a series of reports critical of MMS.

As MMS is handling your new five-year plan to lease more public lands to oil companies, and as Congress prepares to debate whether to allow oil companies to expand their ability to drill offshore, we must have confidence in the agency that oversees the industry's access to such lands. And we must have complete trust in that agency, because it handles billions of dollars of taxpayer resources.

We have no reason at this point to think MMS is up to the task.

I ask that you immediately terminate all employees identified in the above-mentioned report. I also ask that you request the resignation of MMS senior leadership, including Director Randall Luthi, and undertake a complete reorganization of MMS and its operations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Nelson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.