

MARK MEADOWS  
11TH DISTRICT, NORTH CAROLINA

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND  
GOVERNMENT REFORM

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515-3311

January 30, 2014

Mary L. Kendall  
Deputy Inspector General  
Office of the Inspector General  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Mail Stop #4428  
Washington, DC 20240

Phyllis K. Fong  
Inspector General  
Office of the Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Inspectors General:

As the Congressman representing North Carolina's 11<sup>th</sup> District, I value the exceptional service provided by your departments in managing the federal lands and national forests in our state. Your commitment to upholding the rule of law while protecting these public treasures is to be commended.

A number of my constituents have recently challenged the legality of actions taken by agency officials within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service during "Operation Something Bruin." This four-year undercover investigation into suspected illegal poaching activities by hunters in western North Carolina and northern Georgia resulted in the arrests of 81 hunters in February 2013.

At a January 18, 2014, public forum in Bryson City, North Carolina, more than 350 citizens and a few state legislators convened to hear from those impacted by this undercover investigation, which is estimated to have cost more than \$2 million in public funds. Testimonials by the family members of those charged or arrested detailed how law enforcement personnel used improper and abusive tactics—including entrapment—in executing charges against the accused hunters. The physical, emotional, and financial toll experienced by the accused and their families was repeatedly expressed.

Federal and local officials must enforce the rule of law while protecting citizens' constitutional rights against abusive governmental action. I greatly respect the role your agencies play in promoting justice and upholding our nation's laws. However, these significant allegations by constituents of the 11<sup>th</sup> District regarding abuses of governmental power deserve a thorough investigation.

To bring a resolution to this matter, I respectfully request that your departments jointly initiate an independent investigation into the legality of "Operation Something Bruin." My office stands

willing to assist your efforts in any manner that will establish a better understanding of the facts involved in this issue of great importance to our constituents.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Meadows". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mark Meadows  
Member of Congress

*Enclosure:* "Something Brewing" Public Forum Video, January 18, 2014, Bryson City, NC