

Summary: Federal Indian Minerals Office Employee Disclosed Confidential Mineral Valuation Information Without Authorization

Report Date: August 7, 2020

Report Number: 17-0583

The OIG investigated an allegation that a Federal Indian Minerals Office (FIMO) employee improperly disclosed confidential and proprietary mineral appraisal information associated with allotted Indian mineral interests.

We found evidence that the FIMO employee disclosed confidential and proprietary information to a private energy company employee without authorization. The information released included the fair market valuation associated with Navajo Indian allotted mineral interests; the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) regional director canceled the mineral lease negotiations for these interests, in part, because of the disclosure, and the mineral interests remained unleased when we issued our report. The unauthorized disclosure violated the U.S. Department of the Interior's standards for the proper handling of agency information.

We referred our investigation to the U.S. Attorney's Office, which declined prosecution.

This is a summary of an investigative report we issued to the executive management group that oversees FIMO, composed of senior executives from the BIA, the Bureau of Land Management, the Office of Natural Resources Revenue, and the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians.

