

## **Summary: Former Contractor Defrauded USGS via Forged and Falsified Timecards, USGS, CA**

**Report Date: November 17, 2025**

**Report Number: 24-0269**

The OIG investigated allegations that an independent government contractor defrauded a U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) contract by submitting forged and/or falsified timecards. We substantiated the allegation.

From August 2022 to April 2024, the contractor worked at USGS' Pacific Coastal and Marine Science Center in Santa Cruz, California. Pursuant to a two-year, nearly \$70,000 contract, the contractor exploited a lack of oversight in the contractor timecard process by either forging her USGS supervisor's signature on false timecards or altering supervisor-approved timecards by adding hours not worked before submitting the timecards for payment to USGS contracting staff. In April 2024, USGS confronted the contractor about the alleged fraudulent timecards and subsequently terminated the contract for cause. USGS also deobligated the remaining allocated contractual funds. USGS' Office of Acquisitions and Grants advised that it revamped the contractor timecard review and approval process to help safeguard against similar altered or fraudulent submissions in the future.

The contractor admitted that she altered and submitted falsified timecards to USGS. Our analysis determined the contractor had falsely claimed 1,680 hours of work. On August 14, 2025, USGS' Office of Accounting and Financial Management sent the contractor a Bill for Collection for \$39,698.80, representing the value of those 1,680 hours; the contractor entered into an agreement with USGS to repay the full amount over a 36-month period.

We presented this matter to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California, which declined to prosecute in deference to the USGS' administrative action and recovery.

This is a summary of an investigative report we issued to the USGS Director.

