

Summary: Investigation of USBR Civil Engineer

Report Date: December 18, 2014

OIG investigated misconduct allegations against a Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) civil engineer. The complainant alleged the USBR employee was unprofessional and improperly gave one contractor preferential treatment over another.

We reviewed contracting documents and emails, and interviewed the parties involved and did not find any evidence of misconduct by the employee nor any evidence of improper favoritism of one contractor over another. The contracting award process was delayed several times from 2013 to 2014, due to conflicting award and contractor selection approaches. USBR continued to use a specific contractor who had successfully completed previous projects because it had been difficult to identify qualified contractors. In February 2014, however, USBR selected a different prime contractor. USBR staff and the original contractor felt that USBR oversimplified projects and based contracting decisions on USBR contracting goals, not contractor's qualifications. Specifically, they felt that USBR did not consider the complexity, politics or mitigating factors associated with these types of projects. The two competing contractors agreed to work together on the project, but misinformation and miscommunication between all the parties involved led to confusion and project delays.

Our investigation found neither evidence of an inappropriate relationship between the civil engineer and the original contractor nor any evidence of impropriety. We referred our report of investigation to USBR for information only.

This is a summary of an investigative report that was issued internally to the U.S. Department of the Interior. This summary was posted to the web on October 28, 2015.

