

Summary: Employee Ethics Statute Violation – USBR

Report Date: December 10, 2015

OIG investigated allegations that a former U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) civil engineer violated a criminal ethics statute by appearing before USBR on behalf of his new employer, which was under contract to USBR, with the intent to influence a project that he substantially participated in while employed with USBR. At the contractor's direction, but against the advice of USBR ethics officials, the former employee attended a USBR informational workshop. In addition, the employee was married to a USBR area field manager, which created additional potential for a conflict of interest.

The former employee did attend the workshop on behalf of his new employer; however, we found that the ethics opinion that would have kept him from attending the workshop was not sent to him prior to his attendance. When the former employee learned of the post-employment limitations, he terminated his employment with the contractor to avoid future conflicts.

We also found that the USBR area field manager properly distanced herself from the subcontract negotiations with her husband's employer to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest. Further, USBR ultimately rejected the contract award so there was no further apparent or actual conflict of interest.

This is a summary of an investigation report that was issued to USBR for any action deemed appropriate. We did not require a response.

