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Dr. Mark Myers
Director, U.S. Geological Survey
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive
Reston, VA 20192

Dear Director Myers:

I appreciate your continued attention to the circumstances surrounding the A-76 privatization study which involved the National Geospatial Technical Operations Center (NGTOC) in Rolla, Missouri. I would like to direct two issues to your immediate attention and to request a meeting with you on this subject as soon as possible.

First, I am extremely concerned that the cost measurement criteria to be used in the A-76 process does not reflect the true cost of closing the Rolla NGTOC. With regard to one specific section of the Performance Work Statement which states that the costs of facilities and equipment shall be considered to be equal for all bidders, it is obvious that key cost factors are being ignored. This is especially disconcerting given that the aim of the A-76 is to find the most efficient location for the NGTOC.

As we have discussed, the Rolla NGTOC is the exclusive home to extremely sensitive maps and equipment. Moving these and other materials from Rolla to another location would constitute an enormous cost I am concerned is not now being considered in the assessment. Moreover, the cost of renting and operating facilities in Rolla is substantially less than the cost of rent in Denver or the overhead costs of a private contractor. In addition, the Rural Development Act plainly states that preference should be given to low-cost rural facilities when making decisions like these.

Your previous letter to me indicated that U.S. law which insists that cost factors be given at least half of the weight of any privatization would be ignored in this assessment. Even though the A-76 process between the Denver NGTOC and private competitors was started before this law took effect, the process we are engaged in today, which includes consideration of the Rolla site, began long after the law took effect. Litigation over these facts has the potential to cost taxpayers a considerable sum of money in addition to the actual costs, both monetary and operational, including those acknowledged as well as those ignored by your agency, of the A-76 process. I urge you in the strongest possible terms to either reform the A-76 process to include and properly weigh all the actual costs of creating a single USGS NGTOC or privatizing it and to delay the deadline for the final decision, or to simply discontinue this flawed A-76 process and maintain the excellent work accomplished by the two USGS centers in Denver and Rolla under the status quo, resuming full operations and staff levels at each site.

It is the possibility of a final A-76 decision and how it would be made which concerns me secondly and most of all. I have learned that the final decision to select a site or to privatize the NGTOC will be made by Mr. Bob Doyle, your designee. I strongly disagree with Mr. Doyle's selection to make this decision as

he is very much predisposed to selection of Denver as the site for a consolidated NGTOC, evidenced by his statements in a Department of the Interior Inspector General's report filed February 6, 2006. This report states:

"Doyle said that although Rolla, MO, may be a less costly site, Denver, CO has more information technology capabilities, is listed as a location in the DOI enterprise strategy, and has a larger government presence that offers more opportunities. He said that ADGI Siderelis was concerned about the significant investment USGS would have to make out of its budget to develop better information technology capabilities at Rolla, MO. Doyle also said professional judgment is part of the decision making process and added that a case could be made for any location. He said that Rolla, MO would be the better site if cost were the only consideration, but when mission accomplishment and other factors are included, Denver, CO, becomes the better site" (DoI IG Report of Investigation, February 6, 2006).

Clearly Mr. Doyle is predisposed to the selection of Denver to host the NGTOC.

Furthermore, Mr. Doyle's statements during the IG investigation indicate his ignorance to the great effort of the University of Missouri-Rolla (which sends valued interns to USGS Rolla for internships), Ft. Leonard Wood, and the City of Rolla to supplement USGS Rolla with a information technology infrastructure and data redundancy on par with the infrastructure in place in Denver. The City has also committed to partner with USGS Rolla to make any improvements which might be necessary to facilitate a consolidated, Rolla-based NGTOC.

I am doubly disappointed by Mr. Doyle's selection for this duty because it was my understanding as we moved forward with the A-76 process that anyone and everyone involved in the unfair, flawed initial exclusion of Rolla would be excluded from this new A-76 competition. Rolla has already been victimized by the arbitrary decisions of individuals in your agency during this process, and I would think this experience would have instilled in USGS an abundance of caution in avoiding even the suggestion that Rolla's experience in this new process is anything but impartial. Mr. Doyle's selection indicates to me that this is not the case, and it may in fact be impossible for USGS to conduct an A-76 process which is fair to the expert employees at the Rolla NGTOC at all.

In closing, I would like to meet with you personally and as soon as possible to discuss these issues. After more than two years of arbitrary deliberations, unfairnesses and bias against the NGTOC site in Rolla, I am prepared to urge the discontinuation of the A-76 process. Please apprise me of your availability. I will be available at your earliest convenience.

Thanking you in advance for your timely response.

Sincerely,



JO ANN EMERSON
Member of Congress

cc: Secretary Dick Kempthorne
Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett
Assistant Secretary Mark Limbaugh