



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT, REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Washington, DC 20240

SEP 19 2011

The Honorable Jeff Landry
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Landry:

I read with great concern and disappointment your characterization of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement as behaving “like the CIA and Gestapo,” which appeared in an article by Bruce Alpert published in the New Orleans *Times Picayune* on September 16. As I understand it, this characterization was based on nothing more than the fact that when you recently came to the agency's Gulf of Mexico Regional Office without an appointment, you were asked to wait for some time and were told that the top officials in the office were not available to meet with you. The article said that the reason you visited the bureau was “to learn about some stalled permits brought to [Landry's] attention.”

Leaving aside whether your specific intervention on behalf of a constituent on a pending regulatory matter is consistent with applicable ethics rules or sound judgment, our personnel are deeply offended by your words. Immediately after the article was published, our Gulf of Mexico Regional Office personnel told me how disturbed they were at your comparison. They are aware, as I am sure you are, that the Gestapo was the German internal security police under the Nazis, known for its terrorist methods. Your comparison of the minor inconvenience you experienced to the tactics and methods of the Nazi secret police is simply unacceptable from anyone, but especially from a public official.

In light of your defamatory remarks, our Gulf of Mexico Regional Office has asked me to advise you that its personnel will not be available to meet with you on September 30, as previously arranged. Our agency's employees are well aware of their obligation to the public they loyally serve. They do not believe they are under any obligation to meet with someone who has slandered them in this way. In their view, your comments went well beyond fair criticism and maligned them in ways that are completely unacceptable, especially coming from someone elected to represent them. Under the circumstances, and because I too am offended by your characterization, I will not compel them to meet with you.

I would strongly suggest that you consider a public apology to our personnel, which include many of your constituents.

Very truly yours,

Michael R. Bromwich
Director