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United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Washington, DC 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:
92-00000
ADM-1.10

NOV 10 2011

Mr. Paul Houser
Science Advisor
1849 C Street, NW
Washington DC 20240

Subject: Letter of Concern During Probationary Period

Dear Paul:

On April 10, 2011, you were appointed to the position of Science Advisor, SL, in Washington, DC. As we have discussed, you are subject to a probationary period of one year starting from the date of your appointment. The probationary period is an extension of the examination process for a new Federal employee to meet both the conduct and performance requirements of their job and to meet the expectations and standards for employees to be retained in Government service.

As we discussed during your performance review on October 27, 2011, it is extremely important that you understand your need to make marked improvement in your performance. During your performance review, we discussed specific areas that need improvement.

On at least one previous occasion (prior to the November 3 incident cited below) you and I discussed review of the strategy and the need that it be coordinated with our CEQ Task Force liaison (who is the Deputy Secretary). I clearly informed you that we (i.e., Reclamation) work with Liz Klein, Counselor to the Deputy Secretary. In addition, on October 28, I emailed Liz (and copied you) mentioning to her the request about coordinating the review with the CEQ Task Force liaison and suggesting it be discussed at the upcoming November 7th Climate Change Working Group meeting (we also had discussed this verbally).

Despite these communications, on November 3, you directly emailed the Deputy Secretary regarding review of the draft National Fish, Wildlife & Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy. You told me you did so because the Climate Change Assistant at the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies directed you to contact Deputy Secretary Hayes.

It seems as though your actions indicate either poor judgment or failure to listen and follow directions. This most recent event follows previous examples (discussed during your performance review) that also seemed to indicate either poor judgment or failure to listen to directions. It is critical that you clearly understand my expectations and perform accordingly. Failure to do so again will result in your termination during your probationary period.

If I can provide you any assistance which will better enable you to meet the requirements of this position, please contact me anytime. I truly hope that this memorandum of concern and direction will curb any future performance issues.

Sincerely,

Kira L. Finkler
Deputy Commissioner – External & Intergovernmental Affairs