

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 27, 2020

The Honorable Eugene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General
Government Accountability Office
441 G St., NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro:

We write in response to concerning reports that the Indian Health Service (IHS) awarded a \$3 million contract for critical PPE supplies to President Trump's former Deputy Chief of Staff that resulted in the delivery of hundreds of thousands of dollars of unsuitable or faulty equipment to Tribal and IHS health facilities in Arizona and New Mexico. We request the Government Accountability Office (GAO) immediately begin an investigation into waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement of this contract.

According to a *ProPublica* report published on May 22, 2020, IHS awarded a \$3 million contract for respirator masks in April to a company owned by Zach Fuentes, President Trump's former Deputy Chief of Staff, as part of an effort to boost PPE supplies in Indian Country, particularly on the Navajo Nation, which was and is experiencing severe shortages of critical supplies. After the contract was executed, IHS found that nearly a quarter of a million of the masks delivered were likely unsuitable for medical use, while over 100,000 of the masks did not match what was described in the contract.

The distribution of unsuitable and ineffective equipment to the Navajo Nation is particularly disturbing given the scale and severity of the outbreak the Nation is currently battling in Arizona and New Mexico, as well as the severe supply shortages they have reported. We are also deeply concerned that Mr. Fuentes' relationship to the White House played an inappropriate role in the awarding of this contract. This contract was reportedly awarded without thorough competitive bidding or vetting procedures, despite Mr. Fuentes' company having no previous federal contracting experience and only being 11 days old at the time of the contract.

Given the significant questions raised by the product quality and contract selection in this case, we urge the GAO to immediately open an investigation to determine whether any laws, rules, or regulations were violated during the course of the procurement process, and to report the results of such investigation to Congress, including the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Committee on Energy and Commerce.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Three handwritten signatures in black ink are arranged horizontally. The first signature on the left is 'Ruben Gallego', the middle one is 'Raúl M. Grijalva', and the one on the right is 'Deb Haaland'.

Ruben Gallego
Chair
Subcommittee for Indigenous
Peoples of the U.S.

Raúl M. Grijalva
Chair
House Committee on
Natural Resources

Deb Haaland
Vice Chair
House Committee on
Natural Resources