



Studdard, Sarah &lt;sarah.studdard@bia.gov&gt;

---

## Month Two Message

---

**Secretary, Deputy** <deputy\_secretary@ios.doi.gov>  
Bcc: doi\_all\_employees@doi.gov

Fri, Sep 22, 2017 at 3:32 PM



### U.S. Department of the Interior

To: All Department of the Interior Employees

From: David L. Bernhardt, Deputy Secretary

Subject: Month Two Message

A little over a month ago, I wrote to all of you on my first day as Deputy Secretary. Shortly thereafter we established an electronic "ideas" box, and the comments, ideas, and suggestions came rolling in. I want to thank you for your willingness to be thoughtful and candid with your input. Some of the ideas have already served to trigger action.

Many of your comments have educated me on particular issues that I might not have fully appreciated without them. For example, I was a couple steps behind the Secretary in recognizing that it is time for the uniforms to be updated. Your comments have reinforced the very real need of doing so. In addition, I am working to find a realistic means to raise the purchase card limits. I am undeterred, but I expect that we will need to rely on help from Congress. Consequently, that will require more steps to accomplish than I initially hoped.

In my first message to you, I reiterated the basic principle that public service is a public trust and to remind everyone of the basic premise of our Federal service and to confirm my expectation that employees abide by it.

After my first month as Deputy Secretary, and after reading certain comments I am troubled that there is not a universal sense in the Department of the Interior (Department) that those few employees who have failed to uphold these standards are appropriately being held accountable. Please be assured, that I am committed to ensuring that leaders at all levels of the Department are, themselves, ensuring that legally sound, measured, and decisive action is being taken. I want this message to be clear: it is the duty of managers to promptly and effectively take the necessary steps to resolve such issues when they arise.

I also want to convey that we can only take action when we are aware of misconduct. Such awareness often ultimately depends on an employee's willingness to come forward. Despite the official duty articulated in the principles of ethical conduct that "[e]mployees shall disclose waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption to appropriate authorities," many might find it difficult to report misconduct because of a belief that nothing will be done or perhaps due to a fear of retaliation.

Therefore, it is important for you to know that reports of misconduct are taken seriously and that action is taken in a timely manner when appropriate. To that end, I will share the results of two Inspector General investigations that began with a report of employee misconduct and which resulted in accountability. In one case, the allegations concerned former Bureau of Land Management Office of Law Enforcement Supervisory Agent Dan Love's misuse of his position for personal gain, securing privileges for both himself and family members, and misuse of Government equipment for personal purposes. The Department recently removed Mr. Love from Federal service. In the other, the allegations involved reports that former National Park Service Chief Ranger at Canaveral National Seashore, Edwin Correa, made unwanted sexual advances and inappropriate comments towards subordinates. The Department removed Mr. Correa as well.

I share these examples because you need to know that your leadership is listening. We will hold people accountable when we are informed that they have failed in their duties and obligations.

Although the law in large part prevents dissemination of the details of actions taken, I am sharing these examples because you need to know that the Department has taken concrete disciplinary action in cases of serious misconduct, including those involving senior officials. This message is part of our commitment to be vigilant and tireless in its pursuit of an environment in which employees treat each other in a manner that is consistent with the law and in which there are consequences for failing to do so.

Finally, as it is vitally important for the health of the Department that employees disclose misconduct they witness or experience, the Department is committed to protecting those who step forward from retaliation. Therefore, I will also make this clear: the Department must be free from any retaliation or reprisal for reports of misconduct and I expect every leader to ensure this.

Moreover, it goes without saying that we must remember to treat each other, as well as members of the public, with dignity and fairness. Supervisors should recognize the contributions of deserving employees and have the courage to address the failings of those that fall short of meeting expectations.

9/25/2017

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Mail - Month Two Message

I look forward to continuing to work with all of you to further improve the Department and fulfill its important missions. Please keep sending me "ideas;" I will continue to review them.

Sincerely,  
Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt