



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

April 28, 2011

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Grassley:

We have recently learned that members of your staff are participating with staff from the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in contacting agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) as well as at least one witness involved in our pending investigation regarding gun trafficking along the Southwest Border. This investigation, known as Operation Fast and Furious, has resulted in the indictment to date of twenty individuals for drug trafficking, gun trafficking, and money laundering. Trial is scheduled to begin on June 7, 2011 and our investigation into this activity is continuing.

On several occasions in the past, we have expressed our concerns to Chairman Issa about the risks that his Committee's efforts to interview witnesses and agents pose to the successful prosecution of the pending case and other cases that may flow from our investigation. While we respect Chairman Issa's right to conduct oversight of ATF, we are confident that neither you nor he would want that oversight to jeopardize important law enforcement efforts that are directed at stemming the violence in the United States and Mexico emanating from the drug cartels in Mexico.

We are also confident that we can find a way to accommodate both Chairman Issa's oversight needs and the Department's needs in conducting successful investigations and bringing successful prosecutions. In this regard, we are working actively to assemble additional documents in response to Chairman Issa's request. And, because we want to resolve the allegations that have been raised, the Attorney General referred this matter to the Acting Inspector General.

The Attorney General looks forward to talking with you about this during your previously scheduled call on Monday, May 2, 2011. Thank you for your support of our law enforcement efforts. We hope this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact this office if we may be of assistance with this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Weich".

Ronald Weich
Assistant Attorney General

cc: The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Chairman