

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 21, 2023

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Granholm,

We write seeking answers to urgent questions raised by a recent personnel decision within the Department of Energy (Department).


On Tuesday, October 17, we received word that Steven Black, the long-serving Director of the Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence (DOE-IN) at the Department of Energy, was suddenly and without explanation reassigned. We are told he will be taking on a new role as “Senior Advisor” in the Department. We are also aware that a study conducted by an outside contractor, which the Department has had in its possession since April, outlines disturbing findings as to the state of counterintelligence across the Department, to include the national laboratories.


As you are well aware, the Department of Energy and the research it supports, especially at the national laboratories, is among the most important national security work undertaken by this country. The findings in the contractor study, which Congress requested, are deeply concerning. If Director Black presided over DOE-IN over a period of time in which there were serious shortcomings with regard to counterintelligence, he should not be reassigned to any office within the Department that has a national security mission. We request that you refrain from reassigning Director Black to any Department office until we have received answers to these questions.

We request immediate answers to the following questions:

1. Why was Director Black reassigned from the role he has held for 11 years? Did the findings outlined in the contractor study factor into your decision to reassign him?
2. In which part of the Department will he serve as “Senior Advisor”?
3. When were you made aware of the contractor study that was transmitted to DOE-IN on April 24? Do you agree with the findings in the study?

Sincerely,


James E. Risch
United States Senator


John Barrasso, M.D.
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



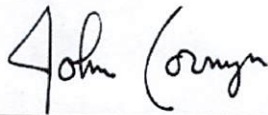
Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



Tom Cotton
United States Senator



Jerry Moran
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator