



OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE INSPECTOR GENERAL  
FOR THE AGENCIES OF THE ILLINOIS GOVERNOR

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July 3, 2014

Martin J. Oberman  
Chairman  
Metra Board of Directors  
Law Office of Martin J. Oberman  
135 South LaSalle Street, Suite 2200  
Chicago, Illinois 60603-4300

Dear Chairman Oberman:

It has recently come to my attention that there may be a fundamental misunderstanding of the role and relationship between Metra and our Office. This misunderstanding may not be limited to Metra, and in an effort to address the matter with all Regional Transit Boards, we have copied the Chairman and Chairman-elect of each Board on this letter.

As you may know, the Ethics Act created the offices of Executive Inspectors General to be *independent* of the agencies under their jurisdictions so that their work would be objective, thorough and free of any potential collusion. Accordingly, though the relationship between this Office and agencies affected by its investigations need not, and should not, be adversarial, it is not the role of an affected agency to determine the nature and scope of our investigations, or what witnesses, documents and information are relevant to our investigations. Pursuant to the Ethics Act, this office has discretion to conduct its own investigations, free from agency interference. While affected agencies may not always agree with our decisions or even be aware of the reasons for those decisions, that is the structure of the statutory mandate under which we operate and perform our duties.

Since our agency was created, we have conducted countless investigations and issued a significant number of final summary reports, which have resulted in findings of wrongdoing and changes in statutes, policies and practices; changes that ultimately benefit the affected agency. It is highly unlikely that those results would have been achieved in the absence of an *independent* inspector general.

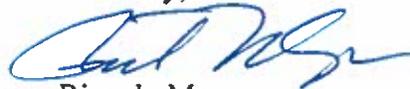
In light of the foregoing considerations, we agree that there should be a civil, professional and non-adversarial relationship between this Office and agencies that are affected by our investigations. However, we do not believe it is appropriate for agencies under our jurisdiction and our Office to “work together,” or for our Office to “help” those agencies in a collaborative manner because we do not believe that is what the Illinois General Assembly had in mind when

it enacted the Ethics Act. It is my opinion, supported by the language in the Ethics Act, that a strong, *independent* inspector general's office is an essential element of any effort to restore public confidence in State government and the Regional Transit Boards.

Although we have encountered issues with the Regional Transit Boards that we have *not* encountered with other State agencies, we will assume that this has been the case because the Regional Transit Boards may not have fully understood our role. We hope that agencies affected by OEIG investigations do not become our adversaries because we ultimately have a common interest in serving the people of Illinois by detecting and remedying waste, fraud, and misconduct. Again, it is our opinion that the appropriate way for an agency to facilitate that common interest is to respect the *independence* of the OEIG and allow us to perform our duties.

We look forward to proceeding in that manner with the Regional Transit Boards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ricardo Meza', is positioned above the printed name.

Ricardo Meza  
Executive Inspector General

cc: Terry Peterson, Chairman of Chicago Transit Board  
Richard Kwasneski, Chairman of Pace Board of Directors  
Kirk Dillard, Chairman-elect Regional Transportation Authority