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June 14, 2006

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing to inquire about the any use by the Department of Homeland Security of chartered private jets for official and unofficial travel. This form of transportation carries with it large cost to the taxpayer and, as such, is subject to exacting federal regulations under OMB Circular A-126.[1]

According to an article in today's *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, a private jet leased by the Centers for Disease Control for use in responding to public health emergencies was repeatedly requisitioned by the Secretary of Health and Human Services to mount a publicity campaign for the new Medicare prescription drug benefit. On two occasions while the jet was occupied for this use, CDC had to charter another aircraft — at additional cost to the taxpayer — to carry out legitimate emergency missions.[2]

In light of the concerns raised by these disclosures, I am conducting a review of the use of passenger aircraft in other selected federal departments. I request that you provide me with information relating to the ownership and leasing of private passenger aircraft by the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department's use of those aircraft over the past 5 years. Specifically, I request:

- A list of private aircraft owned or leased by the Department of Homeland Security, including each aircraft's assigned agency and intended function;

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[1] Circular No. A-126, Revised, White House Office of Management and Budget, (May 22, 1992).

[2] *Cabinet Official is Primary User of CDC Jet*, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, (June 14, 2006).

- Copies of all contracts for the leasing of passenger aircraft for use by the Department;

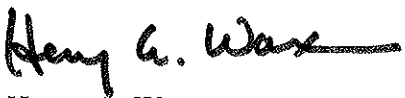
- Copies of all departmental or agency policies relating to travel on these aircraft;

- Information about each use of passenger aircraft by the Department since January 2001, including the date and route flown, the names and positions of all passengers, the purpose of the flight, and any other documentation of use required by federal rules, including OMB Circular A-126;

- Information on the cost of each flight since January 2001 and the justification for the use of government aircraft in lieu of commercial travel, as required by federal rules, including OMB Circular A-126.

I would appreciate your prompt attention to this request. I ask that you provide these documents by no later than June 30, 2006.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Minority Member