



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

June 6, 2013

The Honorable Tom Coburn
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Coburn:

I write in response to your recent letter concerning your previous request for conference-related spending at the Department of the Treasury. Specifically, you asked why Treasury's response did not include data from the Internal Revenue Service. During the same time period that we received your request, Treasury and the IRS received similar—but separate—requests from Chairman Issa. Treasury did not include any IRS data in its submission to Chairman Issa because the IRS responded separately. We mirrored this approach in responding to your request, and we informed your staff by email that the data pertained only to Treasury's Departmental Offices (which does not include the IRS). We recognize that this may not have been clear, and we apologize for any confusion.


On April 10, 2012, we received a request from Chairman Issa, who sought “a list of overnight conferences funded by the department and attended by more than 50 employees since January 1, 2005.” Your April 16, 2012 letter also sought information related to conference spending, as well as guidance on conferences and travel. On April 20, 2012, Chairman Issa wrote a separate letter to the IRS, seeking similar information as he had requested from Treasury. Because he sent a separate request to the IRS directly, our April 23, 2012 response to Chairman Issa addressed conference spending only for Departmental Offices. The IRS responded to Chairman Issa on May 4, 2012, and May 17, 2012. The IRS's response to Chairman Issa included information related to the 2010 Anaheim Conference. Enclosed please find a copy of that correspondence with Chairman Issa.

On May 25, 2012, we responded to your request and provided over one hundred pages of guidance on conferences and travel. On July 9, 2012, your office asked for additional information related to conference data. On August 29, 2012, we emailed your staff and provided a “list of overnight conferences funded by Treasury's Departmental Offices that we were able to identify and were attended by more than 50 employees since January 1, 2005.” Attached to that email was a document entitled “Treasury Departmental Offices Overnight Conferences (1/1/2005 – 6/1/2012) Attended by 50 or more Treasury Staff.” Similar to our response to Chairman Issa, the materials we provided to your office pertained only to Departmental Offices. They did not include information related to conference spending at the IRS.

Separately, we would like to note that conference spending at the IRS has dropped significantly under Treasury leadership. For example, between FY 2005 and FY 2009, the IRS spent an average of \$20 million each year on large conferences. Between FY 2010 and FY 2011, IRS spending on large conferences was cut by over 80 percent from \$37 million to \$6 million per year. In FY 2012, the IRS spent under \$5 million on large conferences. These dramatic reductions reflect the Administration's aggressive push to reduce federal spending and to promote a new culture of efficiency. The Accountable Government Initiative and the Campaign to Cut Waste are both examples of ways the Administration is prioritizing cost savings and the prudent use of taxpayer dollars.

Thank you for your letter. Again, we regret any confusion about the scope of the conference-related information that Treasury previously submitted. To the extent you are seeking additional information regarding IRS conferences, we would be happy to forward your request to the new Acting Commissioner. And, as always, we would be happy to work with your staff to provide any additional information you need.

Sincerely,



Alastair M. Fitzpayne
Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs

Enclosures