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United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

October 18, 2011

Karen Byers
President
American Biological Safety Association

Dear Ms. Byers:

As you know, GAO, an investigative arm of the Congress, will be surveying a sample of select agent entities (laboratories) to seek their views on (1) the extent of overlap in federal agencies' inspections of Select Agent laboratories, (2) the effects of overlapping inspections on costs and laboratory operations, and (3) solutions that can be used to reduce the negative effects of overlapping inspections and its associated costs.

The survey is being done in connection with our review of federal inspections of select agent laboratories for the House Energy and Commerce Committee. The ABSA Council has reviewed a draft of the survey questionnaire and provided input, which we have incorporated into the final version of the survey.

We are about to launch the web-based survey and have e-mailed notification of our survey to potential respondents in our sample. However, we have been advised that there has been concern expressed by a few of those who we sent notification as to the authenticity and validity of our request for their cooperation on the survey. To allay these concerns, we would like to ask whether ABSA could inform its members on its website and listserve that our request is legitimate.

We appreciate ABSA's assistance on this matter. Please contact me at sharmas@gao.gov or at 202-512-3460 or Jason Fong at fongj@gao.gov or at 202-512-7916 if you have any questions or would like to further discuss.

Sincerely yours,

Sushil Sharma, Ph.D., DrPH
Assistant Director

Enclosure

cc: cc list