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COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-158552

September 4, 1979

The Honorable Frank Horton
House of Representatives

Dear Frank:

You recently asked about the General Accounting Office's efforts to followup on the recommendations of the Commission on Federal Paperwork. As you know, the Office of Management and Budget has had followup responsibility for the nearly two years since the Commission concluded its work. However, that legislatively mandated responsibility will expire soon. In view of this, we are beginning to develop plans for our approach to follow OMB's effort. AGC00843
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But first, I would like to describe some of our efforts to implement those recommendations made to GAO and to followup on several of the Commission's recommendations which will have broad impact. We have taken action to implement most of those recommendations made to GAO. A few require further work.

Our followup work on other Commission recommendations has been principally in three areas: organizational issues, impact statements on proposed legislation, and agency reports clearance controls. As you know, GAO staff members have worked closely with your staff in developing H.R. 3570, the "Paperwork and Redtape Reduction Act of 1979." The bill, which we strongly support, should resolve some of the organizational and management issues related to paperwork and statistical policy.

We have also been developing, at ^{Lawton} Senator Chiles' request, a booklet to assist Senate committee staffs and others in compiling the information needed to prepare regulatory (economic, privacy, and paperwork) impact statements on proposed legislation. We are nearing completion of the booklet which we intend to issue as an exposure draft so that it may be used and to obtain comments based on actual experience. We will, after a period of time, revise the booklet based upon the comments received and publish the final edition.

We are also just completing a review of the clearance processes at the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and Health, Education and Welfare. We undertook this work in AGC00042
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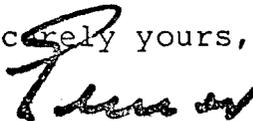
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response to the Commission's recommendation that the agencies be licensed to clear their own reports used to collect information from the public. Basically, we believe OMB should get out of the business of reviewing each report in favor of assuming more of a policymaking and oversight role. OMB should delegate its reports clearance responsibilities in situations where the agencies have applied resources and demonstrated the capability to assume responsibility for the clearance process. Language specifically allowing this delegation is contained in H.R. 3570.

In terms of our future work, we will continue to work toward passage of legislation to resolve the organizational issues and to complete the impact statement booklet. In addition, we have recently assigned a senior staff person whose primary responsibility is to develop an approach for following up on the Commission's recommendations on a broader scale.

Our initial step in this broader followup will be to selectively review those recommendations shown by OMB as implemented (272) and rejected (86) and evaluate OMB's overall program for responding to the recommendations.

Sincerely yours,



Comptroller General
of the United States