

*Waterman*

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**GAO**

United States General Accounting Office  
Washington, DC 20548

Office of  
General Counsel

In Reply  
Refer to:

B-200190

September 3, 1980

*PLM-1*

Mr. Ken Richards  
Office of the Attorney General  
State of New Mexico  
P. O. Drawer 1508  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Mr. Richards:

*Request for Information on*

In response to your request for information, I am sending you the following material concerning the General Accounting Office.

*DLG05210*

Enclosed is a copy of the GAO's enabling legislation, the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921, and the significant 1950 and 1970 Acts which amended the original Act. These statutes are codified in title 31, United States Code. Also enclosed are a list of other statutory provisions related to GAO and the two latest enactments dealing with GAO. This legislation and the accompanying pamphlets should explain the scope of GAO's authority.

In your letter you asked how the GAO maintains its independent, non-political status. The 1921 Act, at section 301 (31 U.S.C. § 41), established the GAO as an independent agency. This expression signifies GAO's independence from the executive branch; section 111(d) of the 1950 Act specifies that the GAO is an agent of Congress. The 1970 Act further interprets the GAO's role as an agency of the legislative branch.

The primary reason that GAO remains independent and non-political is that the Comptroller General is appointed by the President for a 15 year term, without threat of removal by the President. The Comptroller General or the Deputy Comptroller General can only be removed by joint resolution of the Congress for specified cause (31 U.S.C. § 43).



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You will also find enclosed the most recent Monthly List of GAO Reports; I understand that your Office has been added to our mailing list for this monthly publication.

I hope that this information will be of assistance to you.

Sincerely yours,

*Harry R. Van Cleve*

Harry R. Van Cleve  
Deputy General Counsel

Enclosures