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United States General Accounting Office
Washington, DC 20548

October 27, 2000

The Honorable Henry J. Hyde
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary
House of Representatives

Subject: Federally Chartered Corporation: Review of the Financial Statement Audit Report for the National Tropical Botanical Garden for 1998 and 1997

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As requested, we reviewed the audit report covering the financial statements of the National Tropical Botanical Garden, a federally chartered corporation, for the years ended December 31, 1998 and 1997. The corporation's purpose is to establish, develop, operate, and maintain for the benefit of the people an educational and scientific center in the form of one or more tropical botanical gardens, and to foster and encourage fundamental research about tropical plant life and research and study of uses of tropical flora in agriculture, forestry, horticulture, medicine, and other sciences.

Federally chartered corporations are required under 36 U.S.C. 10101 to

- present the corporation's assets and liabilities and reasonable detail on the corporation's income and expenses in annual financial statements,
- obtain an annual financial audit by an independent public accountant, and
- submit the auditors' report and the corporation's financial statements to the Congress.

The objective of our review was to determine whether the audit report complied with the financial reporting requirements of the law. In carrying out our work, we reviewed the corporation's financial statements and the accompanying notes, performed certain analytical procedures related to information presented in the financial statements, reviewed the auditors' report, and made inquiries to corporation officials or the auditors as we deemed necessary. We did not review the auditors' working papers. Our review disclosed no reportable instances of noncompliance.

The audit report included the auditors' opinion that the financial statements of the corporation were presented fairly in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. We are returning the audit report you sent with your letter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey C. Steinhoff". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jeffrey C. Steinhoff
Managing Director
Financial Management and Assurance

Enclosure

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