

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 24, 2026

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Curtis E. Wood
Chief Executive Officer
Atlantic Industrial Coatings, LLC
24502 N James Madison Highway
New Canton, VA 23123

John J. Cafaro
President and Chief Executive Officer
J.J. Cafaro Investment Trust
d/b/a Green Water Solutions, LLC (also
known as Greenwater Services)
6874 Strimbu Dr.
Brookfield, OH 44403

Dear Secretary Burgum, Mr. Wood, and Mr. Cafaro:

I write regarding the Department of the Interior's (DOI) contracts for the renovation of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool and the apparent failure of that renovation to deliver the results promised to the American taxpayer. Public reporting indicates that DOI awarded at least two no-bid contracts for this project—a \$14.7 million contract to Atlantic Industrial Coatings, LLC for resealing, waterproofing, and repainting the pool and a \$1.7 million contract to Greenwater Services (also known as Green Water Solutions, LLC) for a new water filtration system—and that DOI claims that both contracts were legally justified under the Federal Acquisition Regulation's "unusual and compelling urgency" exception to competitive bidding rather than through the ordinary competitive process.¹ This is particularly concerning given the ultimate owner of Greenwater Services, Mr. Cafaro, has donated more than \$300,000 to the Trump campaign and is a neighbor to Mar-a-Lago.²

Within weeks of the project's completion, the pool experienced a significant algae bloom and the newly installed coating on the pool floor has reportedly begun to peel and detach.³ Due to these issues, President Trump announced the pool will need to be partially or fully drained for repairs to the original work—the cost of which has not been reported.⁴ Federal contracting records

¹ 48 C.F.R. § 6.302-2; *see* Arden Farhi & Joe Walsh, *Company Owned by Trump Donor Won \$1.7 Million No-Bid Reflecting Pool Cleaning Contract*, CBS NEWS (Updated June 20, 2026),

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/company-trump-donor-cafaro-reflecting-pool-no-bid-contract/>.

² David A. Fahrenthold, *Firm Tied to Trump Donor Got No-Bid Contract to Clean Reflecting Pool*, N.Y. Times (June 18, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/06/18/us/politics/trump-donor-contract-reflecting-pool.html>.

³ Minh Kim, *Trump Says Reflecting Pool Will Likely Need to Be Drained*, N.Y. Times (June 20, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/06/20/us/politics/trump-reflecting-pool-drained.html>.

⁴ *Id.*

indicate that the Atlantic Industrial Coatings contract, originally valued at \$6.9 million,⁵ grew to \$13.1 million and then to \$14.7 million through a series of modifications⁶ and that an internal National Park Service review found the contractor's profit margin of 20 percent to be well above the customary 6 to 12 percent margin for comparable federal construction work.⁷ Reporting indicates both contracts were awarded without the competition that Congress requires under the Competition in Contracting Act, except in narrowly defined circumstances.⁸

Public Law 117-328 provided \$4.4 million dollars in fiscal year 2023 to repair the Reflecting Pool. The cost for the project has escalated significantly and the coating application expanded the scope as originally requested in the budget request. The administration has added onto this project with funding from National Park entry fees (under the Federal Lands Enhancement Act) without updating Congress on the details of the changes and their justifications. Without congressional involvement as designed, the checks and balances process has broken down and therefore we seek additional information.

Taxpayers are entitled to know if DOI complied with the law in designating this project as an emergency procurement, why costs rose so substantially above the original budget request and the President's subsequent public estimates, if expanding the project's scope to include coating the pool was justified by the cost of the work and the expected additive benefit, why the work has failed to perform as promised, and what role, if any, personal or political relationships played in the selection of these contractors. Accordingly, I request that you provide written answers to the following questions no later than July 10, 2026:

Questions for DOI, Atlantic Industrial Coatings, LLC and Greenwater Services

1. Please provide the complete contracts and all modifications, as applicable, for work related to the Reflecting Pool that has been carried out during 2026.
2. Please describe your organization's role in the renovation—including any decisions, design choices, installation work, or ongoing operation for which you were responsible—and explain what role, if any, that work played in causing or contributing to the algae bloom or the coating's peeling. Please state whether you believe your organization bears any responsibility for either problem and explain why or why not.
3. Please provide a complete, itemized accounting of all costs and funding sources incurred under both contracts to date, including the basis, date, and dollar amount of each contract modification, and any other costs associated with the renovation not captured in the

⁵ Notice ID: 140P2026R0050, SAM.GOV (Apr. 3, 2026), <https://sam.gov/workspace/contract/opp/c31ce49f09ba445c845c2a544f227a7b/view>.

⁶ Contract No. 140P2026C0028, Atlantic Indus. Coatings, LLC, USASPENDING.gov, https://www.usaspending.gov/award/CONT_AWD_140P2026C0028_1443_-NONE_-NONE- (last visited June 22, 2026).

⁷ David A. Fahrenthold, *Reflecting Pool Contract Has 'Inflated' Profit Margin*, *Government Analysis Finds*, N.Y. Times (May 27, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/05/27/us/politics/reflecting-pool-contractor-trump.html>.

⁸ See 41 U.S.C. § 3301; see also Arden Farhi & Joe Walsh, *Company Owned by Trump Donor Won \$1.7 Million No-Bid Reflecting Pool Cleaning Contract*, CBS NEWS (June 19, 2026), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/company-trump-donor-cafaro-reflecting-pool-no-bid-contract/>.

contracts. Please include an itemized list of each expense including, but not limited to, the cost of the coating material, labor for the coating application, equipment for the coating application, equipment for the nanobubblers, labor for the nanobubbler installation, expansion joint materials, and labor to reinforce the expansion joints.

4. Please state whether your organization has been fully paid under its contract and whether any payment has been withheld, reduced, or sought to be reimbursed in light of the documented performance issues.
5. Please describe any prior business, personal, or political relationship between either contractor (or their owners) and the President, DOI, or any administration official and explain what steps, if any, were taken, and by whom, to evaluate potential conflicts of interest before each award.
6. Please identify the timeline(s) governing this project, including the overall completion deadline as well as any sub-timelines or milestones set for specific phases of work (such as resealing, repainting, and filtration installation). Please explain the basis for each such timeline, identify who set them, state whether each deadline or milestone was met and, if not, what caused the delay, and describe how the timeline(s) affected the contracts' cost, including whether expedited or overtime work was required at any phase and what it cost.
7. Please explain the cause of the algae bloom that occurred within weeks of the renovation's completion, including any engineering, water-quality, or filtration-performance assessments your organization performed before or after the work was completed. Please identify what corrective measures have been or will be taken, why those measures were chosen, and at whose expense. Please also state whether DOI plans to replace the pool's pipes, and if so, when that work is expected to occur, what cost is anticipated, and what funding source will be used.
8. Please identify if DOI or any contractor recommended the use of hydrogen peroxide or any other chemical treatment in the pool's water and explain the purpose of that treatment, scientific basis for the treatment, and identify who made the final decision to proceed with it. If the contractor did not recommend the treatment, please state if the contractors approved the treatment in the scope of their warranties. Please also state the cost of this treatment and the source of funding used to pay for it.
9. On May 7, 2026, President Trump's and Secretary Burgum's motorcade drove over portions of the in-progress renovation.⁹ Please identify if any contractor or subcontractor approved the presidential motorcade, which included at least a dozen armored vehicles each reportedly weighing more at least 12,000 pounds each, driving over the recently repaired expansion joints and newly painted coating in the scope of their warranties.

⁹ Darlene Superville, *Trump drives across Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool to inspect blue coating he's adding*, PBS (May 8, 2026), <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/trump-drives-across-lincoln-memorial-reflecting-pool-to-inspect-blue-coating-hes-adding>.

10. Please identify and provide any environmental or engineering analyses conducted before, during, and after the renovation, including any analysis of water chemistry, impacts to wildlife, coating compatibility, or ecological impact, and identify who conducted each analysis and what role each individual or organization played in the project.
11. Please identify the source of the water used to initially fill the pool after the initial restoration was complete, the source of the water that has been used in any subsequent refilling, who recommended the type of water used, who was responsible for overseeing the filling process, and if it had any effect on the subsequent algae bloom or peeling.

Questions for DOI

12. Please provide the written justification and approval documents required under 48 C.F.R. §§ 6.303 and 6.304 for the use of the “unusual and compelling urgency” exception for each contract, including any analysis of alternatives to a sole-source award and relevant precedents for the justification.
13. Please explain why the National Park Service accepted a profit margin of 20 percent on the Atlantic Industrial Coatings contract when, according to the Service’s own internal review, comparable federal construction work customarily carries a 6 to 12 percent margin, and identify who approved that rate and on what basis.
14. Please describe the basis, and provide evidence, for the administration’s claim that vandals caused damage to the Reflecting Pool, including any arrest or citation report, probable cause statement, any other documentation prepared in connection with any arrest or citation, any evidence supporting that claim, and the results of any investigation conducted by the United States Park Police, the National Guard, or any other DOI or federal personnel. Please identify and provide what footage exists of the pool and surrounding area for the period beginning June 1, 2026, through the present, including footage from any fixed security cameras at the site and any body-worn camera footage from Park Police or other federal personnel present at the scene. DOI is directed to preserve all such footage, and to instruct all relevant DOI and federal personnel and contractors to do the same, pending further request from these Committees.
15. Please explain whether the decision to apply the “American Flag Blue” color to the basin of the Reflecting Pool was reviewed pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. If not, please explain the legal basis for concluding that such review was not required.
16. Please describe the process used to identify and select Atlantic Industrial Coatings, LLC and Greenwater Services for these contracts, including how many firms were considered, how each firm’s qualifications and bids were evaluated, and the identity of any individual who recommended, was consulted on, or otherwise facilitated the consideration or selection of either firm.
17. Please identify the specific source of funding for each contract, as well as any other expenses incurred, including the appropriation, account, and fiscal year from which funds

were obligated, and state whether any private, non-appropriated, or donated funds were used for any portion of the project.

18. The Committee on Appropriations allocated \$4.4 million in the official and bipartisan explanatory statement accompanying Public Law 117-328 for the renovation of the Reflecting Pool. Please explain why the Committee was not informed that the scope and cost of the project had expanded well beyond that amount.

Questions for DOI and Atlantic Industrial Coatings, LLC

19. Atlantic Industrial Coatings, LLC (AIC) has publicly indicated that the coating system was provided through Rhino Linings and Creative Polymers, and that the project began with a phone call inviting AIC to participate.¹⁰ Please identify all subcontractors, product suppliers, and manufacturers involved in the coating system, including Rhino Linings and Creative Polymers, and describe how each came to be involved in the project, including the identity of any individual who first proposed the use of these products or companies. For each subcontractor, supplier, and manufacturer, please state the date on which they were first contacted about the project and the date on which they were engaged or retained. Please also state the date on which AIC was first contacted about the project, by whom, and the date on which AIC was formally awarded or engaged for the work.
20. In a June 21, 2026 post on its website, AIC described the damaged areas of the pool as a small portion of the project that does not indicate a failure of the “liner.”¹¹ Please explain this characterization, including what is meant by the “liner” and how it relates to the coating, sealant, waterproofing layer, and concrete basin; describe each layer of the system AIC installed or worked on; how those layers function together; and which specific layer or component is damaged. Please also identify the total square footage affected, provide any inspection or assessment documents supporting the characterization that the damage does not indicate a failure, state the full cost of the warranty repairs and who will bear it, and explain when those repairs are expected to occur.
21. Please state whether the type and color of coating selected for the pool floor is standard practice for large-scale reflecting pools or comparable federal water features and identify any prior examples of its use on a project of similar scale.
22. Please state how the decision to apply a coating was made—did the contractor recommend the coating in their professional opinion as an integral part of waterproofing the expansion joints or instead did DOI require the coating as part of the contract.
23. Please state if your organization raised any objections or concerns about the selection of the coating, and if so, what they were and to whom they were communicated.

¹⁰ *The Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool*, Atlantic Indus. Coatings, LLC, <https://vaspray.com/aic/> (last visited June 22, 2026), archived at <https://perma.cc/CJF5-C28F>.

¹¹ *Id.*

24. Please explain every cause of the apparent failure of the new coating, including any engineering, materials, or quality-assurance assessments your organization performed before or after the work was completed, and identify what corrective measures will be taken and at whose expense.

Questions for DOI and Greenwater Services

25. Please explain what other technologies were considered for filtration of the Reflecting Pool and how the nanobubble ozone filtration system was selected.
26. Please explain the role of nanobubble ozone filtration technology in maintaining the pool's water quality, including why this technology was deemed necessary for the renovation. Please also explain why the permanent nanobubble filtration system was not installed and operational before the pool was refilled, instead requiring the deployment of temporary nanobubbler units afterward, and identify who made the decision to rely on temporary units rather than completing the permanent system before refilling. Please state when the permanent system became fully operational and what, if any, additional costs were incurred as a result of using temporary units in the interim.

The American people deserve assurance that their tax dollars are spent responsibly, transparently, and in accordance with the law, particularly for a project undertaken in the name of commemorating the nation's 250th anniversary. I appreciate your prompt attention to this request and look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeffrey A. Merkley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on the Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies, Committee on
Appropriations