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House of Representatives

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June 12, 2012

The Honorable Darrell E. Issa
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

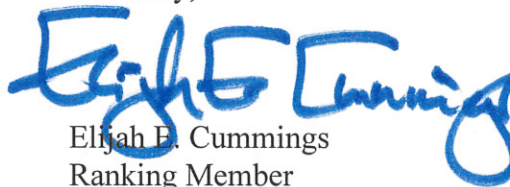
Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to request that we accept an offer that has been made by James Cole, the Deputy Attorney General, to meet with us in person about the Committee's investigation of Operation Fast and Furious.

Yesterday, you informed Committee Members that you scheduled a business meeting next week to vote on your draft contempt citation against Attorney General Eric Holder. I continue to believe that it is possible to resolve outstanding questions regarding this investigation without resorting to contempt. Specifically, I believe it would benefit the Committee to hear directly from the Deputy Attorney General about why some of the documents listed in the draft contempt citation are covered by a federal criminal statute that prohibits their disclosure. In turn, I believe it would benefit the Department to hear directly from us about specific documents we believe could be produced to the Committee without compromising ongoing prosecutions.

There is no doubt that the Committee has a legitimate interest in conducting vigorous oversight of this issue, and I have commended you publicly for exposing—and bringing to a halt—a series of misguided gunwalking operations that placed the lives of American and Mexican citizens in danger. If we can recognize the valid interests of the Department in protecting the independence of its ongoing criminal investigations and prosecutions, I believe we can work together toward a timely resolution of this matter.

Sincerely,



Elijah E. Cummings
Ranking Member