

5501 Alta Vista Road
Bethesda, MD 20814

March 8, 2002

Mr. John Surina
Director
Office of Ethics
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-0122

Dear Mr. Surina:

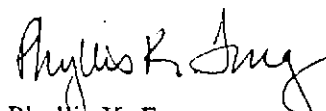
The purpose of this letter is to describe the steps that I intend to take to avoid any actual or apparent conflict of interest in the event that I am confirmed for the position of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

As required by 18 U.S.C. § 208(a), I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that has a direct and predictable effect on my financial interests or those of any other person whose interests are imputed to me, unless I first obtain a written waiver, pursuant to section 208(b)(1), or qualify for a regulatory exemption, pursuant to section 208(b)(2). I understand that the interests of the following persons are imputed to me: my spouse, minor children, or any general partner; any organization in which I serve as officer, director, trustee, general partner or employee; and any person or organization with which I am negotiating or have an arrangement concerning prospective employment.

As reflected on Schedule A of my financial disclosure form, I currently am invested in the T. Rowe Price Maryland Tax Free Bond Fund. If confirmed, I pledge that I will not participate personally and substantially in any particular matter that will have a direct and predictable effect on the ability or willingness of the State of Maryland to honor its obligations to its bondholders, unless I first obtain a written waiver or qualify for a regulatory exemption.

I believe the steps I have here agreed to take will assure that no conflict of interest or appearance thereof will exist between my personal financial interests and the duties I will perform as Inspector General for USDA.

Sincerely,


Phyllis K. Fong