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**SPECIAL COUNSEL FINDS THAT WHISTLEBLOWER ALLEGATIONS
DEMONSTRATE SUBSTANTIAL LIKELIHOOD THAT ARMY CORPS OF
ENGINEERS ENGAGED IN VIOLATIONS OF LAW, RULE OR
REGULATION, AND/OR GROSS WASTE OF FUNDS; REQUESTS
INVESTIGATION BY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The U.S. Office of Special Counsel (OSC), today announced that it has transmitted to the Secretary of Defense, for his investigation, whistleblower allegations that officials at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Saint Louis District, Missouri, engaged in violations of law, rule or regulation and a gross waste of taxpayers' funds.

The whistleblower, Dr. Donald C. Sweeney, is a Senior Regional Economist with the Corps. Dr. Sweeney alleged to OSC that Corps officials manipulated the cost benefit analysis on the feasibility of wide-scale improvements to the navigation system on the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway in a way that resulted in a positive proposal for unnecessary and expensive improvements potentially costing in excess of one billion dollars. The whistleblower alleged that Corps officials failed to comply with appropriate laws, rules and regulations when they manipulated key variables pertaining to the required cost benefit analysis contained in the Corps' feasibility report.

The whistleblower was the original technical manager of the economic study of the project. Based upon the information that he provided to the OSC, Special Counsel

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Elaine Kaplan determined that there exists a substantial likelihood that officials in the Corps have engaged in violations of law, rule or regulation and a gross waste of funds. Pursuant to her statutory obligation (5 U.S.C. § 1213) Special Counsel Kaplan requested that the Secretary of Defense investigate Dr. Sweeney's allegations and report back to OSC the Department of Defense's findings, including the corrective actions it intends to take, within the statutory time frame of sixty days.

The OSC is an independent federal agency. In addition to investigating and prosecuting complaints of unlawful retaliation, the OSC provides federal employees with a secure channel for blowing the whistle on violations of law, rule or regulation, gross mismanagement or waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health and safety. By law, the OSC is empowered to require agencies to conduct investigations and report back to OSC whenever the Special Counsel finds a substantial likelihood that a federal employee's disclosures demonstrate the existence of one of these conditions. After the OSC reviews the report to insure that it contains the necessary information and that its findings appear reasonable, the OSC transmits the report to the President and the Congress for further action by those entities, if appropriate.
