

USADA Lobbied DOJ To Join Whistle-Blower Lawsuit

The head of the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, Travis Tygart, lobbied Attorney General Eric Holder for the [Justice Department](#) to join a whistle-blower lawsuit against Lance Armstrong. This was on the same day when the disgraced cyclist confessed in an interview to Oprah Winfrey that he used banned performance enhancing drugs.

The letter by Tygart is dated the same day on which Armstrong confessed to using performance enhancing drugs before Winfrey. Officials of USADA have been urging Armstrong to speak under oath with its investigators if he hoped to have his lifetime ban reduced but he recently refused to do so and said he will only depose before an international tribunal formed to comprehensively address pro cycling. Tim Herman, Armstrong's longtime lawyer, remarked that Lance for several reasons will not participate in USADA's efforts to selectively conduct American prosecutions that only demonize selected individuals while failing to address the 95 percent of the sport over which USADA has no jurisdiction.

A person familiar with discussions between the two sides said among the topics was how much protection the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency could provide Lance Armstrong in the whistle-blower case and against possible criminal action and the cyclist and his attorneys ultimately were not satisfied with USADA's offer.

[Travis Tygart](#) wrote in the letter to Holder that USADA "uncovered one of the greatest frauds in the history of sport" but that his agency had reached the end of what it can do to punish the now-banned cyclist and other "non-sports" people involved with his teams. The USADA chief also wrote that fraud and other crimes were committed and the case involved drug trafficking, federal witness intimidation and that other federal agencies have gathered more information. He also told Holder that the Justice Department joining the case against the cyclist would be viewed favorably by the public and the media. Tygart called the doping by Lance Armstrong and the Postal Service teams a "massive economic fraud" that "absolutely dwarfs anything Landis did."

Tygart wrote to Holder on January 14 and urged him to join the civil case and told Holder that "fraud and other crimes were committed" by Lance Armstrong and other members of his former U.S. Postal Service teams. It is not clear if the Attorney General responded, but the Justice Department has not yet announced if it will join the lawsuit filed by former Armstrong teammate Floyd Landis, who was stripped of the 2006 Tour de France title for doping. Landis has accused Lance Armstrong of committing fraud against the Postal Service that sponsored most of the teams of the now-banned Armstrong as the star rider made use of performance enhancing drugs to win the Tour de France a record seven consecutive times. The former teammate of Armstrong was also a key witness in an investigation by the United States Anti-Doping Agency last year, which exposed the doping past of the 41-year-old retired cyclist Armstrong. Landis stands to collect millions of dollars of any possible financial penalties against Armstrong from the whistle-blower suit.

According to the latest update, the Justice Department on Friday has joined a whistle-blower lawsuit against disgraced cyclist Lance Armstrong. This increases the odds the cyclist may have to forfeit millions of dollars paid out by his team sponsor, the U.S. Postal Service.