



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL

October 1, 2014

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Project Notification:
Evaluation of EPA's Efforts to Correct Noncompliance at Small Drinking
Water Systems With Serious Violations
Project No. OPE-FY14-0047

FROM: Dan Engelberg, Director /s/
Water Evaluations
Office of Program Evaluation

TO: Cynthia Giles, Assistant Administrator
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Ken Kopocis, Deputy Assistant Administrator
Office of Water

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to begin preliminary research on the EPA's efforts to correct noncompliance at small drinking water systems with serious violations.

Our objective is to determine how the EPA helps states and territories ensure that small community water systems with serious violations come into compliance with health-based standards and treatment requirements. The anticipated benefits of this project are improvements in the protection of human health by ensuring the EPA is enforcing and assuring compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act.

The project will be conducted using applicable generally accepted government auditing standards. During the preliminary research phase, we plan to review documents, analyze data, and interview relevant managers and staff in the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA), the Office of Water (OW), and in selected EPA regions. We will also conduct research at selected states, territories and localities.

We will work with your Audit Follow-Up Coordinators to arrange a kickoff meeting at a mutually agreeable time to discuss the objectives, scope and purpose of preliminary research, as well as the responsibilities of OECA, OW, and the OIG during the project. We will answer any questions that you may have about the evaluation process, reporting procedures, methods used to gather and analyze data, and what we should expect of each other during the course of the evaluation. At the kickoff meeting, we will also be interested in hearing about any concerns that you may have related to this program area, and any input regarding the regions, states, territories and experts the OIG should contact during preliminary research. Throughout the project, we will provide regular updates on the status of the project to the agreed-upon contacts from your offices.

Prior to the kickoff meeting, we request that you provide us with copies of, or links to, the following:

- A comprehensive database of small community water systems designated as serious violators over the past 5 years.
- The quarterly “Drinking Water Serious Violators Reports” and the “Serious Violator Lists” for 2010.
- Specific locational data for the small community water systems classified as serious violators.
- Any data-quality reviews conducted on the Safe Drinking Water Information System over the past 5 years.
- OECA policies, procedures, guidance and protocols pertaining to the drinking water enforcement response policy and tracking tool.
- OECA policies, procedures, guidance and protocols pertaining to the issue of enforcement and small community drinking water systems.
- OW policies, procedures, guidance and protocols pertaining to the issue of compliance and small community drinking water systems.

During this project we will also speak with the EPA’s Office of Research and Development to obtain information concerning their current drinking water research, and to gain an understanding of their responsibilities and the support that they provide to small community water systems.

We respectfully note that the OIG is authorized by the Inspector General Act of 1978 to have timely access to personnel and all materials necessary to complete its objectives. We will request your resolution if an agency employee or contractor refuses to provide requested records to the OIG, or otherwise fails to cooperate with the OIG. We may report unresolved access matters to the Administrator and include the incident in our Semiannual Report to Congress.

Any questions or information related to the audit should be addressed to me at (202) 566-0830 or engelberg.dan@epa.gov; or to the Project Manager, Katie Butler, at (404) 562-9736 or butler.kathlene@epa.gov.

For suggestions on other audits or evaluations, please phone (202) 566-2391 or email OIG_WEBCOMMENTS@epa.gov. To report fraud, waste or abuse, please phone 1-888-546-8740 or email OIG_Hotline@epa.gov.

cc: Lek Kadeli, Acting Assistant Administrator, Office of Research and Development
Lawrence Starfield, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
Michael H. Shapiro, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Water
Gwen Spriggs, Audit Follow-Up Coordinator, Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
Marilyn Ramos, Audit Follow-Up Coordinator, Office of Water
Hyon Kim, Audit Follow-Up Coordinator, Office of Research and Development
Regional Administrators, Regions 1–10
Regional Audit Follow-Up Coordinators, Regions 1–10
Arthur A. Elkins Jr., Inspector General
Charles Sheehan, Deputy Inspector General

Alan Larsen, Counsel to the Inspector General
Carolyn Copper, Assistant Inspector General for Program Evaluation
Aracely Nunez-Mattocks, Chief of Staff, Office of Inspector General
Kevin Christensen, Acting Assistant Inspector General for Audit
Patrick Sullivan, Assistant Inspector General for Investigations
Patricia Hill, Assistant Inspector General for Mission Systems
Christine El-Zoghbi, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Program Evaluation
Jennifer Kaplan, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Congressional and Public Affairs
Jeffrey Lagda, Congressional and Media Liaison, Office of Inspector General
Kathlene Butler, Project Manager, Office of Inspector General