




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

OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL

January 8, 2016

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Project Notification:
Review of Ambient Air Monitoring Data Changes and Gaps
Project No. OPE-FY16-0009

FROM: James L. Hatfield, Acting Director 
Air Issues
Office of Program Evaluation

TO: Janet McCabe, Acting Assistant Administrator
Office of Air and Radiation

The purpose of this memorandum is to notify you that the Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to begin preliminary research for an evaluation of the ambient air monitoring program within the EPA's Office of Air and Radiation (OAR). This project is included in the OIG's Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Plan.

The OIG's objective is to determine whether selected air monitoring data in EPA's Air Quality System (AQS) meet criteria established by the EPA. Specifically, we want to know:

1. Do data revisions comply with EPA criteria?
2. Do data exclusions or gaps comply with EPA criteria?

During the preliminary research phase, we plan to review EPA regulations, policies, procedures and guidance related to the collection of ambient monitoring data; analyze ozone ambient monitoring data to identify instances of data revisions and gaps; and review a sample of data points where data was revised or is missing.

We plan to begin our work within OAR's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards. We also plan to visit state and local monitoring agencies responsible for collecting air monitoring data points in our sample, and to visit EPA regions with oversight responsibility for state and local monitoring agencies.

We will contact your audit liaison to arrange a mutually agreeable time for a kickoff meeting to discuss the assignment objective and our planned work. We will also answer any questions about the evaluation process and reporting procedures. Prior to or during our kickoff meeting, we request that you provide us with copies of (or links to) the following materials:

- Ozone ambient data reporting requirements and guidance.
- Policies and procedures related to data entry, data review/certification, and maintenance of data in the EPA's AirNow data repository.
- Policies and procedures related to data entry, data review/certification, and maintenance of data in AQS.
- Results from any system audits of either the AirNow or AQS databases.
- Instructions for accessing current and historical data maintained in AirNow and AQS databases.
- Key points of contact for accessing and working with data in AirNow and AQS.

To ensure the success and timely completion of this project, we respectfully note that the OIG is authorized by the Inspector General Act of 1978 to have timely access to personnel and all material necessary to complete its objectives. For this evaluation, we may request access to EPA databases, meetings and interviews with EPA personnel and contractors, and documentation related to ambient air monitor reporting. 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 the Semiannual Report to Congress.

If you or your staff have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (919) 541-1030 or hatfield.jim@epa.gov; or Andrew Lavenburg, Project Manager, at (919) 541-1871 or lavenburg.andrew@epa.gov.

cc: Elizabeth Shaw, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Air and Radiation
 Steve Page, Director, Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, Office of Air and Radiation
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