




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

NOV 18 2013

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Final Release of *The Environmental Protection Agency-Wide Plan to Provide Solid Waste Management Capacity Assistance to Tribes*

FROM: Mathy Stanislaus
Assistant Administrator 

TO: Regional Administrators
Assistant Administrators

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (the EPA) is pleased to release *The Environmental Protection Agency-Wide Plan to Provide Solid Waste Management Capacity Assistance to Tribes* (the Plan).¹ The Plan is an internal Agency-wide strategy to provide effective tribal solid waste management capacity assistance. The Plan implements the recommendations made by the U.S. EPA, Office of Inspector General (OIG) in their March 21, 2011, Evaluation Report, *EPA Needs an Agency-Wide Plan to Provide Tribal Solid Waste Management Capacity Assistance*.² The OIG Report and recommendations generally focused on internal EPA program management issues. The Plan and a table listing the OIG's recommendations are attached. The table indicates where in the Plan each recommendation is addressed, along with the timeframe for completion. (See Section 5.0 of the Plan for a more detailed set of milestones and dates for implementation.)

The Plan addresses the OIG recommendations and reflects the EPA's main tribal solid waste priority, which is the promotion of sustainable tribal waste management programs through the development and implementation of integrated waste management plans. The Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response and the Office of International and Tribal Affairs have collaborated on the *Guidance on the Award and Management of General Assistance Agreements for Tribes and Intertribal Consortia* (GAP Guidance)³ and the Plan to ensure that there is consistency between the two documents. The GAP Guidance contains a description of the solid and hazardous waste program capacity development and implementation actions which can be funded under GAP.

The Plan addresses how the EPA will be prioritizing its resources on waste-related activities which lead to the most significant environmental benefits. In FY 2015, the EPA will discontinue the tribal open

¹ The final Plan is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/wyl/tribal/capacityassist.htm>

² The OIG Evaluation Report can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2011/20110321-11-P-0171.pdf>

³ The GAP Guidance can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/tp/GAP-guidance-final.pdf>

dump closure and clean up measure to focus on sustainable tribal waste management programs. However, the Plan reaffirms EPA's support for the continued efforts to characterize and assess open dumps, in cooperation with the Indian Health Service. I would like to emphasize that EPA will focus on identifying and assessing open dumps posing the highest threat to human health and the environment, and that health threat assessment information and data will be needed to support decision-making on cleanup of open dumps.

In addition, the development and refinement of performance measures is an ongoing process that will extend beyond the issuance of the Plan and the EPA FY 2014-2018 Strategic Plan. The EPA has created a workgroup, consisting of both headquarters and regional staff, convened workgroup meetings and will obtain input from headquarters and regional management, as well as tribes on potential new performance measures intended to reflect the breadth of tribes' activities that advance sustainable tribal solid waste management programs. The EPA plans to develop a process for evaluating options for potential new performance measures through the national workgroup by December 2013. This process will include tribal consultation and coordination. The national workgroup intends to develop and implement new performance measure(s) by October 2014.

We appreciate the input and collaboration from across the Agency, as well as with our tribal government partners, during the Plan development process. The EPA consulted and coordinated with numerous tribes on *The Environmental Protection Agency-Wide Plan to Provide Solid Waste Management Capacity Assistance to Tribes* (the Plan) between July 23, 2012, and November 8, 2012. In addition to participating in tribal conferences and meetings, we received 168 written comments from 27 commenters, 19 tribal governments, 4 inter-tribal organizations, the Region 8, 9 and 10 Regional Tribal Operations Committees (RTOCs) and the state of Alaska. As a result of these comments, the EPA made revisions to the Plan to enhance the Agency's ability to provide effective solid waste management capacity assistance to tribes. The Plan is subject to updating and modification as priorities and resources change.

We look forward to working collaboratively across the Agency and with tribes and tribal organizations to implement this new Agency-Wide Plan. Thank you, in advance, for your active participation in this important effort, as together, we continue to protect human health and the environment.

Attachments

cc: Barry Breen
Deputy Regional Administrators
Deputy Assistant Administrators
Barnes Johnson
Betsy Smidinger
Matt Straus
Marsha Minter
Janice Sims