



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

OFFICE OF  
INSPECTOR GENERAL

August 29, 2019

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** Project Notification:  
Response to Congressional Request Over Concerns with EPA Access to  
Witness Testimony Prior to Hearing  
Project No. OA&E-FY19-0313

**FROM:** John Trefry, Director, Forensic Directorate  
Office of Audit and Evaluation

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Trefry".

**TO:** Henry Darwin, Acting Deputy Administrator  
Office of the Administrator

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is initiating an evaluation based on a congressional request that expressed concerns that the EPA obtained advance access to testimony by an environmental science and policy expert before the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology on May 23, 2017. This project is based on an initial congressional request dated June 26, 2017, and subsequent follow-up requests.

Our objectives are to determine: (1) how a senior political appointee obtained a copy of the witness's testimony prior to the congressional hearing, and (2) whether employees in the Administrator's office received whistleblower training on federal prohibitions against interfering with or intimidating individuals who testify before Congress.

The project will be conducted using *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*, issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. The anticipated benefits of this project are to improve operational efficiency.

We will contact the audit coordinator to arrange a mutually agreeable time to discuss the objectives and scope of our project. We would also be particularly interested in any areas of concern that you may have. We will answer any questions you may have about the project process, reporting procedures, methods used to gather and analyze data, and what we should expect of each other during the course of the project. Throughout the project, we will provide updates on a regular basis through a monthly meeting or via email, phone or video conference.

We respectfully note that the OIG is authorized by the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, to have timely access to personnel and all materials necessary to complete its objectives. We will request that you resolve the situation 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*.

I will supervise the project and the Project Manager will be Angela Bennett. Should you or your staff have any questions, please contact me at (202) 566-2474 or [trefry.john@epa.gov](mailto:trefry.john@epa.gov), or Angela Bennett at (404) 562-9844 or [bennett.angela@epa.gov](mailto:bennett.angela@epa.gov).

cc: Doug Benevento, Associate Deputy Administrator  
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