




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

OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL

August 10, 2020

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Notification of Evaluation:
EPA's Efforts Under the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Acts to Address Harmful Algal Blooms
Project No. OA&E-FY20-0280

FROM: Laretta Joseph, Acting Director
Water Directorate
Office of Audit and Evaluation 

TO: David P. Ross, Assistant Administrator
Office of Water

The Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency plans to begin an evaluation regarding the EPA's efforts to address harmful algal blooms. This evaluation is included in our [Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Plan](#). This evaluation also addresses the following top management challenges for the Agency, as identified in our [EPA's FYs 2020–2021 Top Management Challenges](#) report, issued July 21, 2020:

- Overseeing states implementing EPA programs.
- Complying with internal control (data quality).
- Communicating risks.

The OIG's objective is to evaluate how the EPA is exercising its authority under the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water acts to address harmful algal blooms and thus protect human health and the environment. The OIG plans to conduct work within the Office of Water and selected EPA Regions. The evaluation will be conducted using *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*, issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. The anticipated benefit of this evaluation is improved EPA operational efficiency in protecting human health and the environment from harmful algal blooms.

We will contact you to arrange a mutually agreeable time to discuss our objectives. We would also be particularly interested in any areas of concern that you may have. We will answer any of your questions about the evaluation process, reporting procedures, methods used to gather and analyze data, and what we should expect of each other during the evaluation. Throughout the evaluation, we will provide updates on a regular basis.

To expedite our evaluation, please be ready to provide the following information at the entrance conference:

- Program planning documents—including goals, strategies, and performance measurement plans—related to addressing the causes and impacts of harmful algal blooms.
- Results of agencywide or program-specific initiatives to address the causes and impacts of harmful algal blooms.
- Contact information for state collaborators who work on harmful algal bloom issues.
- Contact information for any EPA lead in each Region who works on harmful algal bloom issues.

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 immediately resolve the situation if an Agency employee or contractor refuses to provide requested materials 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 evaluation, and the project manager will be Alli Dutton. Any information related to the project should be addressed to me at (212) 637-3049 or joseph.lauretta@epa.gov, or Alli Dutton at (215) 814-2349 or dutton.allison@epa.gov.

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