




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

OFFICE OF  
INSPECTOR GENERAL

February 1, 2021

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** Notification of Revised Evaluation Objective:  
EPA Region 9 and 10 Oversight of Tribal Drinking Water During Coronavirus Pandemic  
Project No. OA&E-FY20-0044

**FROM:** Kathlene Butler, Director  
Water Directorate  
Office of Evaluation 

**TO:** Deborah Jordan, Acting Administrator  
EPA Region 9

Michelle Pirzadeh, Acting Administrator  
EPA Region 10

The Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency initiated an evaluation of EPA's oversight of tribal drinking water systems on May 29, 2020. This evaluation was included in our [Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Plan](#) and was expanded to include evaluating the EPA's response to the coronavirus pandemic—that is, the SARS-CoV-2 virus and resultant COVID-19 disease.

We wish to notify you that we are revising our project objective to focus solely on coronavirus pandemic impacts to tribal drinking water oversight in Regions 9 and 10, the two regions overseeing the most tribal drinking water customers in the United States. The OIG's revised objective is to determine how the coronavirus pandemic has affected the ability of EPA Regions 9 and 10 to provide oversight to help public water systems in Indian Country deliver safe drinking water to customers during the pandemic. This evaluation also addresses the following top management challenge for the Agency, as identified in our [EPA's FYs 2020–2021 Top Management Challenges](#) report, issued July 21, 2020, of integrating and leading environmental justice.

The OIG plans to continue conducting work within Regions 9 and 10 and will continue work with the Office of Water. The evaluation will continue under the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation, issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. The anticipated benefits of this evaluation include improved information regarding overseeing tribal drinking water systems during the ongoing pandemic and in future unexpected events.

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*.

We will post this memorandum on our public website at [www.epa.gov/oig](http://www.epa.gov/oig). I will supervise the evaluation, and the project manager will be Allison Dutton. Any information related to the project should be addressed to either the project manager or me.

cc: Radhika Fox, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Water  
Wesley J. Carpenter, Deputy Chief of Staff  
Dan Utech, Chief of Staff  
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