



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

OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL

August 18, 2017

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Project Notification:
Public Notification of Drinking Water Quality
Project No. OPE-FY17-0020

FROM: Kathlene Butler, Director, Water Issues /s/
Office of Program Evaluation

TO: Michael Shapiro, Acting Assistant Administrator
Office of Water

Lawrence Starfield, Acting Assistant Administrator
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assistance

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to begin preliminary research on the public notification of drinking water quality as required under the Safe Drinking Water Act. This project is included in the OIG's Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Plan.

The OIG's objective is to determine whether the EPA adequately ensures that public drinking water systems notify the public as required by the public notification rule promulgated under the Safe Drinking Water Act, such as when the systems identify contamination at unsafe levels.

The OIG plans to conduct work at the EPA's Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water within the Office of Water. We will also conduct work at the EPA's Office of Civil Enforcement within the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance. Our work will also include EPA regional drinking water and enforcement offices, and select states and drinking water utilities. Applicable generally accepted government auditing standards will be used in conducting our project. The anticipated benefits of this project are improved protection of public health through improved communication of drinking water quality and associated risks.

We will contact you through your respective Audit Follow-Up Coordinators, to arrange a mutually agreeable time to discuss our objective and the purpose of the preliminary research phase of our project. We would be interested particularly in hearing from you and your staff on our selection of states and drinking water utilities to include in our evaluation, as well as any areas of concern that you may have. We will answer any of your questions 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 email updates every 4 weeks, or by the method and frequency determined when we meet.

We respectfully note that the OIG is authorized by the Inspector General Act of 1978 to have timely access to personnel and all materials necessary to complete its objectives. 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.

I will supervise the project, and the Project Manager will be Kathryn Hess. Any information related to the project should be addressed to me at (404) 562-9736 or butler.kathlene@epa.gov, or to Kathryn Hess at (617) 918-1487 or hess.kathryn@epa.gov.

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