



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

JUL 29 2015

OFFICE OF
THE ADMINISTRATOR

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Managing Challenge and Prize Competitions
at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

FROM: A. Stanley Meiburg, Acting Deputy Administrator

TO: Assistant Administrators
Chief of Staff
Associate Administrators
Regional Administrators

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Stanley Meiburg".

President Obama in 2011 signed the America COMPETES Act, an effort to strengthen our economy and face critical challenges by tapping the creativity and innovative thinking of the American people. As part of America COMPETES and other authorities (CWA § 104, CAA § 103, SWDA § 8001, MPRSA § 203 SDWA §1442 and TSCA § 10), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has been encouraging public collaboration in government activities by opening challenges and prize competitions to the public.

Challenges and prize competitions can help solve longstanding environmental and public-health issues through transformative solutions. However, it is important that challenges and prize competitions are effectively managed, carefully structured and meet clear criteria for advancing the EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment.

In a February 23, 2012, memorandum the Office of General Counsel provided legal advice on the use of EPA funds for monetary prizes to encourage innovations in environmental technologies under both America COMPETES and statutes that authorize the EPA to encourage research and development, known as R&D authorities. On August 20, 2013, the Administrator signed a delegation of authority enabling senior management to administer these prize competitions.

In an effort to facilitate a One EPA approach to administering challenge and prize competitions, I am formally establishing the Challenge Review Team, known as ChaRT. Its role will be to ensure that agency challenges and prize competitions are supported by applicable legal requirements and adequate scientific foundation, a clear budget rationale and a transparent communications plan. Concurrence from the ChaRT is required before announcing a prize contest. The committee is currently co-chaired by the Office of Research and Development and the Office of Public Affairs and includes participation from the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, the Office of the General Counsel, the Office of Environmental Information and other offices, as necessary.

A series of policies and guidelines pertaining to the process review and use of challenges at the EPA has also been developed and can be accessed at <http://intranet.ord.epa.gov/groups/innovation-epa/prize-competitions>. It includes:

- summary of the legal requirements for America COMPETES prizes;
- questions and answers pertaining to the EPA's managing of intellectual property rights;
- guidance for preparing *Federal Register* notices;
- guidance on managing judging panels;
- instructions for completing a request concurrence for challenge and competition solicitations; and
- financial guidance.

Please note that while America COMPETES provides authority for the EPA to accept private funds to finance challenges, the statute also contains stringent procedural requirements that do not apply to R&D authorities' challenges. Additionally, the R&D authorities allow the EPA to conduct prize contests to further the public's understanding of the importance of environmental protection.

For external purposes, the challenge.gov website serves as the portal for transparent tracking of prizes and challenge proposals. Challenges and competitions sponsored by the EPA will be accessible through challenge.gov and the posting of challenges will be approved by the review committee.

I encourage all offices to participate in leveraging this exciting resource. If you have questions about the America COMPETES Act or implementing challenges and competitions at the EPA, please contact our OPA colleague Roxanne Smith or Denice Shaw in ORD.

cc: Administrator
Deputy Assistant Administrators
Deputy Chiefs of Staff
Deputy Associate Administrators
Deputy Regional Administrators