



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

OFFICE OF  
INSPECTOR GENERAL

May 17, 2018

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** Project Notification:  
EPA's Processes for Preserving Emails and Text Messages,  
and Responding to Freedom of Information Act Requests  
Project No. OA&E-FY18-0217

*Rudolph M. Brevard*

**FROM:** Rudolph M. Brevard, Director  
Information Resources Management Directorate

**TO:** Andrew Wheeler, Deputy Administrator

Steven Fine, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator  
Office of Environmental Information

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to begin fieldwork to follow up on significant information technology security findings and recommendations noted in OIG reports issued between fiscal years 2013 and 2017, as well as to look into a hotline allegation received in fiscal year 2018. This project is the result of a congressional request and is not included in our annual audit plan.

The OIG's objectives are to determine whether the EPA took action to complete OIG recommendations regarding the preservation of email and text messages, and the improvement of the agency's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) process. The OIG plans to conduct work at headquarters and at regional offices as needed. Applicable generally accepted government auditing standards will be used in conducting the project. The anticipated benefits of this project are ensuring the effectiveness of EPA processes for preserving electronic records and responding to FOIA requests.

We will contact you to arrange a mutually agreeable time to discuss our objectives and the purpose of our project. We would also be particularly interested in 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 updates on a monthly basis and, further into the project, on a bi-weekly basis.

For the following audit reports, in addition to the information entered into the agency's Management Audit Tracking System, please provide, to the extent possible before or at the kickoff meeting: documented evidence on completed recommendations, access to data systems or databases, and personnel to be interviewed:

- *Congressionally Requested Audit: EPA Needs to Improve Processes for Preserving Text Messages as Federal Records* (Report No. [17-P-0062](#)), issued December 21, 2016.
- *Briefing Report: Review of EPA's Process to Release Information Under the Freedom of Information Act* (Report No. [14-P-0262](#)), issued May 16, 2014.
- *Congressionally Requested Inquiry into the EPA's Use of Private and Alias Email Accounts* (Report No. [13-P-0433](#)), issued September 26, 2013.

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 any 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*.

The project will be supervised by me and the Project Manager will be Jeremy Sigel. Any information related to the project should be addressed to me at (202) 566-0893 or [brevard.rudy@epa.gov](mailto:brevard.rudy@epa.gov), or Jeremy Sigel at (202) 566-0852 or [sigel.jeremy@epa.gov](mailto:sigel.jeremy@epa.gov).

cc: Ryan Jackson, Chief of Staff  
Henry Darwin, Chief of Operations  
Harvey Simon, Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for Environmental Information  
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Nancy Grantham, Acting Principal Deputy Associate Administrators for Public Affairs  
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Arthur A. Elkins Jr., Inspector General  
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