



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

OFFICE OF  
INSPECTOR GENERAL

August 6, 2014

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** Project Notification:  
Municipal Sewer Systems—Consent Decree Progress and Challenges  
Project No. OPE-FY14-0045

**FROM:** Dan Engelberg, Director, Water Evaluations /s/  
Office of Program Evaluation

**TO:** Cynthia Giles, Assistant Administrator  
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

Nancy Stoner, Acting Assistant Administrator  
Office of Water

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to begin preliminary research on the EPA's ongoing enforcement initiative focused on "keeping raw sewage and contaminated stormwater out of our nation's waters." This project is included in our fiscal year 2014 annual plan.

The overall evaluation objective is to determine what results the major municipal stormwater improvement programs have had on compliance and environmental quality (receiving surface water quality). Specifically, we will address the following questions:

1. How are selected municipalities implementing consent decrees issued under the EPA's enforcement initiative to keep raw sewage and contaminated stormwater out of the nation's waters, and are they achieving milestones and anticipated outcomes?
2. What opportunities exist for the EPA to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its tracking of the progress of consent decree implementation and outcomes?

The project will be conducted using applicable generally accepted government auditing standards. During the preliminary research phase, we plan to review documents, analyze data, and interview relevant managers and staff in the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA) and the Office of Water (OW), selected EPA regions, and selected states and localities. We will update agreed-upon contacts from your offices on a regular basis on the status of our evaluation.

We will work with your Audit Follow-Up Coordinator to arrange a kickoff meeting at a mutually agreeable time to discuss the objectives, scope and purpose of preliminary research, as well as the responsibilities of OECA, OW and the OIG during the evaluation. We will answer any questions you have about the evaluation process, reporting procedures, methods used to gather and analyze data, and what we should expect of each other during the course of the evaluation. At the kickoff meeting, we will

also be interested in hearing about any of your concerns and obtaining your input on regions, states and any experts we should contact during preliminary research.

Prior to our kickoff meeting, we request that you provide us with copies of, or links to, the following:

- A comprehensive list of the consent decrees signed under municipal sewer enforcement initiatives.
- OECA policies, procedures, guidance and protocols pertaining to the monitoring of municipal sewer system consent decrees.
- OECA policies, procedures and guidance for regional, state and local agency periodic reporting on their monitoring of municipal sewer system consent decrees.
- OECA policies, procedures and guidance for facilities operating under a municipal sewer system consent decree to periodically report their progress in meeting the terms and conditions of the consent decree to the EPA and/or the appropriate state or local agency.

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.

Any questions or information related to the audit should be addressed to me at (202) 566-0830 or [engelberg.dan@epa.gov](mailto:engelberg.dan@epa.gov); or the Project Manager, Katie Butler, at (404) 562-9736 or [butler.kathlene@epa.gov](mailto:butler.kathlene@epa.gov).

For suggestions on other audits or evaluations, please phone (202) 566-2391 or email [OIG\\_WEBCOMMENTS@epa.gov](mailto:OIG_WEBCOMMENTS@epa.gov). To report fraud, waste or abuse, please phone 1-888-546-8740 or email [OIG\\_Hotline@epa.gov](mailto:OIG_Hotline@epa.gov).

cc: Lawrence Starfield, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator, OECA  
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