



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

OFFICE OF  
INSPECTOR GENERAL

June 5, 2017

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** Project Notification:  
Evaluation of EPA's Approval Process for Air Quality Dispersion Models  
Project No. OPE-FY17-0016

**FROM:** James L. Hatfield, Director, Air Evaluations /s/  
Office of Program Evaluation

**TO:** Sarah Dunham, Acting Assistant Administrator  
Office of Air and Radiation

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to begin preliminary research to assess the effectiveness of EPA's process for reviewing and approving air quality dispersion models it recommends for use by state, local and tribal air pollution control agencies. This project is included in our fiscal year 2017 Annual Plan.

The OIG expects to focus its work on the Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. We plan to review applicable laws, regulations, policies, procedures and guidance related to the uses and evaluations of air quality dispersion models. We plan to primarily focus on the review and approval process for the American Meteorological Society/EPA Regulatory Model (AERMOD) during our preliminary research. Applicable generally accepted government auditing standards will be used in conducting our project. This project should provide value to the EPA, states and the public by assessing whether EPA-recommended models have been properly evaluated for their intended uses.

We will contact the Office of Air and Radiation's audit liaison to arrange a mutually agreeable time to discuss our objectives and the purpose of the preliminary research phase 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 regular basis as agreed upon at this meeting.

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

- All model evaluations of AERMOD (original or revised versions).
- All peer reviews of AERMOD (original or revised versions).
- All consequence analyses of AERMOD (original or revised versions).

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 Renee McGhee-Lenart. Any information related to the project should be addressed to me at (919) 541-1030 or [hatfield.jim@epa.gov](mailto:hatfield.jim@epa.gov), or Renee McGhee-Lenart at (913) 551-7534 or [mcghee-lenart.renee@epa.gov](mailto:mcghee-lenart.renee@epa.gov).

cc: Ryan Jackson, Chief of Staff

Elizabeth Shaw, Career Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Air and Radiation

Joseph Goffman, Associate Assistant Administrator and Senior Counsel, Office of Air and Radiation

Steve Page, Director, Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, Office of Air and Radiation

Marc Vincent, Audit Follow-Up Coordinator, Office of Air and Radiation

Benita Deane, Agency Follow-Up Coordinator

George Hull, Acting Associate Administrator for Public Affairs

Julia Valentine, Acting Director, Office of Media Relations, Office of Public Affairs

Regional Audit Follow-Up Coordinators, Regions 1–10

Arthur A. Elkins Jr., Inspector General

Charles Sheehan, Deputy Inspector General

Alan Larsen, Counsel to the Inspector General

Kevin Christensen, Assistant Inspector General for Audit

Carolyn Copper, Assistant Inspector General for Program Evaluation

Patrick Sullivan, Assistant Inspector General for Investigations

Edward Shields, Acting Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Management

Christine El-Zoghbi, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Program Evaluation

Jennifer Kaplan, Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Congressional and Public Affairs

Jeffrey Lagda, Congressional and Media Liaison, Office of Inspector General

Tia Elbaum, Congressional and Media Liaison, Office of Inspector General