



# At a Glance

## Why We Did This Project

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducted this audit in response to two congressional requests that raised concerns about glider vehicle testing conducted by the EPA in 2017.

A glider vehicle is a truck that uses a previously owned powertrain (including the engine, transmission and usually the rear axle) but has new body parts. In 2017, the EPA performed emissions testing on two glider vehicles, which it received by donation, at its National Vehicle and Fuel Emissions Laboratory in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The OIG also has an ongoing audit related to the development of a November 2017 proposed rulemaking pertaining to glider vehicles (see *Project Notification: Response to Congressional Request on Glider Repeal Actions*, Project No. [OA&E-FY19-0053](#)).

### This report addresses the following:

- *Improving air quality.*
- *Compliance with the law.*

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## EPA's 2017 Glider Vehicle Testing Complied with Standard Practices

### What We Found

We found that the EPA's selection and testing of the donated glider vehicles in 2017 was consistent with Clean Air Act authority, standard EPA practices, and relevant policies and procedures. We found that the EPA did not fully adhere to its delegation of authority related to the acceptance of donated property under the Clean Air Act. The delegation of authority establishes limitations that impede the EPA's ability to practically implement its donation acceptance authority. We also found that more direction on the solicitation and acceptance of donations would make the process more transparent, address concerns over preferential treatment, and potentially give the EPA more options to carry out its research objectives.

**The EPA's 2017 glider vehicle testing complied with EPA standard practices.**

We confirmed that EPA employees obtained approval to conduct glider vehicle testing and that EPA leadership received an August 2017 briefing on the potential for a glider vehicle test program before EPA career staff initiated the program. We found that EPA employees followed normal procedures in submitting the November 2017 glider vehicle test report to a public rulemaking docket.

We found no evidence that EPA staff deleted materials potentially responsive to Freedom of Information Act requests or records within the scope of our audit that were related to the EPA's 2017 glider vehicle testing.

We also found no evidence that a former Office of Transportation and Air Quality Center Director violated ethics restrictions either while serving as a federal employee or post federal employment.

### Recommendations and Planned Agency Corrective Actions

We recommend that the Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation, in consultation with the General Counsel, the Designated Agency Ethics Official, and the Assistant Administrator for Research and Development, revise the delegation of authority to enable practical implementation for the acceptance of donated property consistent with Section 104 of the Clean Air Act, and address pertinent ethics considerations. We also recommend that the Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation, in consultation with the General Counsel and the Designated Agency Ethics Official, evaluate and document whether the Office of Transportation and Air Quality needs to develop further guidance or policies to implement the delegation of authority for the acceptance of donated property under Section 104 of the Clean Air Act; and, if needed, develop the guidance or policies. The recommendations are resolved with corrective actions pending.