



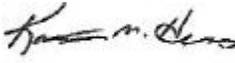
UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL

May 29, 2020

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Notification of Evaluation:
EPA's Oversight of Tribal Drinking Water Systems
Project No. OA&E-FY20-0044

FROM: Kathryn Hess, Acting Director 
Water Directorate
Office of Audit and Evaluation

TO: David P. Ross, Assistant Administrator
Office of Water

Susan Parker Bodine, Assistant Administrator
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

W.C. "Chad" McIntosh, Assistant Administrator
Office of International and Tribal Affairs

The Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency plans to begin an evaluation of EPA's oversight of tribal drinking water systems. This evaluation is included in our fiscal year 2020 annual plan and is being expanded to include the EPA's response to the coronavirus pandemic—that is, the SARS-CoV-2 virus and resultant COVID-19 disease.

The OIG's objectives are to determine:

- The effects of the EPA's oversight, including compliance assistance and enforcement activities, on the ability of public water systems in Indian Country to provide safe drinking water to customers.
- How the EPA modified its oversight to help public water systems in Indian Country provide safe drinking water to customers during the coronavirus pandemic.

The OIG plans to conduct work within the Office of Water, the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, the Office of International and Tribal Affairs, selected regions, and selected tribes. The evaluation will be conducted using *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*, issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. One anticipated benefit of this evaluation is identifying successful methods for using compliance assistance and enforcement activities to help tribal drinking water systems obtain and maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act.

We will contact you to arrange a mutually agreeable time to discuss our objectives. We would also be particularly interested in any areas of concern that you may have. We will answer any of your questions about the evaluation process, reporting procedures, methods used to gather and analyze data, and what we should expect of each other during the evaluation. Throughout the evaluation, we will provide updates on a regular basis.

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 immediately resolve the situation if an Agency employee or contractor refuses to provide requested materials 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 evaluation, and the project manager will be Tim Roach. Any information related to the project should be addressed to me at (617) 918-1487 or hess.kathryn@epa.gov, or to Tim Roach at (312) 886-3026 or roach.tim@epa.gov.

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