



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY



News Release

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Inspector General
Washington, D.C.

For Immediate Release
November 16, 2022
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EPA Office of Inspector General announces projects examining the water emergency in Jackson, Mississippi

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Inspector General today announced two projects related to the Jackson, Mississippi, drinking water emergency. These projects were initiated as a result of issues identified through the OIG’s previously announced inquiry into the crisis.

On September 13, 2022, the OIG announced an [initial inquiry](#) and began conducting interviews and gathering data that would form the basis for decision-making about subsequent work to follow. The inquiry examined compliance with regulations, policies, and procedures for oversight of the city’s water system and administration of Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds.

As a result of the information gathered, the OIG will undertake both an [evaluation](#) reviewing the EPA’s response and oversight of drinking water contamination in Jackson and an [audit](#) examining how funding and spending decisions at the state and local levels impacted the water crisis.

“The EPA OIG acted swiftly this past September, as it came to light that a water contamination crisis was severely impacting the community of Jackson, Mississippi,” said Inspector General Sean O’Donnell. “Based on what we learned through an initial inquiry on the ground there, my office now will pursue formal, comprehensive reviews to understand fully how the EPA conducted oversight of the water system and how Drinking Water State Revolving funds were awarded and expended. My office takes seriously the responsibility to oversight responses to environmental emergencies. Other work in this area includes the Benton Harbor and Flint, Michigan water emergencies and the Red Hill fuel spill.”

The OIG anticipates issuing final reports from both projects during the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2023, that is, between July and September. However, such estimates are always subject to change. The reports will be made publicly available on the OIG’s [website](#).

Anyone with knowledge of potential waste, fraud, and abuse relating to EPA operations and programs is encouraged to report it to the [OIG Hotline](#) at 1-888-546-8740 or OIG_Hotline@epa.gov.

The OIG is an independent office within the EPA that performs audits, evaluations, and investigations of the EPA and the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board, and their contractors, and prevents and detects fraud, waste and abuse. For more information, visit [our website](#) and follow the OIG on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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