



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

OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL

November 14, 2022

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Notification of Evaluation:
Review of EPA Response and Oversight Related to Drinking Water Contamination in Jackson, Mississippi
Project No. OSRE-FY23-0033

FROM: Patrick Gilbride, Director *Patrick D. Gilbride*
Implementation, Execution, and Enforcement Directorate
Office of Special Review and Evaluation

TO: Daniel Blackman, Regional Administrator
Region 4

The Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency plans to begin an evaluation to examine the EPA's response and oversight related to drinking water contamination in Jackson, Mississippi. This evaluation addresses the following top management challenge for the Agency: enforcing environmental laws and regulations.

Our objective is to determine the circumstances of, and the EPA's response to, noncompliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act at the City of Jackson's community water system. We plan to conduct work in EPA Region 4; however, we may also include work at EPA headquarters, the Mississippi State Department of Health, and the City of Jackson. The evaluation will be conducted using *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*, issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. The anticipated benefits of this evaluation include improved operational efficiency and greater human health and environmental protections.

We will contact you to arrange a mutually agreeable time to discuss our objective. 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 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. Similarly, EPA Manual 6500, *Functions and Activities of the Office of Inspector General* (1994), requires that each EPA employee cooperate with and fully disclose information to OIG. Also, Administrator Michael S. Regan, in an April 28, 2021 email message to EPA employees, conveyed his "expectation that EPA personnel provide OIG timely access to records or other information" and observed that "full cooperation with the OIG is in the best interest of the public we serve." We will request that you immediately resolve the

situation if an Agency employee or contractor refuses to provide requested materials to OIG or otherwise fails to cooperate with OIG. We may report unresolved access matters to the administrator and include the incident in the *Semiannual Report to Congress*.

We will post this memorandum on our public website at www.epa.gov/oig. Anyone with knowledge of potential fraud, waste, abuse, misconduct, or mismanagement related to this evaluation should contact the OIG Hotline at (888) 546-8740 or via an electronic form on the “OIG Hotline” [webpage](#).

cc: Janet McCabe, Deputy Administrator
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