



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D C. 20460

Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights  
Office of External Civil Rights Compliance

April 28, 2023

**Via Email**

**In Reply Refer to:**

EPA Complaint No.: 01D-19-R5

Thom Petersen, Commissioner  
Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
625 Robert Street North  
St. Paul, MN 55155-2538

Dear Commissioner Petersen:

This letter is to notify you that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of External Civil Rights Compliance (OECRC) has determined that the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has fully complied with the Informal Resolution Agreement (Agreement), dated August 20, 2019, between MDA and the OECRC, relating to EPA Complaint No. 01D-19-R5 (Complaint). Accordingly, OECRC is closing the monitoring of the Agreement and the Complaint itself as of the date of this letter.

Section III of the Agreement contains MDA's commitment to take action to address the following: public participation, notice of nondiscrimination, grievance procedures, access to MDA programs and services for persons with disabilities and/or limited-English proficiency, designation of a nondiscrimination coordinator, and training of MDA staff on its nondiscrimination policies and procedures and federal nondiscrimination obligations. Pursuant to Section IV.C. of the Agreement, MDA has submitted, and OECRC has approved, reports demonstrating completion of deliverables including MDA's Notice of Nondiscrimination, Grievance Procedures, Designation of a Nondiscrimination Coordinator, Language Access Plan, Public Participation Plan, and Disability Policy described in Section III of the Agreement. On February 1, 2023, by email MDA purported to notify OECRC that it had fulfilled the remaining commitment by providing civil rights training for all 498 MDA employees and affirming that it would require this same training program for all new employees as required under Section III.G of the Agreement. By satisfying the staff training commitment, MDA has now fulfilled its commitments as set forth in Section III of the Agreement.

Neither the closure of the monitoring or closure of the Complaint affects MDA's continuing responsibility under Title VI, Section 504, 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7, and, as applicable, other federal nondiscrimination laws,<sup>1</sup> nor does it affect EPA's investigation of any Title VI or other

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federal civil rights complaint or address any other matter not covered by the closure. This letter is not a formal statement of EPA policy and should not be relied upon, cited, or construed as such.

I thank you and your staff for your cooperation in this matter. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 202-809-3297, by e-mail at [hoang.anhthu@epa.gov](mailto:hoang.anhthu@epa.gov), or Zahra Khan, Case Manager at 202-564-0460, by email at [khan.zahra@epa.gov](mailto:khan.zahra@epa.gov).

Sincerely,

Anhthu Hoang  
Acting Director  
Office of External Civil Rights  
Compliance

cc: Ariadne Goerke  
Deputy Associate General Counsel  
Civil Rights & Finance Law Office

Debra Shore  
Acting Deputy Regional Administrator  
Deputy Civil Rights Official  
EPA Region 5

Robert Kaplan  
Regional Counsel  
EPA Region 5

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<sup>1</sup> See Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 United States Code §§ 2000d to 2000d-7 (Title VI); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, 29 U.S.C. § 794; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 et seq.; Age Discrimination Act of 1975, 42 U.S.C. §§ 6101 et seq.; Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972, Pub. L. 92-500 § 13, 86 Stat. 903 (codified as amended at 33 U.S.C. § 1251 (1972)); 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7.