



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

November 15, 2023

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Notification:
Evaluation of the EPA's Implementation of the Underground Injection Control Class VI Well Program
Project No. OSRE-FY24-0023

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

TO: Radhika Fox, Assistant Administrator
Office of Water

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Inspector General plans to begin an evaluation of the EPA's Underground Injection Control Class VI Well Program. This evaluation addresses the following fiscal year 2024 top [management challenges](#) for the Agency: managing grants, contracts, and data systems; maximizing compliance with environmental laws and regulations; and mitigating the causes and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

Our objective is to determine whether the EPA has used available resources, including funding appropriated by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, to improve permitting of Class VI wells under its Underground Injection Control Program. We intend to identify how the EPA either has used or plans to use \$5 million in annual Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding from fiscal year 2022 through 2026 to improve Class VI well permitting. We will review the EPA's role as the primary enforcement authority for states that do not have primacy for the Underground Injection Control Class VI Well Program, and we will assess how the program is being directly implemented by the Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water and EPA regions. We will conduct the evaluation 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 increased assurance that the EPA is making effective use of available resources to improve permitting under the Underground Injection Control Class VI Well Program and efficiently manage the influx of permit applications.

We will contact you to arrange a mutually agreeable time to discuss our objective. At that time, we can discuss any concerns that you may have and answer any 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 Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, authorizes the OIG to have timely access to personnel and all materials necessary to complete our 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 the OIG. Also, Administrator Michael S. Regan, in a May 16, 2023 email to EPA employees, stated that the “agency and its employees have a duty to cooperate with OIG” and observed that “full engagement and collaboration between the OIG and EPA provides our agency with the opportunity to improve program performance and efficiency.” If an Agency employee or contractor refuses to provide requested materials to the OIG or otherwise fails to cooperate with the OIG, we will request that you immediately resolve the situation. Consistent with the Inspector General Act, we may report unresolved access matters to the administrator and to Congress.

We will post this memorandum on our public website at www.epaoig.gov. 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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