



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

April 17, 2025

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Notification:
Lessons Learned from Prior Oversight of the EPA's Disaster Response Efforts
Project No. OA-FY25-0054

FROM: Erica Hauck, Director
Pollution Control and Cleanup Directorate
Office of Audit

TO: Chad McIntosh, Acting Deputy Administrator

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Inspector General plans to review prior EPA OIG and U.S. Government Accountability Office reports to identify lessons related to the EPA's disaster response efforts. The project number is OA-FY25-0054.

Our objective is to describe the lessons we identify from select EPA OIG and U.S. Government Accountability Office oversight reports to help inform the EPA's future efforts to prepare for and respond to natural disasters. This project does not constitute an audit or evaluation but is intended to comprise a review of documentation from prior EPA OIG and Government Accountability Office reports. Therefore, this work will not be conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards or with the *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*, issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. We will, however, follow the OIG's quality control procedures to ensure that the information in the report is accurate and supported.

We will contact the audit liaisons in the relevant program offices to arrange a mutually agreeable time to discuss our objective. At that time, we will answer any questions from the program offices about our process, reporting procedures, and methods used to gather and analyze data.

To expedite our project, we request that Agency staff be ready to provide, at or before the entrance conference, data that represents the EPA's costs to conduct natural disaster response work from January 2020 through December 2024. This data should include the total costs and number of EPA personnel utilized for EPA responses to each natural disaster within that time.

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. Additionally, Administrator Lee Zeldin, in a February 7, 2025 email to EPA employees, said that "the OIG requires

information and assistance from EPA managers and staff on a regular basis” and outlined his expectation that EPA employees “report waste, fraud, and abuse to the OIG.” He explained that this “responsibility to report appropriate activity to the OIG is one of the most important and successful means the OIG has for identifying and stopping wrongdoing” and that review and oversight enable the Agency to be more effective in achieving its mission. 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 project should contact the OIG Hotline at (888) 546-8740 or via an electronic form on the “OIG Hotline” [webpage](#).

cc: Travis Voyles, Assistant Deputy Administrator
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Wesley J. Carpenter, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Administrator
Barry Breen, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Land and Emergency Management
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