



OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

September 11, 2025

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Notification:
Evaluation of the EPA's Oversight of Ohio's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permitting Program for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations
Project No. OSRE-FY25-0083

FROM: Paul H. Bergstrand, Assistant Inspector General
Office of Special Review and Evaluation

TO: Anne Vogel, Regional Administrator
EPA Region 5

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of Inspector General plans to begin an evaluation of the EPA's oversight of Ohio's permitting program under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System for concentrated animal feeding operations. This evaluation is the result of OIG Hotline complaints alleging that animal waste from concentrated animal feeding operations may be entering Lake Erie through Ohio's Maumee River Watershed.

Our objective is to determine whether the EPA's oversight verifies that Ohio's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permitting program implements all federal regulatory requirements related to nutrient management plans for concentrated animal feeding operations. We plan to conduct work within the Water Division of EPA Region 5. We will conduct the evaluation using *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*, issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.

We will contact your office to arrange a mutually agreeable time to discuss our objective. At that time, we can discuss any concerns 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 objective. 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. 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 evaluation should contact the OIG Hotline at (888) 546-8740 or via an electronic form on the “OIG Hotline” [webpage](#).

cc: David Fotouhi, Deputy Administrator

Travis Voyles, Associate Deputy Administrator

Eric Amidon, Chief of Staff, Office of the Administrator

Wesley J. Carpenter, Deputy Chief of Staff for Management, Office of the Administrator

Cheryl Newton, Deputy Regional Administrator for Region 5

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