

# OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY



## COMPENDIUM OF OPEN AND UNRESOLVED RECOMMENDATIONS



Data as of  
March 31, 2022

## Abbreviations

EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
OIG	Office of Inspector General
U.S.C.	United States Code

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# At a Glance

## Why We Published This Compendium

Section 5 of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (5 U.S.C. App. 3), requires each inspector general to prepare semiannual reports for Congress, which must include “an identification of each significant recommendation described in previous semi-annual reports on which corrective action has not been completed.”

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Inspector General is publishing this compendium to analyze the open and unresolved recommendations listed in the semiannual report covering our work from October 1, 2021, through March 31, 2022. Our intention is to produce this compendium twice a year following each semiannual report publication.

**Open recommendations** are those that the EPA and the OIG agree on but for which the agreed-to corrective action has not been completed. This includes recommendations with corrective actions past due or due in the future. **Unresolved recommendations** are those for which the Agency and the OIG do not agree on the corrective action, the proposed corrective action completion date, or the completion of the corrective action.

Address inquiries to our public affairs office at (202) 566-2391 or [OIG\\_WEBCOMMENTS@epa.gov](mailto:OIG_WEBCOMMENTS@epa.gov).

List of [OIG Reports](#).

## Compendium of Open and Unresolved Recommendations: Data as of March 31, 2022

### What We Found

This compendium focuses on 175 recommendations (156 open and 19 unresolved) identified in Report No. [EPA-350-R-22-001](#), *Semiannual Report to Congress: October 1, 2021–March 31, 2022*, issued May 2022. These recommendations represent \$29.70 million in potential monetary benefits. In this compendium, we also discuss:

- The breakdown of unresolved recommendations, including recommendations the Agency previously reported as closed.
- The relationship of open and unresolved recommendations to the EPA’s fiscal year 2022 top management challenges, which we identify in OIG Report No. [22-N-0004](#), *EPA’s Fiscal Year 2022 Top Management Challenges*, issued November 12, 2021.
- 17 high-priority (open or unresolved) recommendations the OIG identified.
- The breakdown of open recommendations by program office and region.
- 103 open recommendations to improve human health and the environment and 53 recommendations to improve administrative and business functions.
- Open recommendations that are at least three years old, as well as corrective actions that are not scheduled to be completed within three years of report issuance.

From March 2017 through March 2022, the OIG issued 11 semiannual reports to Congress. These reports identified an average of 104 open recommendations and 18 unresolved recommendations to the EPA. The total potential monetary benefit was, on average, \$147.8 million for the recommendations.



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

THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

August 2, 2022

**MEMORANDUM**

**SUBJECT:** Compendium of Open and Unresolved Recommendations: Data as of March 31, 2022

**FROM:** Sean W. O'Donnell

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean W O'Donnell".

**TO:** Michael S. Regan, Administrator  
Janet McCabe, Deputy Administrator

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Inspector General presents the *Compendium of Open and Unresolved Recommendations: Data as of March 31, 2022*, which details the status of 156 open and 19 unresolved recommendations issued to the EPA as of March 31, 2022.

The Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, requires each inspector general to prepare semiannual reports for Congress, which must include "an identification of each significant recommendation described in previous semi-annual reports on which corrective action has not been completed." This compendium provides an analysis of the open or unresolved recommendations identified in the *Semiannual Report to Congress: October 1, 2021–March 31, 2022* (OIG Report No. [EPA-350-R-22-001](#)), issued May 2022.

Section 1 focuses on unresolved recommendations. Section 2 outlines how open and unresolved recommendations relate to the EPA's top management challenges, which we detail in *EPA's Fiscal Year 2022 Top Management Challenges* (OIG Report No. [22-N-0004](#)), issued November 12, 2022. Section 3 identifies 17 high-priority (open or unresolved) recommendations. Section 4 identifies open recommendations by program and regional office. Section 5 discusses the (1) human health and environmental benefits and (2) administrative and business benefits of the open recommendations. Section 6 lists the open recommendations that are at least three years old, as well as those recommendations with proposed corrective actions not scheduled to be completed within three years of report issuance.

We will post this report to our website at [www.epa.gov/oig](http://www.epa.gov/oig).

cc: Assistant Administrators  
General Counsel  
Chief Financial Officer  
Associate Administrators  
Regional Administrators

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## INTRODUCTION

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### Terminology

In this compendium, we discuss the open and unresolved recommendations that the Office of Inspector General has made to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. **Open recommendations** are OIG recommendations for which the Agency has proposed corrective actions and estimated completion dates, and has gained the OIG's agreement, but which the Agency has not yet completed. **Unresolved recommendations** are those for which the Agency and the OIG do not agree on the corrective action, the proposed corrective action completion date, or the completion of the corrective action.

Section 5 of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended (5 U.S.C. app.), requires each inspector general to prepare semiannual reports for Congress. This must include "an identification of each significant recommendation described in previous semiannual reports on which corrective action has not been completed." Section 5 also requires these semiannual reports to list prior audit, inspection, and evaluation reports for which management made no decision. Accordingly, the EPA OIG includes lists in each of its semiannual reports to Congress of the OIG's open and unresolved recommendations to the EPA.

### Purpose

This compendium analyzes the OIG's open or unresolved recommendations to keep Agency management and Congress informed about the EPA's:

- Outstanding commitments to act on OIG recommendations.
- Progress in completing corrective actions, which will help improve its programs and operations.

As of March 31, 2022, the EPA had not implemented 156 OIG recommendations.<sup>1</sup> The full text of these recommendations and any associated monetary benefits can be viewed in Appendix 3 of OIG Report No. [EPA-350-R-22-001](#), *Semiannual Report to Congress: October 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022*, issued May 2022. Additionally, as of March 31, 2022, the OIG issued 19 recommendations to the EPA that remain unresolved, one of which is considered high priority. These recommendations can be found in Appendix 2 of the *Semiannual Report to Congress* cited above.

### Background

The Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, requires the OIG to analyze and report on open or unimplemented recommendations. For example, Section 5(a)(3) of the IG Act requires each inspector general to identify significant recommendations described in previous semiannual reports on which corrective action has not been completed. As another example, Section 5(a)(10) requires a summary of

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<sup>1</sup> The EPA OIG also provides oversight to the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board. However, with only three open recommendations, the CSB did not have the volume to make a compendium necessary. The recommendations issued to the CSB that remained open as of March 31, 2022, can be viewed in Appendix 3 of OIG Report No. [EPA-350-R-22-001](#), *Semiannual Report to Congress: October 1, 2021–March 31, 2022*, issued May 2022.



each audit, inspection, and evaluation report in which: (a) no management decision has been made by the end of the reporting period, (b) no comment was made within 60 days of report issuance, or (c) if there are any outstanding unimplemented recommendations. And Section 5(a)(12) requires reporting of any significant management decisions related to recommendations for which the Inspector General does not agree with. One way the OIG meets this statutory obligation is through this compendium.

The Office of Management and Budget Circular A-50, *Audit Follow-up*, dated September 29, 1982, also provides insight into the recommendation process, such as the role of the OIG in alerting the EPA or the CSB to open or unresolved recommendations. Specifically, the circular:

- Affirms that management's corrective actions on resolved findings and recommendations are essential for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of government operations.
- States that audit follow-up is a shared responsibility of agency management officials and auditors.
- Requires each agency to ensure that systems are in place for the prompt and proper resolution and implementation of audit recommendations.

The importance of resolving recommendations is reflected in OMB Circular A-50's requirement that the EPA work with the OIG to resolve recommendations. EPA Manual 2750, *Audit Management Procedures*, which is based in part on OMB Circular A-50, similarly reflects the importance of resolving OIG recommendations. To this end, the EPA's chief financial officer is designated as the EPA's principal audit follow-up official. As the principal audit follow-up official, the CFO is responsible for ensuring agencywide audit resolution and overseeing the Agency's implementation of corrective actions. If the OIG and the audited or evaluated EPA office cannot reach a resolution, the Office of the Chief Financial Officer will hold resolution discussions with the OIG and the relevant Agency office. If the discussions do not achieve resolution, the EPA deputy administrator, as the official to determine the matter to be resolved, will review the issue and make a decision as to the status of the Agency's proposed action.

## Compendium Data Sources

Table 1 outlines the relevant information from the March 2017–March 2022 semiannual reports to Congress used to produce this compendium.

**Table 1: Semiannual reporting data relevant to the development of this compendium\***

Semiannual reporting period	Number of open and unresolved recommendations	Potential monetary benefits (in millions)
10/01/16 – 03/31/17	114	\$110.23
04/01/17 – 09/30/17	73	\$112.33
10/01/17 – 03/31/18	133	\$865.69
04/01/18 – 09/30/18	76	\$89.21
10/01/18 – 03/31/19	148	\$92.47
04/01/19 – 09/30/19	93	\$71.07
10/01/19 – 03/31/20	138	\$69.85
04/01/20 – 09/30/20	138	\$115.45
10/01/20 – 03/31/21	136	\$40.60
04/01/21 – 09/30/21	119	\$30.60
10/01/21 – 03/31/22	175	\$29.70

Source: OIG Semiannual Reports to Congress issued 2017–2022. (EPA OIG table)

\* U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board and single audit report data were not included.



## SECTION 1: Unresolved Recommendations

A recommendation is unresolved when the Agency and the OIG do not agree on the corrective action, the proposed corrective action completion date, or the completion of the corrective action.

Table 2 provides an overview of the EPA's 19 unresolved OIG recommendations as of March 31, 2022, and as reported in OIG Report No. [EPA-350-R-22-001](#), *Semiannual Report to Congress: October 1, 2021–March 31, 2022*. The table delineates these recommendations by the EPA office or region responsible for implementing the associated corrective actions. The 19 unresolved recommendations were issued across nine reports.

If addressed, the 19 unresolved recommendations would potentially impact four of the seven EPA top management challenges the OIG identified for fiscal year 2022. Specifically, seven unresolved recommendations are related to integrating and leading environmental justice across the Agency and government; five pertain to managing infrastructure funding and business operations; four concern enforcing environmental laws and regulations; and three relate to ensuring the safe use of chemicals. [Appendix A](#) details the unresolved recommendations by report, including summaries of OIG and EPA positions, affected management challenges, and any progress made toward resolution.

**Table 2: Unresolved recommendations by responsible office**

Responsible office	Number of unresolved recommendations
Associate Deputy Administrator (within the Office of the Administrator)	1 recommendation across 1 report
Office of Air and Radiation	7 recommendations across 3 reports
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance	6 recommendations across 3 reports
Office of Land and Emergency Management	3 recommendations across 1 report
Office of Water	2 recommendations across 1 report

Source: OIG Report No. [EPA-350-R-22-001](#), *Semiannual Report to Congress: October 1, 2021–March 31, 2022*. (EPA OIG table)

Table 3 presents 13 recommendations that the Agency closed, having reported the corrective actions as completed, but for which the OIG determined necessary corrective actions were not completed. As the Agency has not provided a revised completion date for these recommendations, they are unresolved. These 13 recommendations concern five offices, six reports, and three management challenges. Six of the recommendations contain human health or environmental benefits, and seven contain administrative or business benefits. [Appendix B](#) details these previously closed recommendations by report with the other open and unresolved recommendations, indicating the relevant management challenge, report title, EPA office, number of recommendations, and recommendation benefit type. The six reports containing the 13 unresolved recommendations are identified.

**Table 3: Previously closed, unresolved recommendations by responsible office**

Responsible office	Number of previously closed recommendations
Office of Mission Support	2 recommendations across 2 reports
Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention	3 recommendations across 1 report
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance and Office of Water*	2 recommendations across 1 report
Office of Land and Emergency Management	5 recommendations across 1 report
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance	1 recommendation across 1 report

\*These recommendations were issued to both offices within the same report.

Source: OIG Report No. [EPA-350-R-22-001](#), *Semiannual Report to Congress: October 1, 2021–March 31, 2022*. (EPA OIG table)

## **SECTION 2: Implementing Open and Unresolved Recommendations Would Help EPA Mitigate Its Top Management Challenges**

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The EPA faces significant challenges in accomplishing its mission. Our office makes annual public reports on the EPA's top management challenges, wherein we assess the major challenges that affect EPA operations. In fiscal year 2021, we identified seven top management challenges for the EPA in OIG Report No. [22-N-0004](#), *EPA's Fiscal Year 2022 Top Management Challenges*. Drawing attention to these key issues is an essential component of the OIG's mission. In Table 4, we enumerate the EPA's open and unresolved recommendations that, if implemented or resolved, would help the EPA mitigate its challenges. [Appendix B](#) details the management challenge that relates to each report that contains these open and unresolved recommendations.

**Table 4: EPA’s top management challenges and related open and unresolved recommendations**

Management challenge	Description of challenge	Number of open and unresolved recommendations
<b>Mitigating the causes and adapting to the impacts of climate change</b>	The EPA, with its mission of protecting human health and the environment, is uniquely positioned to lead in addressing climate change nationally. It will also work internationally to mitigate the causes and adapt to the impacts of climate change.	<b>3</b> open recommendations across <b>1</b> report <i>These recommendations concern EPA action needed to address the threat of harmful algal blooms occurrences of which scientists predict will increase due to climate change.</i>
<b>Integrating and leading environmental justice across the Agency and government</b>	The EPA needs to enhance its consideration of environmental justice across programs and regions. The EPA also needs to continue its leadership in this area.	<b>30</b> open and <b>4</b> unresolved recommendations across <b>10</b> reports <i>Corrective actions could further the EPA’s goal of providing an environment where all people enjoy the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards. These recommendations support the EPA’s aim of giving equal access to the decision-making process for maintaining a healthy environment to live, learn, and work in.</i>
<b>Ensuring the safe use of chemicals</b>	To effectively protect public health and the environment, the EPA must be able to conduct credible and timely assessments of the risks from pesticides, toxic chemicals, and other environmental chemical risks.	<b>24</b> open recommendations across <b>9</b> reports <i>Progress on these recommendations will help the EPA prevent pollution, protect against pesticide misuse, increase the effectiveness of its programs and improve regulation involving pesticides and other chemicals.</i>
<b>Safeguarding scientific integrity principles</b>	Science-based decisions at the EPA must be based on principles of scientific integrity to protect human health and the environment using the best available science. This includes developing new processes and updating regulations, policies, and guidance.	<b>7</b> open recommendations across <b>2</b> reports <i>Improving implementation of the Scientific Integrity Policy will enable the EPA to accomplish its mission to protect human health and the environment more effectively.</i>
<b>Ensuring information technology and systems are protected against cyberthreats</b>	Information technology is a fundamental and essential resource for the EPA to carry out its mission.	<b>1</b> open recommendations across <b>1</b> report <i>Deficiencies in the EPA’s information technology internal controls could be used to exploit weaknesses in Agency applications and hinder the EPA’s ability to prevent, detect, and respond to emerging cyberthreats.</i>
<b>Managing infrastructure funding and business operations</b>	Over the next 5 years, and beyond, the EPA will help implement one of the largest investments in infrastructure in our history. The Agency must effectively oversee the funding and operation of America’s water, wastewater, and other environmental infrastructure.	<b>55</b> open and <b>9</b> unresolved recommendations across <b>25</b> reports <i>The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, signed into law on November 15, 2021, appropriated approximately \$60 billion to the EPA over Fiscal Years 2022–2026, for investments in infrastructure. The EPA will make significant investments in advancing public health and safety by improving drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure, cleaning up legacy pollution, investing in healthier air for children, increasing its workforce, and increasing the country’s climate resilience. Proposed actions to address oversight and management controls will help ensure the Agency administers these investments efficiently and effectively.</i>
<b>Enforcing environmental laws and regulations</b>	A robust enforcement program is vital to deterring regulated entities from violating environmental laws and regulations and to protecting human health and the environment.	<b>36</b> open and <b>6</b> unresolved recommendations across <b>14</b> reports <i>A decline in the EPA’s enforcement activities may expose the public and the environment to undetected harmful pollutants.</i>

Source: OIG Report No. [EPA-350-R-22-001](#), *Semiannual Report to Congress: October 1, 2021–March 31, 2022*. (EPA OIG table)

### **SECTION 3: High-Priority (Open or Unresolved) Recommendations**

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We identified 17 high-priority (open or unresolved) recommendations, issued across nine OIG reports, based on the fact that these recommendations:

- Offered significant contributions to the improvement of human health, the environment, or business operations.
- Identified potential funds to be put to better use.
- Relate to top management challenges.

This section identifies the high-priority recommendations, specifies which management challenges they aim to mitigate, and classifies them by the benefits to be gained from their implementation.

#### **Recommendations Containing Human Health or Environmental Benefits**

If implemented, 15 of the 17 high-priority open or unresolved recommendations would benefit human health or the environment. Eight reports detailed in the tables below contain these 15 high-priority recommendations. These recommendations would also help the EPA address five of its top management challenges: enforcing environmental laws and regulations, ensuring the safe use of chemicals, integrating and leading environmental justice across the Agency and government; and mitigating the causes and adapting to impacts of climate change.

## ***Limited Oversight of Permits May Allow Facilities to Emit Excess Pollution That Would Otherwise be Subject to Stringent Clean Air Act Requirements***

<b>Report</b>	
<b>Number</b>	<a href="#">21-P-0175</a>
<b>Date issued</b>	July 8, 2021
<b>Title</b>	<i>EPA Should Conduct More Oversight of Synthetic-Minor-Source Permitting to Assure Permits Adhere to EPA Guidance</i>
<b>High-priority recommendations</b>	
Numeration in the “High-priority recommendations issued within report” row refers to the recommendation within the report	
<b>Responsible offices</b>	Office of Air and Radiation
<b>High-priority recommendations issued within report</b>	5. Identify all state, local, and tribal agencies in which Clean Air Act permit program implementation fails to adhere to the public participation requirements for synthetic-minor-source permit issuance and take appropriate steps to assure the identified states adhere to the public participation requirements.
<b>Status of high-priority recommendations</b>	Open Recommendation 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned completion date: December 31, 2023</li> </ul>
<b>Associated top management challenge and description</b>	<i>Enforcing environmental laws and regulations.</i> While the EPA oversees compliance monitoring activities at synthetic-minor facilities to assure that facilities comply with their permits, the EPA conducts minimal oversight of the permits themselves. The EPA has issued guidance for state and local agencies to develop synthetic-minor-source permit limitations to assure that the limits are enforceable as a practical matter. However, the EPA does not assess whether state and local agencies' permit limits have complied with this guidance. We found that 23 of the 30 synthetic-minor-source permits we reviewed in the natural gas extraction industry did not adhere to all elements of the EPA's guidance on practical enforceability. In cases where permit limits did not meet their practical enforceability guidance due to insufficient monitoring requirements, it could be more difficult to detect when a synthetic-minor source has violated them or is emitting pollutants at a major-source level. The EPA should increase its oversight of synthetic-minor-source permits to better assure that they adhere to EPA guidance and can be enforced.

## Testing and Controls Necessary for EPA to Make Measurable Progress to Safeguard Against the Risk of Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals

Report	
Number	<a href="#">21-E-0186</a>
Date issued	July 28, 2021
Title	<i>EPA's Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program Has Made Limited Progress in Assessing Pesticides</i>
High-priority recommendations	
Numeration in the "High-priority recommendations issued within report" row refers to the recommendation within the report	
Responsible offices	Office of the Chief Financial Officer
High-priority recommendations issued within report	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Issue Tier 1 test orders for each List 2 chemical or publish an explanation for public comment on why Tier 1 data are no longer needed to characterize a List 2 chemical's endocrine-disruption activity.</li> <li>3. Issue List 1-Tier 2 test orders for the 18 pesticides in which additional Tier 2 testing was recommended or publish an explanation for public comment on why Tier 2 data are no longer needed to characterize the endocrine-disruption activity for each of these 18 pesticides.</li> <li>7. Conduct annual internal program reviews of the Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program.</li> </ol>
Status of high-priority recommendations	<p><i>Open</i></p> <p>Recommendation 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned completion date: September 30, 2025</li> </ul> <p>Recommendation 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned completion date: September 30, 2024</li> </ul> <p>Recommendation 7:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned completion date: September 30, 2022</li> </ul>
Associated top management challenge and description	<p><i>Ensuring the safe use of chemicals.</i> Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program testing delays are inconsistent with Section 408(p)(6) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. That section directs the EPA to take appropriate action to protect public health if testing and evaluation finds a substance affects the human endocrine system. Without the required testing, the EPA cannot progress toward compliance with statutory requirements or safeguard human health and the environment against risk from endocrine-disrupting chemicals. Without internal controls, the EDSP cannot have reasonable assurance that the program's goals and objectives will be accomplished and that resources will be allocated efficiently and effectively. Moreover, an established system of management controls would provide mechanisms for consistent program operation.</p>



## ***Lack of Data or Tools Prevents the EPA’s Identification of Over 350 Pollutants in Biosolids***

<b>Report</b>	
<b>Number</b>	<a href="#">19-P-0002</a>
<b>Date issued</b>	November 15, 2018
<b>Title</b>	<i>EPA Unable to Assess the Impact of Hundreds of Unregulated Pollutants in Land-Applied Biosolids on Human Health and the Environment</i>
<b>High-priority recommendations</b>	
<b>Numeration in the “High-priority recommendations issued within report” row refers to the recommendation within the report</b>	
<b>Responsible office</b>	Office of Water—specifically the Assistant Administrator for Water
<b>High-priority recommendation issued within report</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Complete development of the probabilistic risk assessment tool and screening tool for biosolids land application scenarios.</li> <li>4. Develop and implement a plan to obtain the additional data needed to complete risk assessments and finalize safety determinations on the 352 identified pollutants in biosolids and promulgate regulations as needed.</li> </ol>
<b>Status of high-priority recommendation</b>	<p><i>Open</i></p> <p>Recommendation 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned completion date: December 31, 2021</li> <li>• Revised completion date: March 31, 2023</li> </ul> <p>Recommendation 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned completion date: December 31, 2022</li> </ul>
<b>Associated top management challenge and description</b>	<p><i>Ensuring the safe use of chemicals.</i> The controls over the land application of sewage sludge (biosolids), including laws, regulations, guidance, policies, or activities, were incomplete or had weaknesses and may not fully protect human health and the environment. The EPA consistently monitored biosolids for nine regulated pollutants. However, the Agency lacked the data or risk assessment tools needed to determine the safety of 352 pollutants found in biosolids. The EPA identified these pollutants in a variety of studies from 1989 through 2015. Our analysis determined that the 352 pollutants include 61 designated as acutely hazardous, hazardous or priority pollutants in other programs. The Clean Water Act requires the EPA to review biosolids regulations at least every two years to identify additional pollutants and promulgate regulations for such pollutants.</p>

## Effective Risk Communication is Critical to Enable Community Risk Management

Report	
Number	<a href="#">21-P-0223</a>
Date issued	September 9, 2021
Title	<i>EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management Lacked a Nationally Consistent Strategy for Communicating Health Risks at Contaminated Sites</i>
High-priority recommendations	
Numeration in the "High-priority recommendations issued within report" row refers to the recommendation within the report	
Responsible offices	Office of Land and Emergency Management
High-priority recommendations issued within report	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Establish and implement internal controls for the Office of Land and Emergency Management to conduct periodic evaluations of the risk communication efforts and outreach at Office of Land and Emergency Management–led sites. Periodically summarize Office of Land and Emergency Management programwide risk communication evaluation results to share across the Office of Land and Emergency Management programs and with EPA regions. Use these risk communication evaluation results when warranted to modify the Office of Land and Emergency Management programwide risk communication strategy, as appropriate.</li> <li>3. Establish and implement internal controls for the Office of Land and Emergency Management to provide community members, when sampling results or other indicators show that they are or may be exposed to environmental health hazards, with: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Information that allows them to manage their risks.</li> <li>b. Resources to contact to address the health impacts of the exposure.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
Status of high-priority recommendations	<p><i>Open</i></p> <p>Recommendation 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned completion date: September 30, 2022</li> </ul> <p>Recommendation 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned completion date: September 30, 2022</li> </ul>
Associated top management challenge and description	<i>Integrating and leading environmental justice across the Agency and government.</i> OLEM's risk communication efforts do not consistently provide community members living on or near contaminated sites with an understanding of their risk level or what steps—if any—are necessary to protect themselves from contamination. In addition, OLEM programs do not consistently use or promote existing tools that could improve risk communication. The EPA's ability to effectively communicate risk is critical to enabling community members to manage their risks of exposure to harmful contaminants.

## Harmful Algal Blooms Impact Recreational and Drinking Water

Report	
Number	<a href="#">21-E-0264</a>
Date issued	September 29, 2021
Title	<i>EPA Needs an Agencywide Strategic Action Plan to Address Harmful Algal Blooms</i>
High-priority recommendations	
Numeration in the “High-priority recommendations issued within report” row refers to the recommendation within the report	
Responsible offices	Office of Water
High-priority recommendations issued within report	3. Mindful that the EPA has substantial work to complete before publishing final numeric water quality criteria recommendations for nitrogen and phosphorus under the Clean Water Act for rivers and streams, establish a plan, including milestones and identification of resource needs, for developing and publishing those criteria recommendations. <b>Management challenge: enforcing environmental laws and regulations.</b>
	4. Assess and evaluate the available information on human health risks from exposure to cyanotoxins in drinking water and recreational waters to determine whether actions under the Safe Drinking Water Act are warranted. <b>Management challenge: Ensuring the safe use of chemicals.</b>
Status of high-priority recommendations	<p><i>Open</i></p> <p>Recommendation 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned completion date: Unresolved</li> <li>Revised completion date: April 30, 2023</li> </ul> <p>Recommendation 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned completion date: December 31, 2022</li> </ul>
Associated top management challenge and description	<i>Enforcing environmental laws and regulations and ensuring the safe use of chemicals.</i> Harmful algal blooms affect our nation’s recreational and drinking waters. They occur when, among other conditions, high levels of nutrients—nitrogen and phosphorus—pollute rivers, lakes, and reservoirs. These nutrients reach bodies of water from sources such as livestock operations (fertilizer runoff from farm fields), lawns, and gardens, urban stormwater, and industrial and municipal discharges. The EPA does not have an agencywide strategy for addressing harmful algal blooms, despite Congress appointing the EPA administrator as the leader for federal actions focused on reducing freshwater harmful algal blooms.

## Clean Air Act Compliance May be Hindered by Title V Program Implementation Issues

Report	
Number	<a href="#">22-E-0017</a>
Date issued	January 12, 2022
Title	<i>EPA's Title V Program Needs to Address Ongoing Fee Issues and Improve Oversight</i>
High-priority recommendations	
Numeration in the "High-priority recommendations issued within report" row refers to the recommendation within the report	
Responsible offices	Office of Air and Radiation
High-priority recommendations issued within report	2. In Collaboration with EPA regions, develop and implement a plan to address declining Clean Air Act Title V revenues.
Status of high-priority recommendations	<p><i>Open</i></p> <p>Recommendation 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned completion date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Q4, FY 2023.</li> <li><a href="#">EPA's Response</a> as of March 22nd</li> <li><a href="#">OIG's response</a> accepting corrective action dates of March 22<sup>nd</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Associated top management challenge and description	<p><i>Mitigating the causes and adapting to impacts of climate change.</i> The Title V permit program requires certain sources of air pollution to obtain permits. These permits help to ensure that such sources comply with environmental regulations. The Clean Air Act requires each entity implementing a Title V program, also known as a permitting authority, to collect fees from Title V sources sufficient to fund all reasonable Title V program costs. These fees cannot be used to pay for non-Title V activities. Lack of consistent oversight and persistent Title V fee challenges may undermine Title V program implementation.</p>

## EPA's Civil and Criminal Enforcement Support Hindered

Report	
Number	<a href="#">21-P-0131</a>
Date issued	May 12, 2021
Title	<i>Staffing Constraints, Safety and Health Concerns at EPA's National Enforcement Investigations Center May Compromise Ability to Achieve Mission</i>
High-priority recommendations	
Numeration in the "High-priority recommendations issued within report" row refers to the recommendation within the report	
Responsible office	Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
High-priority recommendation issued within report	5. Develop and incorporate metrics that address safety and health issues and staff concerns into National Enforcement Investigations Center senior management performance standards, such as collecting anonymous feedback from all staff annually.
	9. Develop and incorporate metrics on the National Enforcement Investigations Center work environment and culture into Office of Criminal Enforcement, Forensics, and Training senior management performance standards, such as results from the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, periodic culture audits, or other methods to measure progress.
	10. Develop and incorporate metrics that address work environment and culture into National Enforcement Investigations Center senior management performance standards.
Status of high-priority recommendation	<p><i>Open.</i></p> <p>Recommendation 5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned completion date: Unresolved</li> <li>Revised completion date: September 30, 2022</li> </ul> <p>Recommendation 9:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned completion date: Unresolved</li> <li>Revised completion date: June 28, 2024</li> </ul> <p>Recommendation 10:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned completion date: Unresolved</li> <li>Revised completion date: June 28, 2024</li> </ul>
Associated top management challenge and description	<i>Enforcing environmental laws and regulations.</i> The National Enforcement Investigations Center, or NEIC, lacks systematic tracking of secondary issues from observations, comments, concerns, and opportunities for improvement identified in QA audits; management review action items that are not tracked anywhere else; and customer complaints. Without a systematic method of documenting and tracking review of these items, NEIC staff and management are more likely to inadequately address persistent issues, make less informed decisions, and transfer knowledge less effectively.

## ***EPA's Role in Joint Rulemakings Needs Clarification to Improve the Quality of EPA's Actions***

<b>Report</b>	
<b>Number</b>	<a href="#">21-E-0125</a>
<b>Date issued</b>	April 20, 2021
<b>Title</b>	<i>Concerns About the Process Used for the SAFE Vehicles Rule Demonstrate the Need for a Policy on EPA's Role in Joint Rulemakings</i>
<b>High-priority recommendations</b>	
<b>Numeration in the "High-priority recommendations issued within report" row refers to the recommendation within the report</b>	
<b>Responsible office</b>	Office of the Administrator, Associate Administrator for Policy
<b>High-priority recommendations issued within report</b>	<p>4. In coordination with program offices, develop a policy for the Agency's role in a joint rulemaking. The policy could build upon earlier recommendations from the U.S. Government Accountability Office and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations for addressing executive orders.</li> <li>• Expectations for completing Action Development Process milestones or documenting decisions to skip milestones.</li> <li>• A description of the rulemaking major process steps and deliverables, including timing.</li> <li>• A description of interagency roles, responsibilities, and interactions, including resolving conflict.</li> <li>• Identification of other stakeholders.</li> <li>• Best practices that may have more general applicability and should be updated as appropriate to reflect process improvements.</li> </ul>
<b>Status of high-priority recommendations</b>	<p><i>Unresolved</i></p> <p>Recommendation 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned completion date: Unresolved</li> </ul>
<b>Associated top management challenge and description</b>	<p><i>Integrating and leading environmental justice across the Agency and government.</i> The EPA and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, or NHTSA, jointly issued the SAFE Vehicles Rule. However, the agencies' technical personnel did not collaborate during final rule development, undercutting the joint character of the rulemaking. Furthermore, the EPA did not follow its established process for developing regulatory actions, did not complete major ADP rulemaking milestones, and did not document who decided to skip these milestones and why. In addition, NHTSA performed all major technical assessments for the rule. The role of EPA technical personnel was limited to providing advisory input to NHTSA for only some aspects of the analysis. The EPA also did not analyze executive orders on the impacts of modified greenhouse gas standards on vulnerable populations. In the EPA's prior joint rulemakings with NHTSA, each agency conducted modeling and analysis and drafted preamble text related to its separate statutory authority.</p>

## Recommendations Containing Administrative or Business Benefits

If implemented, two of our 17 high-priority open or unresolved recommendations would benefit the EPA’s administrative and business processes and functions. These two high-priority recommendations were issued in one report and are detailed in the table below. These recommendations would also help the EPA mitigate one of its top management challenges, managing infrastructure funding and business operations.

### ***EPA Risks Mismanagement of Over \$20 billion in Cumulative Grant Funds***

Report	
Number	<a href="#">22-P-0018</a>
Date issued	February 22, 2022
Title	<i>EPA Should Consistently Track Coronavirus Pandemic-Related Grant Flexibilities and Implement Plan for Electronic Grant File Storage</i>
High-priority recommendations	
Numeration in the “High-priority recommendations issued within report” row refers to the recommendation within the report	
Responsible offices	Office of Mission Support
High-priority recommendations issued within report	2. Develop a plan to implement, by December 2022, a uniform electronic record-keeping system for grants to meet the Office of Management and Budget direction in M-19-21, Transition to Electronic Records, that all federal records must be created, retained, and managed in electronic formats with appropriate metadata.
	3. Direct program offices and regions to use a uniform official electronic file system that would allow consistency in agencywide access and storage of electronic grant files.
Status of high-priority recommendations	<p><i>Open</i></p> <p>Recommendation 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned completion date: December 31, 2022</li> </ul> <p>Recommendation 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned completion date: December 31, 2022</li> </ul>
Associated top management challenge and description	<i>Managing infrastructure funding and business operations.</i> The EPA Office of Grants and Debarment does not know the full extent to which program offices and regions have implemented grant flexibilities and exceptions OMB permitted due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The EPA manages over \$20 billion in cumulative grant awards annually.



## SECTION 4: Open Recommendations by Region and Program Office

We analyzed the 156 open recommendations as of March 31, 2022, by the region and program office responsible for completing the associated corrective actions. Table 5 details, in descending order, the number of open recommendations for each region or program office. [Appendix C](#) provides a full breakdown of the reports associated with these open recommendations by responsible region and program office.

**Table 5: Number of open recommendations by responsible office**

Responsible office	Number of associated open recommendations**
Office of Air and Radiation	20 open recommendations across 9 reports
Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention	19 open recommendations across 7 reports
Office of Land and Emergency Management	19 open recommendations across 6 reports
Office of Mission Support*	17 open recommendations across 9 reports
Office of the Chief Financial Officer	14 open recommendations across 6 reports
Office of Water	12 open recommendations across 5 reports
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance	11 open recommendations across 4 reports
Office of Mission Support and Office of the Chief Financial Officer**	8 open recommendations in 1 report
Region 10	6 open recommendations across 2 reports
Office of Research and Development	5 open recommendations across 3 reports
Region 9	5 open recommendations across 2 reports
Office of General Counsel	5 open recommendations in 1 report
Office of the Administrator	4 open recommendations across 3 reports
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance and Office of Water**	2 open recommendations in 1 report
Region 3	3 open recommendations in 1 report
Region 5	2 open recommendations across 2 reports
Region 6	2 open recommendations across 2 reports
Region 2	2 open recommendations in 1 report

Source: OIG Report No. [EPA-350-R-22-001](#), *Semiannual Report to Congress: October 1, 2021–March 31, 2022*. (EPA OIG table)

\* The Office of Mission Support combines two offices: The Office of Administration and Resource Management and the Office of Environmental Information. These two offices address administrative and business functions, such as personnel, contracting, grants, and information technology.

\*\* Some of the open recommendations were issued to multiple offices or regions within the same report.

## SECTION 5: Open Recommendations by Benefit Type

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We analyzed the benefits for the Agency from completing the associated corrective actions for the 156 recommendations remaining open as of March 31, 2022. Our recommendations to the EPA address two main types of benefits:

- *Human health and environmental benefits.* These benefits provide for better health and environmental outcomes and include actions taken for site clean-up or remediation, to reduce exposure to contaminants, improve conditions for vulnerable communities, improve indoor air quality and to reduce CO2 emissions.
- *Administrative and business benefits.* The EPA’s administrative and business processes—which cover personnel, contracting, grants, and information technology functions—facilitate the human health and environmental mission.

There are 37 reports with 103 open recommendations covering human health and environmental benefits. There are 20 reports with 53 open recommendations covering administrative and business benefits. [Appendix B](#) details the benefits to be gained by each report with open recommendation.

## SECTION 6: Corrective Actions Taking Three Years or More to Implement

Of the 156 open recommendations as of March 31, 2022, 51 recommendations issued across 28 EPA OIG reports remain open after three years or are not scheduled to be implemented three years after issuance. Prompt implementation of corrective actions is necessary to ensure that their benefits, both monetary and environmental, are realized. Delayed implementation, by contrast, leaves the Agency more vulnerable to fraud, waste, and abuse. It also means the Agency will risk not meeting its goals in the most effective and efficient manner.

OMB Circular No. A-50 requires each executive agency to establish an audit follow-up system. It states that agencies shall assign a high priority to resolving and implementing corrective actions for audit recommendations. It also states that corrective actions should proceed as rapidly as possible. However, it does not establish a time frame. EPA Manual 2750 requires the EPA to timely, efficiently, and effectively resolve OIG findings and recommendations.

It is the Agency's responsibility to implement agreed-to recommendations. EPA Manual 2750 states that recommendations are considered overdue if the Agency has not completed corrective actions agreed upon with the OIG within one year of their estimated completion dates. The OIG encourages the responsible offices to complete corrective actions in a year or less. However, the Agency states that more complicated corrective actions must take longer. EPA Manual 2750 requires timely and efficient resolutions to implement corrective actions for the greatest possible impact and potency. The OIG highly discourages corrective actions taking what it views as an unreasonable amount of time, and the OIG will address and report them, as appropriate.

Table 6 provides an overview. [Appendix D](#) details the reports containing these open recommendations.

**Table 6: Recommendations open three years or longer by responsible office**

Responsible office	Recommendations open three or more years
Office of Land and Emergency Management	9 recommendations across 2 reports
Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention	8 recommendations across 5 reports
Office of Air and Radiation	7 recommendations across 4 reports
Office of Water	7 recommendations across 3 reports
Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance	6 recommendations across 3 reports
Office of Mission Support	2 recommendations across 2 reports
Office of Research and Development	2 recommendations across 2 reports*
Office of the Administrator	2 recommendations in 1 report*
Office of the Chief Financial Officer	2 recommendations in 1 report
Office of General Counsel	1 recommendation
Region 3	1 recommendation
Region 5	1 recommendation
Region 6	1 recommendation
Region 9	1 recommendation
Region 10	1 recommendation

Source: OIG Report No. [EPA-350-R-22-001](#), *Semiannual Report to Congress: October 1, 2021–March 31, 2022*. (EPA OIG table)

\* Some of the open recommendations were issued to multiple offices or regions within the same report.

## 19 Unresolved Recommendations Over 9 Reports

### *EPA Failed to Develop Required Cost and Benefit Analyses and to Assess Air Quality Impacts on Children's Health for Proposed Glider Repeal Rule Allowing Used Engines in Heavy-Duty Trucks*

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">20-P-0047</a>
Date issued	December 5, 2019
Summary of findings	<p>The EPA did not comply with requirements of Executive Orders 12866 and 13045 when developing and issuing the proposed Glider Repeal Rule. Additionally, the EPA did not follow its principal rulemaking guidance—the Action Development Process—in developing the proposed Glider Repeal Rule, nor did it meet Federal Records Act requirements.</p> <p>Executive Order 12866 directs significant regulatory actions to be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs for review. Any substantive changes that the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs recommends to the regulatory action must be publicly identified. A regulatory action deemed "economically significant" under Executive Order 12866 triggers an assessment of (1) the anticipated costs and benefits and (2) any reasonable alternatives. Executive Order 13045 applies to "economically significant" regulatory actions that "concern an environmental health or safety risk that an agency has reason to believe may disproportionately affect children." This order requires an evaluation of the environmental health risks to children and an explanation of why the planned regulation is preferable to alternatives.</p> <p>According to EPA managers and officials, then-Administrator Scott Pruitt directed that the Glider Repeal Rule be promulgated as quickly as possible. The proposed repeal rule would relieve industry of compliance requirements of the Phase 2 rule, which set emissions standards and production limits for gliders beginning January 1, 2018. EPA officials were aware that available information indicated the proposed Glider Repeal Rule was "economically significant." However, then-Administrator Pruitt directed the Office of Air and Radiation to develop the proposed rule without conducting the required analyses in relevant executive orders. The lack of analyses left the public uninformed of the proposed rule's benefits, costs, potential alternatives, and impacts on children's health during the public comment period. As of December 5, 2019, the proposed Glider Repeal Rule was listed on the EPA's Fall 2019 Regulatory Agenda as "economically significant."</p>
Unresolved recommendation	
Responsible office	Office of Air and Radiation
Recommendation	<p>3. In consultation with the Associate Administrator for Policy, document the decisions made during the glider repeal rulemaking process, including substantive decisions reached orally, to comply with applicable record-keeping and docketing requirements, including those found in the Federal Records Act, the EPA's Interim Records Management Policy, and the EPA's Action Development Process guidance. <b>Management challenge: Managing infrastructure funding and business operations.</b></p>
Resolution progress	Negotiations have not progressed, as the EPA and the OIG cannot agree on corrective actions to satisfy the recommendation.
Impact	The EPA's actions regarding the proposed Glider Repeal Rule lacked transparency and deprived the public of required information.

## EPA Should Conduct New Residual Risk and Technology Reviews for Chloroprene- and Ethylene Oxide-Emitting Source Categories to Protect Human Health

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">21-P-0129</a>
Date issued	May 6, 2021
Summary of findings	<p>Results from the EPA's modeling and monitoring efforts indicate that people in some areas of the country may be exposed to unacceptable health risks from chloroprene and ethylene oxide emissions. Despite the EPA classifying chloroprene as a likely human carcinogen in 2010 and ethylene oxide a carcinogen in 2016, the EPA has not conducted new residual risk and technology reviews, or RTRs, for most types of industrial sources—referred to as source categories—that emit chloroprene or ethylene oxide. The EPA should take the following steps to ensure its RTR process sufficiently identifies and addresses these emissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct new residual risk reviews for four major source categories that emit chloroprene or ethylene oxide using new risk values for these pollutants.</li> <li>• Conduct a residual risk review for the hospital sanitizers area source category using the new risk review for ethylene oxide.</li> <li>• Conduct overdue technology reviews for four source categories.</li> <li>• Develop new National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants, or NESHAPs, for chemical plant area sources that emit ethylene oxide.</li> <li>• Develop a process to initiate timely reviews of existing and uncontrolled emission sources when new or updated risk information becomes available.</li> </ul> <p>New RTRs should be conducted because the EPA issued new risk values for chloroprene and ethylene oxide in 2010 and 2016 respectively. These were intended to reflect their potent carcinogenicity, as found in newer scientific evidence. The EPA should exercise its discretionary authority to conduct new residual risk reviews under the Clean Air Act whenever new data or information indicates an air pollutant is more toxic than previously determined. Use of such discretionary authority is consistent with the Agency's position, stated in its April 2006 commercial sterilizer RTR rule.</p>
Unresolved recommendations	
Responsible office	Office of Air and Radiation
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and implement an internal control process with specific criteria to determine whether and when new residual risk reviews of existing National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants and uncontrolled emission sources are needed to incorporate new risk information that demonstrates that an air pollutant is more toxic than previously determined. <b>Management challenge: Ensuring the safe use of chemicals.</b></li> <li>2. Conduct new residual risk reviews for Group I polymers and resins that cover neoprene production, synthetic organic chemical manufacturing industry, polyether polyols production, commercial sterilizers, and hospital sterilizers using the new risk values for chloroprene and ethylene oxide and revise the corresponding National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants, as needed. <b>Management challenge: Ensuring the safe use of chemicals.</b></li> <li>3. Revise National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants for chemical manufacturing area sources to regulate ethylene oxide and conduct a residual risk review to ensure that the public is not exposed to unacceptable risks. <b>Management challenge: Ensuring the safe use of chemicals.</b></li> </ol>
Resolution progress	<p>In a July 7, 2021 memorandum,* the Office of Air and Radiation provided corrective actions for Recommendations 1, 2 and 3. These included developing and beginning to implement new internal control processes, creating roadmaps for regulatory options to reduce the risk of source the categories commercial sterilizers and hazardous organic NESHAP; and revising NESHAPs for chemical manufacturing area sources.</p> <p>In the OIG's August 5, 2021 response to the Office of Air and Radiation's memorandum,* the inspector general stated that the OIG did not agree with the proposed corrective actions.</p> <p>* All correspondence related to the report recommendations are listed on the report's <a href="#">homepage</a>.</p>
Impact	The EPA should conduct new RTRs for chloroprene- and ethylene oxide-emitting source categories to address elevated individual lifetime cancer risks impacting over 464,000 people, as found in a modeling tool, and to achieve environmental justice.

## Resource Constraints, Leadership Decisions, and Workforce Culture Led to A Decline in Federal Enforcement

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">21-P-0132</a>
Date issued	May 13, 2021
Summary of findings	<p>EPA-led compliance monitoring activities, enforcement actions, monetary enforcement results, and environmental benefits generally declined FY 2007–2018 nationwide. This downward trend also occurred at the regional level and on a statute-by-statute basis. While annual enforcement measures—such as penalty dollars assessed or commitments to clean up pollution—declined, the results varied year-to-year based on the conclusion of large cases.</p> <p>The decline in enforcement resources was a primary driver behind the observed declining enforcement trends, resulting in fewer compliance monitoring activities and concluded enforcement actions. EPA leadership also made strategic decisions that affected enforcement trends. These included focusing limited resources on the most serious cases and—in 2017—emphasizing deference to state enforcement programs and compliance assistance. From 2006 through 2018, growth in the domestic economy and new laws increased the size and level of activity in key sectors that the EPA regulated. However, the EPA’s capacity to meet that need decreased.</p> <p>The EPA’s annual enforcement reports do not provide context for understanding the EPA’s enforcement accomplishments and the impact these enforcement activities have on human health and the environment. For example, the EPA does not measure or report data for compliance-assistance activities, informal enforcement actions, and noncompliance rates. The EPA could also provide additional information that would provide context about the scope of activities captured by its enforcement measures, such as the type of inspections conducted, and the types and toxicity of pollutants removed from the environment.</p>
Unresolved recommendations	
Responsible office	Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess the needs of the Agency’s enforcement program by completing a workforce analysis. Determine the level of staffing to achieve and maintain a strong enforcement presence in the field that protects human health and the environment. <b>Management challenge: Enforcing environmental laws and regulations.</b></li> <li>2. Integrate the results of the workforce analysis into the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance’s annual and strategic planning processes. <b>Management challenge: Enforcing environmental laws and regulations.</b></li> <li>5. Establish additional measures for Agency-led compliance assistance activities and informal enforcement actions and include these new measures in future annual enforcement results reports with the appropriate context. <b>Management challenge: Enforcing environmental laws and regulations.</b></li> </ol>
Resolution progress	<p>The Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance responded to the final report in a July 12, 2021 memorandum,* which included proposed corrective actions. Based on the information and supporting documentation provided, the OIG determined that the three recommendations remain unresolved. The OIG issued a memorandum on August 18, 2021, that explained why the proposed corrective actions did not meet the intent of the recommendations.</p> <p><i>* All correspondence related to the report recommendations are listed on the report’s <a href="#">homepage</a>.</i></p>
Impact	Agency action would help prevent a decline in the EPA’s enforcement activities that, if not addressed, may expose the public and the environment to undetected harmful pollutants.

## EPA Does Not Consistently Monitor Hazardous Waste Units Closed with Waste in Place or Track and Report on Facilities That Fall Under the Two Responsible Programs

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">21-P-0114</a>
Date issued	March 29, 2021
Summary of findings	<p>The EPA did not consistently verify the continued protection of human health and the environment at hazardous waste treatment storage, or disposal facilities, known as TSDFs, with Resource Conservation and Recovery Act units that were closed with hazardous waste in place. Specifically, almost half were not inspected at the frequency set by EPA policy.</p> <p>EPA regional oversight of TSDF inspections by authorized states is also inconsistent. Five of the ten EPA regions incorporate inspection commitments in their annual state RCRA grant negotiations to verify that their authorized states are complying with the inspection policy. Two regions have similar processes in place, but their processes do not include all their states, and three regions do not have any process in place to verify compliance. Because of the lack of inspections, a hazardous waste leak from a compromised unit could go undetected for years with dire human health and environmental consequences. For example, a leak that is not expeditiously detected could contaminate groundwater. This would result in a loss of drinking water supply, high cleanup costs, and human exposure to contaminants.</p> <p>During the evaluation of units closed with waste in place, the OIG observed some issues with interactions between the RCRA and Superfund programs. EPA oversight of RCRA units referred to the Superfund program and those deferred back to the RCRA program as incomplete. The lack of procedures and the use of differing facility identification numbers in the two programs have hindered the EPA's tracking of facilities transferred between the two programs. As a result, it is uncertain whether either program is appropriately managing RCRA units and protecting human and environmental health.</p> <p>Fifty-six RCRA Corrective Action facilities that were closed with waste in place are also managed by the Superfund program. Ineffective EPA oversight of these sites resulted in 42 possible conflicting and 126 double-counted accomplishment milestones. Because these milestones are used to communicate site status to the public, communities could be confused or misled as to the cleanup status of the sites.</p>
Unresolved recommendations	
Responsible office	Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
Recommendations	<p>2. In collaboration with the Office of Land and Emergency Management, establish mechanisms to ensure that all inspections are completed within the required time frame of two years for operating treatment, storage, or disposal facilities or the policy time frame of three years for nonoperating treatment, storage, or disposal facilities. <b>Management challenge: Enforcing environmental laws and regulations.</b></p>
Resolution progress	<p>The Agency provided a memorandum dated May 27, 2021, that outlined planned corrective actions and estimated completion dates for the three unresolved recommendations issued in the subject OIG report. Based on the information and supporting documentation provided, two of the recommendations are now resolved.</p> <p>The OIG did not agree with the Agency's planned corrective action for one of the recommendations. As a result, we continue to consider one recommendation issued to the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance unresolved. The OIG issued a memorandum on November 2, 2021, advising the Agency to follow the dispute resolution process. The Office of the Chief Financial Officer scheduled a meeting that was held on June 3, 2022, with the OIG, the Office of Land and Emergency Management, and the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance. Follow-on discussions between offices were held, and a second dispute resolution meeting is expected to be scheduled.</p> <p><i>* All correspondence related to the report recommendations are listed on the report's <a href="#">homepage</a>.</i></p>
Impact	The EPA's inspection frequency of TSDFs with RCRA units closed with waste in place did not meet the EPA's statutory requirement or policy.



## EPA Needs to Improve Its Emergency Planning to Better Address Air Quality Concerns During Future Disasters

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">20-P-0062</a>
Date issued	December 16, 2019
Summary of findings	<p>Most air toxic emission incidents during Hurricane Harvey occurred within a five-day period of the storm's landfall. Most of these emissions were due to industrial facilities shutting down and restarting operations in response to the storm, and storage tank failures. However, state, local, and EPA mobile air monitoring activities were not initiated in time to assess the impact of these emissions. Additionally, once started, monitoring efforts did not always generate data considered suitable for making health-based assessments. This was in part because there was no guidance outlining how to monitor air quality following an emergency.</p> <p>The air monitoring data collected did not indicate that the levels of individual air toxics after Hurricane Harvey exceeded the health-based thresholds established by the State of Texas and the EPA. However, these thresholds do not consider the cumulative impact of exposure to multiple air pollutants at one time. Further, the EPA's thresholds are based on short-term exposure to a single air pollutant and do not consider lifetime exposures. Consequently, the thresholds may not sufficiently protect residents in communities that neighbor industrial facilities and experience repeated or ongoing exposures to air toxics.</p> <p>We did not identify instances of inaccurate communication from the EPA to the public regarding air quality after Hurricane Harvey. However, public communication of air monitoring results was limited. As a result, communities were unaware of the Agency's activities and data collection efforts. This lack of awareness can diminish public trust and confidence in the EPA.</p>
Unresolved recommendations	
Responsible office	Office of Land and Emergency Management
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop general guidance to help state and local agencies and external stakeholders develop air monitoring plans for emergency situations in heavily industrialized areas so that usable data are collected in targeted areas of concern. <b>Management challenge: Integrating and leading environmental justice, across the Agency and government.</b></li> <li>2. Develop, in coordination with the associate administrator for Public Affairs, a plan for providing public access to air monitoring data collected during an emergency response. <b>Management challenge: Integrating and leading environmental justice across the Agency and government.</b></li> <li>3. Coordinate with the Office of Research and Development and the Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards within the Office of Air to assess the availability and use of remote and portable monitoring methods to monitor air toxics when stationary monitoring methods are not available. <b>Management challenge: Integrating and leading environmental justice across the Agency and government.</b></li> </ol>
Resolution progress	EPA provided a formal response on February 28, 2020. On August 17, 2021, the Office of Land and Emergency Management provided revised corrective actions. Resolution efforts remain underway.
Impact	Developing EPA guidance for collecting and communicating air quality data could improve public confidence in the Agency during future disaster responses.

## EPA's 2018 BEACH Act Report to Congress Does Not Fully Meet Statutory Requirements

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">20-E-0246</a>
Date issued	August 13, 2020
Summary of findings	<p>In a predecessor report, Report No. <a href="#">18-P-0071</a>, published in January 2018, we found that the EPA had not reported to Congress on the progress of the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act of 2000, also known as the BEACH Act, as statutorily required. We recommended that the EPA submit the mandated reports to Congress. As part of its corrective actions in response to our January 2018 report recommendations, the EPA issued a BEACH Act report to Congress in July 2018.</p> <p>During this follow-up evaluation, we found that the EPA's 2018 report to Congress does not fully meet the reporting requirements of the BEACH Act and the Plain Writing Act of 2010. The report also does not adhere to federal internal control principles. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report does not evaluate federal and local efforts to implement the BEACH Act.</li> <li>• Although the report lists recommendations for additional water quality criteria and improved monitoring methodologies, communication of these recommendations could be improved by using plain language principles, which would help readers to more easily understand the recommendations.</li> <li>• The report recommendations do not specify who needs to take action or what the barriers to implementation are.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, we concluded that the EPA's Office of Water staff did not reach out to congressional staff members to inquire about what information Congress needs from the Agency to make informed decisions regarding the BEACH Act program. By issuing a report that did not fully meet the requirements of the BEACH and Plain Writing acts, the EPA missed the opportunity to provide Congress with the information needed for effective decision-making.</p>
Unresolved recommendations	
Responsible office	Office of Water
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and adopt a written strategy that lays out steps the EPA will take to verify that future reports to Congress fully meet (a) the reporting requirements in the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act of 2000, (b) expectations that federal agencies comply with the Plain Writing Act of 2010, and (c) federal internal control principles. <b>Management challenge: Managing infrastructure funding and business operations.</b></li> <li>2. Develop and submit a report to Congress in 2022 that includes an evaluation of federal, state, and local efforts to implement the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act of 2000, based on the EPA's annual reviews of Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act grants, information reported in the swimming season reports, and additional relevant resources. <b>Management challenge: Managing infrastructure funding and business operations.</b></li> </ol>
Resolution progress	<p>The Office of Water provided a response on October 8, 2020, that communicated its disagreement with the findings and recommendations. The Agency provided a second response on July 23, 2021, communicating that it planned to work with staff in the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations to reach out to Congress for input on the EPA's BEACH Act program.</p> <p>On August 12, 2021, OIG issued a memorandum to the Agency explaining that the Agency's proposed corrective actions did not meet the intent of the report's recommendations and advising the Agency to follow the dispute resolution process. Although the recommendations remain unresolved, the Agency told the OIG that it is drafting its required report to Congress for 2022 in a manner that meets the intent of the recommendations.</p> <p><i>* All correspondence related to the report recommendations are listed on the report's <a href="#">homepage</a>.</i></p>
Impact	EPA issuance of informative BEACH Act reports would allow Congress to make informed program decisions, improve program oversight, and enhance transparency.

## Concerns About the Process Used for the SAFE Vehicles Rule Demonstrate the Need for a Policy on EPA's Role in Joint Rulemakings

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">21-E-0125</a>
Date issued	April 20, 2021
Summary of findings	<p>Although the EPA and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration jointly issued the Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient, or SAFE, Vehicles Rule, the agencies' technical personnel did not collaborate during final rule development, undercutting the joint character of the rulemaking. Furthermore, the EPA did not follow its established process for developing regulatory actions, did not complete major Action Development Process milestones, and did not document who decided to skip these milestones and why. In addition, NHTSA performed all major technical assessments for the rule, while the role of EPA technical personnel was limited to providing advisory input to NHTSA for some aspects of the analysis. The EPA did not conduct a separate analysis related to executive orders on the impacts of modified standards on vulnerable populations.</p> <p>Former EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt decided that the SAFE Vehicles Rule would be based solely on NHTSA modeling and analysis and that the NHTSA would draft the majority of the preamble text. One senior EPA official cited NHTSA's statutory deadline for establishing its standards as the impetus for its lead role in developing the rulemaking. This approach bypassed aspects of the EPA's normal rulemaking process. It also diverged from the more collaborative precedent set by the agencies' prior joint rulemakings, as well as circumvented Office of Air and Radiation technical personnel feedback prior to the final rule being circulated for interagency review. Furthermore, technical personnel were confused about the proper contents of the docket, and congressional and tribal stakeholders raised transparency concerns after the final rule was published. While joint rulemaking is infrequent, the process should be improved by clearly defining the EPA's responsibilities when working with a partner agency.</p>
Unresolved recommendations	
Responsible office	Office of Air and Radiation
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In coordination with the Office of General Counsel, docket for the final Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient Vehicles Rule and commit to docketing for future joint rulemaking actions covered by Clean Air Act section 307(d), 42 U.S.C. section 7607(d), whether the EPA docket for the joint rulemaking action reflects an interpretation that the partner agency is an "other agency" for purposes of the docketing requirements of Clean Air Act section 307(d)(4)(B)(ii), 42 U.S.C. section 7607(d)(4)(B)(ii). This docketed information should include whether written comments on the action by either partner agency during interagency review and responses to such comments are part of the docket, if applicable. <b>Management challenge: Integrating and leading environmental justice across the Agency and government.</b></li> <li>2. In coordination with the Office of General Counsel, docket any written comments received from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration regarding the draft final Safer Affordable Fuel-Efficient Vehicles Rule during interagency review from January 14, 2020, to March 30, 2020, and docket the EPA's written responses to such comments. <b>Management challenge: Integrating and leading environmental justice across the Agency and government.</b></li> <li>4. In coordination with program offices, develop a policy for the Agency's role in a joint rulemaking. The policy could build upon earlier recommendations from the U.S. Government Accountability Office and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations for addressing executive orders.</li> <li>• Expectations for completing Action Development Process milestones or documenting decisions to skip milestones.</li> <li>• A description of the rulemaking major process steps and deliverables, including timing.</li> <li>• A description of interagency roles, responsibilities, and interactions, including resolving conflict.</li> <li>• Identification of other stakeholders.</li> <li>• Best Practices that may have more general applicability and should be updated as appropriate to reflect process improvements.</li> </ul> <b>Management challenge: Integrating and leading environmental justice across the Agency and government.</b> </li> </ol>

<b>Resolution progress</b>	The Agency disagreed with Recommendation 2, and the OIG required more specific details to resolve Recommendations 1 and 4. Therefore, Recommendations 1, 2 and 4 remain unresolved.
<b>Impact</b>	The EPA's actions in the final SAFE Vehicles Rule undercut the rule's quality.

## ***EPA's Fiscal Years 2021 and 2020 (Restated) Consolidated Financial Statements***

<b>Report details</b>	
<b>Number</b>	<a href="#">22-F-0007</a>
<b>Date issued</b>	November 15, 2021
<b>Summary of findings</b>	<p>The following significant deficiencies were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EPA did not reconcile cash differences with the U.S. Department of the Treasury.</li> <li>• The EPA did not recognize revenue for the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014 fee fund expenses.</li> <li>• EPA regions did not provide accounts receivable source documentation in a timely manner.</li> <li>• The Office of the Chief Financial Officer needs to conduct periodic reviews of users' accounts within the EPA's Contract Payment System.</li> </ul>
<b>Unresolved recommendations</b>	
<b>Responsible office</b>	Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>4. Enforce the existing policies and procedures, which includes forwarding accounts receivable source documents to the Cincinnati Finance Center, in accordance with the time frame provided in the applicable resource management directives. <b>Management challenge: Managing infrastructure funding and business operations.</b></p> <p>5. Implement a system that tracks the dates when accounts receivable source documents need to be submitted and are submitted by the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance to the Cincinnati Finance Center. <b>Management challenge: Managing infrastructure funding and business operations.</b></p>
<b>Resolution progress</b>	The EPA has not provided a formal response regarding the two unresolved recommendations as of March 31, 2022, in part because the final report's transmittal memo incorrectly stated no final response to the report was required. The OIG is working with the Agency to obtain a formal response in accordance with our audit resolution procedures.
<b>Impact</b>	If not addressed, the significant deficiencies noted could lead to a misstated Agency Fund Balance with the Treasury, EPA financial statements being materially misstated, billing issues, and loss of interest accrual.

## Management Alert: Prompt Action Needed to Inform Residents Living Near Ethylene Oxide-Emitting Facilities About Health Concerns and Actions to Address Those Concerns

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">20-N-0128</a>
Date issued	March 31, 2020
Summary of findings	<p>Through its National Air Toxics Assessment, the EPA identified areas where exposure to ethylene oxide emissions could contribute to an elevated estimated lifetime cancer risk equal to or greater than 100 in one million, a risk level that the EPA generally considers not sufficiently protective of health. These emissions primarily come from chemical manufacturing plants and commercial sterilizers that sterilize medical equipment.</p> <p>The EPA has prioritized activities to assess more fully ethylene oxide emissions and the associated health risks to the public near 25 high-priority facilities. These activities include communicating with facilities and states about gathering emissions information and communicating with elected officials about the National Air Toxics Assessment results. The EPA or state personnel, or both, have met with residents living near nine of the 25 high-priority facilities. However, communities near 16 facilities have yet to be afforded public meetings or other direct outreach to learn about the health risks and actions being taken to address those risks.</p> <p>The OIG did not identify any specific statutory, regulatory, or policy requirements for the EPA to provide the public additional information about its preliminary determination that certain ethylene oxide-emitting facilities may present health risks to surrounding communities. However, the EPA's mission statement includes working to ensure that "[a]ll parts of society ... have access to accurate information sufficient to effectively participate in managing human health and environmental risks." Thus, the Agency should work to ensure that it directly and promptly communicates to residents living near all the high-priority facilities about the health risks and actions it is taking to address those risks.</p>
Unresolved recommendations	
Responsible office	Associate Deputy Administrator
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve and continue to implement ongoing risk communication efforts by promptly providing residents in all communities near the 25 ethylene oxide-emitting facilities identified as high-priority by the EPA with a forum for an interactive exchange of information with the EPA or the states regarding health concerns related to exposure to ethylene oxide. <b>Management challenge: Integrating and leading environmental justice across the Agency and government.</b></li> </ol>
Resolution progress	<p>The Agency and the OIG have not been able to come to an agreement to resolve Recommendation 1. After the parties engaged in the dispute resolution process, on January 4, 2021, the administrator concurred with the Office of Air and Radiation's position that the recommendation should be closed.</p> <p>On February 22, 2021, the OIG requested that the acting EPA administrator reconsider the former administrator's decision to close the recommendation.</p> <p><i>* All correspondence related to the report recommendations are listed on the report's <a href="#">homepage</a>.</i></p>
Impact	The EPA needs to inform residents who live near facilities with significant ethylene oxide emissions about their elevated estimated cancer risks so they can manage their health risks.

## *Open and Unresolved Recommendations by Top EPA Management Challenge and Benefit Type*

Top EPA management challenge	Report with associated open and/or unresolved recommendations		Action office	Number of open/unresolved (U) recommendations*	Benefit type	Impact
	Report no.	Report title				
Mitigating the causes and adapting to the impacts of climate change	<a href="#">21-E-0264</a>	EPA Needs an Agencywide Strategic Action Plan to Address Harmful Algal Blooms	Office of Water	3	Human health and environmental	Scientists predict that harmful algal bloom occurrences in recreational waters and drinking water sources will increase as excess nutrients continue to flow into water bodies, temperatures warm, and extreme weather events occur due to climate change.
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1 report</b>		<b>3 open recommendations</b>		
Integrating and leading environmental justice across the Agency and government	<a href="#">21-P-0223</a>	EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management Lacked a Nationally Consistent Strategy for Communicating Health Risks at Contaminated Sites	Office of Land and Emergency Management	3	Human health and environmental	As part of its mission to protect human health, the EPA communicates risks from contaminated sites to the public. Without accurate, clear, and timely information, residents living on or near contaminated sites cannot take precautions, if necessary, to protect their health and safety.
	<a href="#">21-P-0129</a>	EPA Should Conduct New Residual Risk and Technology Reviews for Chloroprene- and Ethylene Oxide-Emitting Source Categories to Protect Human Health	Office of Air and Radiation	1	Human health and environmental	The EPA should conduct new Risk and Technology Reviews for chloroprene- and ethylene oxide-emitting source categories to address elevated individual lifetime cancer risks impacting over 464,000 people, as found in a modeling tool, and to achieve environmental justice.
				3 (U)	Administrative and business	
	<a href="#">21-P-0122</a>	Improved Review Processes Could Advance EPA Regions 3 and 5 Oversight of State-Issued National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits	Region 3	3	Human health and environmental	Improved EPA oversight could ensure that state National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System programs are protecting human health and the environment.
			Region 5	1		
	<a href="#">21-P-0123</a>	EPA Delayed Risk Communication and Issued Instructions Hindering Region 5's Ability to Address Ethylene Oxide Emissions	Office of Air and Radiation	2	Human health and environmental	The EPA did not achieve its mission when senior leaders issued instructions to Region 5 that impacted the region's ability to address ethylene oxide emissions and when the EPA delayed communicating health risks regarding ethylene oxide.

Top EPA management challenge	Report with associated open and/or unresolved recommendations		Action office	Number of open/unresolved (U) recommendations*	Benefit type	Impact
	Report no.	Report title				
	<a href="#">21-P-0032</a>	Region 2's Hurricanes Irma and Maria Response Efforts in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands Show the Need for Improved Planning, Communications, and Assistance for Small Drinking Water Systems	Region 2	2	Human health and environmental	Enhancements to water system capacity and emergency preparation for island response could better protect the health of communities impacted by hurricanes and other disasters.
	<a href="#">21-P-0333</a>	Improved EPA Oversight of Funding Recipients' Title VI Programs Could Prevent Discrimination	Office of General Counsel	5	Human health and environmental	Despite elimination of the case backlog, additional improvements in the EPA's oversight of Title VI funding recipients could prevent discrimination.
	<a href="#">20-N-0128</a>	Management Alert: Prompt Action Needed to Inform Residents Living Near Ethylene Oxide-Emitting Facilities About Health Concerns and Actions to Address Those Concerns	Associate Deputy Administrator (within the Office of the Administrator)	1 / 1 (U)	Human health and environmental	The EPA needs to inform residents who live near facilities with significant ethylene oxide emissions about their elevated estimated cancer risks so they can manage their health risks.
	<a href="#">19-P-0318</a>	EPA Must Improve Oversight of Notice to the Public on Drinking Water Risks to Better Protect Human Health	Office of Water	2	Human health and environmental	Without reliable information about drinking water, consumers cannot make informed health decisions and the EPA cannot provide effective oversight.
	<a href="#">18-P-0221</a>	Management Weaknesses Delayed Response to Flint Water Crisis	Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Office of Water	2 EPA previously indicated that recommendations were closed. (2/13)	Human health and environmental	The EPA should strengthen its oversight of state drinking water programs to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Agency's response to drinking water contamination emergencies.
	<a href="#">21-E-0254</a>	Pandemic Highlights Need for Additional Tribal Drinking Water Assistance and Oversight in EPA Regions 9 and 10	Region 9 Region 10	4 4	Human health and environmental	The coronavirus pandemic negatively impacted the oversight and assistance that Regions 9 and 10 provide to the tribal drinking water systems under their purview, as well as the capacity of these systems to provide safe drinking water.
Subtotal	10 reports			30 open and 4 unresolved recommendations		



Top EPA management challenge	Report with associated open and/or unresolved recommendations		Action office	Number of open/unresolved (U) recommendations*	Benefit type	Impact
	Report no.	Report title				
Ensuring the safe use of chemicals	<a href="#">19-P-0195</a>	Pesticide Registration Fee, Vulnerability Mitigation and Database Security Controls for EPA's FIFRA and PRIA Systems Need Improvement	Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention	1	Administrative and business	Proper vulnerability testing, fee registration and database controls are essential to the security of the EPA's Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act and Pesticide Registration Improvement Act systems.
	<a href="#">21-E-0072</a>	EPA Is at Risk of Not Achieving Special Local Needs Program Goals for Pesticides	Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention	1	Human health and environmental	Without a sufficient management-control system and other improvements, the Special Local Needs program will not effectively promote risk reduction and pollution prevention.
	<a href="#">20-P-0012</a>	Tribal Pesticide Enforcement Comes Close to Achieving EPA Goals, but Circuit Rider Inspector Guidance Needed	Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance	3	Human health and environmental	Improvements in the "circuit rider" program can enable the EPA to better detect and prevent pesticide misuse and unnecessary risks to human health and the environment in Indian country.
	<a href="#">19-P-0207</a>	EPA Effectively Screens Air Emissions Data from Continuous Monitoring Systems but Could Enhance Verification of System Performance	Office of Air and Radiation	1	Human health and environmental	Data from continuous emissions monitoring systems are used to determine whether sources, such as power plants, comply with emissions limits designed to improve air quality and achieve environmental and public health goals.
	<a href="#">19-P-0002</a>	EPA Unable to Assess the Impact of Hundreds of Unregulated Pollutants in Land Applied Biosolids on Human Health and the Environment	Office of Water	4	Human health and environmental	The EPA identified 352 pollutants in biosolids but cannot yet consider these pollutants for further regulation due to either a lack of data or risk assessment tools. Pollutants found in biosolids can include pharmaceuticals, steroids and flame retardants.
	<a href="#">18-P-0080</a>	EPA Needs to Evaluate the Impact of the Revised Agricultural Worker Protection Standard on Pesticide Exposure Incidents	Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention	1	Human health and environmental	Over 2 million agricultural workers and pesticide handlers are protected by the Worker Protection Standard. Revisions to the standard are intended to reduce exposure to pesticides and provide enhanced protection to agricultural workers, pesticide handlers and their families.
	<a href="#">17-P-0053</a>	Additional Measures Can Be Taken to Prevent Deaths and Serious Injuries from Residential Fumigations	Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention	1	Human health and environmental	The EPA can better prevent deaths and serious injuries caused during residential fumigations by amending sulfuryl fluoride labels and monitoring compliance.



Top EPA management challenge	Report with associated open and/or unresolved recommendations		Action office	Number of open/unresolved (U) recommendations*	Benefit type	Impact
	Report no.	Report title				
	<a href="#">21-E-0186</a>	EPA's Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program Has Made Limited Progress in Assessing Pesticides	Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention	9	Human health and environmental	Without the required testing and an effective system of internal controls, the EPA cannot make measurable progress toward complying with statutory requirements of safeguarding human health and the environment against risks from endocrine disrupting chemicals.
	<a href="#">21-E-0146</a>	EPA Deviated from Typical Procedures in Its 2018 Dicamba Pesticide Registration Decision	Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention	3	Human health and environmental	The EPA needs to document and follow established procedures to ensure scientifically sound decisions regarding pesticides
Subtotal	9 reports			24 open recommendations		
Safeguarding scientific integrity principles	<a href="#">20-P-0173</a>	Further Efforts Needed to Uphold Scientific Integrity Policy at EPA	Deputy Administrator (within the Office of the Administrator)	1	Human health and environmental	Improving implementation of the Scientific Integrity Policy will enable the EPA to more effectively carry out its mission to protect human health and the environment.
			Office of Research and Development/ Science Advisor	3		
	<a href="#">18-P-0240</a>	EPA Needs a Comprehensive Vision and Strategy for Citizen Science that Aligns with Its Strategic Objectives on Public Participation	Deputy Administrator (within the Office of the Administrator)	2	Human health and environmental	Without uniform guidance and direction, the EPA will be unable to fully use citizen science data that could contribute to the agency's mission.
			Office of Research and Development	1		
Subtotal	2 reports			7 open recommendations		
Ensuring information technology and systems are protected against cyberthreats	<a href="#">21-E-0124</a>	EPA Needs to Improve Processes for Updating Guidance, Monitoring Corrective Actions, and Managing Remote Access for External Users	Office of Mission Support	1	Administrative and business	Deficiencies in the EPA's information technology internal controls could be used to exploit weaknesses in Agency applications and hinder the EPA's ability to prevent, detect, and respond to emerging cyberthreats.
Subtotal	1 report			1 open recommendation		
Managing infrastructure funding and business operations	<a href="#">21-P-0242</a>	EPA Needs to Strengthen Its Purchase Card Program Approval Process	Office of Mission Support	2	Administrative and business	The Agency needs to improve oversight of its approximately \$25 million in annual purchase card and convenience check expenses to be better stewards of taxpayer dollars.
	<a href="#">21-E-0226</a>	EPA's Emergency Response Systems at Risk of Having Inadequate Security Controls	Office of Land and Emergency Management	2	Administrative and business	If the availability and integrity of emergency response system data are jeopardized, it could harm the EPA's ability to coordinate response efforts to protect the public from environmental disasters.
			Office of Mission Support	4		
			Office of Air and Radiation	1		

Top EPA management challenge	Report with associated open and/or unresolved recommendations		Action office	Number of open/unresolved (U) recommendations*	Benefit type	Impact
	Report no.	Report title				
	<a href="#">21-P-0094</a>	EPA Improperly Awarded and Managed Information Technology Contracts	Office of Mission Support	1	Administrative and business	The Agency needs to improve its oversight of long-standing contractors, like CGI Federal, to improve operations and be a better steward of taxpayer dollars.
	<a href="#">21-F-0045</a>	EPA's Fiscal Years 2019 and 2018 Hazardous Waste Electronic Manifest System Fund	Office of the Chief Financial Officer	4	Administrative and business	We found the fund's financial statements to be fairly presented and free of material misstatement. However, if the Agency does not address material weaknesses in internal controls over financial reporting, there remains a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement will not be prevented or detected and corrected on a timely basis.
	<a href="#">21-E-0033</a>	EPA Needs to Improve Its Planning and Management of Laboratory Consolidation Efforts	Office of Mission Support	1	Administrative and business	Without improved management controls, the EPA risks continued cost overruns and delays in its laboratory consolidation efforts. Overruns and delays will reduce the Agency's potential avoided costs and savings of approximately \$409 million over 30 years.
	<a href="#">20-E-0332</a>	EPA Has Sufficiently Managed Emergency Responses During the Pandemic but Needs to Procure More Supplies and Clarify Guidance	Office of Land and Emergency Management	1	Administrative and business	On-Scene Coordinators may not be safe deploying during the pandemic without sufficient personal protective equipment and clear guidance.
	<a href="#">20-P-0120</a>	EPA Needs to Improve Its Risk Management and Incident Response Information Security Functions	Office of Mission Support	1	Administrative and business	Further implementation of risk management activities and incident response tools are needed to combat cybersecurity threats intended to steal and destroy confidential and sensitive information.
				1 EPA previously indicated the recommendation was closed (3/13)		
	<a href="#">20-P-0065</a>	EPA Needs to Improve Management and Monitoring of Time-Off Awards	Office of Mission Support	2	Administrative and business	The EPA's time-off awards program needs to be held to the same standard as the Agency's monetary awards program, both in execution and resource management.
	<a href="#">20-F-0033</a>	EPA's Fiscal Years 2019 and 2018 (Restated) Consolidated Financial Statements	Office of the Chief Financial Officer	4	Administrative and business	We found the EPA's financial statements to be fairly presented and free of material misstatement. However, the Agency needs to address deficiencies to strengthen its accounting and financial statement preparation processes.

Top EPA management challenge	Report with associated open and/or unresolved recommendations		Action office	Number of open/unresolved (U) recommendations*	Benefit type	Impact
	Report no.	Report title				
	<a href="#">19-P-0155</a>	Actions Needed to Strengthen Controls over the EPA Administrator's and Associated Staff's Travel	Office of the Chief Financial Officer	2	Administrative and business	Actions need to be taken to strengthen controls over Administrator travel to help prevent the potential for fraud, waste, and abuse.
	<a href="#">19-N-0154</a>	EPA Region 5 Needs to Act on Transfer Request and Petition Regarding Ohio's Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation Permit Program	Region 5	1	Administrative and business	EPA Region 5's lack of timely decisions on program transfer requests and petitions leaves state programs without clarity and petitioners unaware of petition status.
	<a href="#">18-P-0059</a>	Self-Insurance for Companies with Multiple Cleanup Liabilities Presents Financial and Environmental Risks for EPA and the Public	Office of Land and Emergency Management	4	Administrative and business	The EPA's ability to oversee self-insurance instruments is impaired, leaving the Agency and taxpayers vulnerable to billions of dollars in financial risk and the public vulnerable to environmental risk. Unlike the EPA, some federal agencies do not accept corporate self-insurance.
	<a href="#">17-P-0368</a>	Improved Management of the Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Program Is Required to Maximize Cleanups	Office of Land and Emergency Management	5 EPA previously indicated the recommendations were closed (8/13)	Administrative and business	For ten of the 20 closed Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund cooperative agreements reviewed, approximately \$10.9 million available to clean up brownfields is not being used as intended.
	<a href="#">16-P-0333</a>	Enhanced Controls Needed to Prevent Further Abuse of Religious Compensatory Time	Office of Mission Support	1 EPA previously indicated the recommendation was closed (9/13)	Administrative and business	Inadequate controls for Religious Compensatory Time resulted in payouts to employees of \$73,514 and may result in additional payouts of up to \$81,927.
	<a href="#">14-P-0109</a>	Internal Controls Needed to Control Costs of Emergency and Rapid Response Services Contracts, as Exemplified in Region 6	Region 6	1	Administrative and business	Improper application of general and administrative rates resulted in higher costs to the government.
	<a href="#">21-P-0131</a>	Staffing Constraints, Safety and Health Concerns at EPA's National Enforcement Investigations Center May Compromise Ability to Achieve Mission	Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance	3	Human health and environmental	Safety, health, and attrition issues may compromise the National Enforcement Investigations Center's ability to support the EPA's civil and criminal enforcement efforts.
	<a href="#">20-P-0146</a>	EPA's Processing Times for New Source Air Permits in Indian Country Have Improved, but Many Still Exceed Regulatory Time Frames	Office of Air and Radiation	6	Human health and environmental	Delays in processing tribal New Source Review permits could impact construction projects and increase the risk that existing facilities awaiting a permit could be emitting more pollution than would be allowed if they were operating under an approved permit.

Top EPA management challenge	Report with associated open and/or unresolved recommendations		Action office	Number of open/unresolved (U) recommendations*	Benefit type	Impact
	Report no.	Report title				
	<a href="#">19-P-0251</a>	More Effective EPA Oversight Is Needed for Particulate Matter Emissions Compliance Testing	Region 10	2	Human health and environmental	Effective EPA oversight of stack testing improves data quality for compliance determinations and other uses.
	<a href="#">11-P-0215</a>	EPA's Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program Should Establish Management Controls to Ensure More Timely Results	Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention	3 EPA previously indicated the recommendations were closed (12/13)	Human health and environmental	The Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program will not be able to establish an effective screening and testing program without establishing program control and accountability. As a result, achieving the goal of protecting human health and the environment from endocrine disruptors will continue to be delayed.
	<a href="#">08-P-0196</a>	Making Better Use of Stringfellow Superfund Special Accounts	Region 9	1	Human health and environmental	Reclassifying or transferring is consistent with EPA guidance and would potentially allow \$47.8 million to be available for better use in Region 9's Superfund program or elsewhere in the Nation.
	<a href="#">21-E-0219</a>	EPA Needs to Measure and Track Performance of Programs Eliminated in President's Budget but Later Funded by Congress	Office of the Chief Financial Officer	2	Human health and environmental	Without internal controls to track eliminated-then-funded program performance, the EPA risks underreporting environmental and human health outcomes.
	<a href="#">21-P-0114</a>	EPA Does Not Consistently Monitor Hazardous Waste Units Closed with Waste in Place or Track and Report on Facilities That Fall Under the Two Responsible Programs	Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance	1 (U)	Human health and environmental	The EPA's inspection frequency of Treatment, Storage, and Disposal Facilities with Resource Conservation and Recovery Act units closed with waste in place does not meet the EPA's statutory requirement or policy.
	<a href="#">20-P-0062</a>	EPA Needs to Improve Its Emergency Planning to Better Address Air Quality Concerns During Future Disasters	Office of Land and Emergency Management	3 (U)	Human health and environmental	Developing EPA guidance for collecting and communicating air quality data could improve public confidence in the Agency during future disaster responses.
	<a href="#">21-E-0125</a>	Concerns About the Process Used for the SAFE Vehicles Rule Demonstrate the Need for a Policy on EPA's Role in Joint Rulemakings	Office of Air and Radiation	3 (U)	Human health and environmental	The EPA's Actions in the final SAFE Vehicles Rule undercut the rule's quality.
	<a href="#">22-F-0007</a>	EPA's Fiscal Years 2021 and 2020 (Restated) Consolidated Financial Statements	Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance	2 (U)	Administrative and business	We found the EPA's financial statements to be fairly presented and free of material misstatement. However, the Agency needs to address deficiencies to strengthen its accounting and financial statement preparation processes.

Top EPA management challenge	Report with associated open and/or unresolved recommendations		Action office	Number of open/unresolved (U) recommendations*	Benefit type	Impact
	Report no.	Report title				
Subtotal	25 reports			55 open and 9 unresolved recommendations		
Enforcing environmental laws and regulations	<a href="#">21-P-0265</a>	EPA Needs to Strengthen Oversight of Its Travel Program Authorization and Voucher Approval Processes	Office of the Chief Financial Officer	1	Administrative and business	The Agency did not consistently comply with travel program requirements, which can lead to mismanagement of the EPA's annual travel expenses, which totaled \$52.7 million in fiscal year 2019.
	<a href="#">21-P-0042</a>	EPA Needs to Substantially Improve Oversight of Its Military Leave Processes to Prevent Improper Payments	Office of Mission Support	9	Administrative and business	The EPA paid 124 reservists about \$1.4 million in military leave pay from January 2017 through June 2019. We identified potential improper payments of \$129,000 related to 104 of the 1,628 payroll transactions that we audited.
			Office of the Chief Financial Officer			
	<a href="#">20-P-0245</a>	EPA Needs to Strengthen Controls Over Required Documentation and Tracking of Intergovernmental Personnel Act Assignments	Office of Mission Support	3	Administrative and business	The Agency lacks controls to verify that documents are submitted and maintained as required, as well as a reliable system to track employees on IPA assignment.
	<a href="#">21-P-0175</a>	EPA Should Conduct More Oversight of Synthetic-Minor-Source Permitting to Assure Permits Adhere to EPA Guidance	Office of Air and Radiation	5	Human health and environmental	Without clear and enforceable limitations in synthetic-minor-source permits, facilities may emit excess pollution that would otherwise subject them to the more stringent requirements of the Clean Air Act major-source permitting programs.
	<a href="#">21-P-0132</a>	Resource Constraints, Leadership Decisions, and Workforce Culture Led to a Decline in Federal Enforcement	Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance	4 / 3 (U)	Human health and environmental	A decline in the EPA's enforcement activities may expose the public and the environment to undetected harmful pollutants.
	<a href="#">21-P-0130</a>	EPA Helps States Reduce Trash, Including Plastic, in U.S. Waterways but Needs to Identify Obstacles and Develop Strategies for Further Progress	Office of Water	2	Human health and environmental	The EPA and states can reduce the volume of trash, including plastics, in U.S. waterways by evaluating barriers to implementing the Clean Water Act and developing strategies to overcome those barriers.
	<a href="#">21-E-0125</a>	Concerns About the Process Used for the SAFE Vehicles Rule Demonstrate the Need for a Policy on EPA's Role in Joint Rulemakings	Office of Air and Radiation	1	Human health and environmental	The EPA's actions in the final SAFE Vehicles Rule undercut the rule's quality.

Top EPA management challenge	Report with associated open and/or unresolved recommendations		Action office	Number of open/unresolved (U) recommendations*	Benefit type	Impact
	Report no.	Report title				
	<a href="#">21-P-0114</a>	EPA Does Not Consistently Monitor Hazardous Waste Units Closed with Waste in Place or Track and Report on Facilities That Fall Under the Two Responsible Programs	Office of Land and Emergency Management	4	Human health and environmental	The EPA's inspection frequency of Treatment, Storage, and Disposal Facilities with Resource Conservation and recovery Act units closed with waste in place does not meet the EPA's statutory requirement or policy.
	<a href="#">20-P-0236</a>	EPA Needs to Improve Oversight of How States Implement Air Emissions Regulations for Municipal Solid Waste Landfills	Region 6	1	Human health and environmental	Effective EPA oversight of state implementation of landfill air emissions requirements helps achieve air quality, public health, and environmental goals set by the Clean Air Act.
			Office of Air and Radiation	1		
	<a href="#">20-P-0047</a>	EPA Failed to Develop Required Cost and Benefit Analyses and to Assess Air Quality Impacts on Children's Health for Proposed Glider Repeal Rule Allowing Used Engines in Heavy-Duty Trucks	Office of Air and Radiation	1 / 1 (U)	Human health and environmental	The EPA's actions regarding the proposed Glider Repeal Rule lacked transparency and deprived the public of required information.
	<a href="#">16-P-0275</a>	EPA Has Not Met Certain Statutory Requirements to Identify Environmental Impacts of Renewable Fuel Standard	Office of Air and Radiation	2	Human health and environmental	The EPA, Congress and other stakeholders lack key information on biofuel impacts needed to make science-based decisions about RFS.
	<a href="#">16-P-0104</a>	EPA Has Not Met Statutory Requirements for Hazardous Waste Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facility Inspections, but Inspection Rates Are High	Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance	1 EPA previously indicated the recommendation was closed (13/13)	Human health and environmental	Missed Treatment, Storage, and Disposal facilities inspections violate the Resource conservation and recovery Act legal requirement and can increase the risk of exposure to hazardous substances.
	<a href="#">10-P-0224</a>	EPA Should Revise Outdated or Inconsistent EPA-State Clean Water Memoranda of Agreement	Office of Water	1	Human health and environmental	The current state of the MOAs means that the EPA cannot assure it has effective management control over State programs that assures the public that Clean Water Act objectives are being achieved.
	<a href="#">20-E-0246</a>	EPA's 2018 BEACH Act Report to Congress Does Not Fully Meet Statutory Requirements	Office of Water	2 (U)	Human health and environmental	EPA issuance of informative Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act reports would allow Congress to make informed program decisions, improve program oversight, and enhance transparency.
Subtotal		14 reports	36 open and 6 unresolved recommendations			

\* "U" denotes an unresolved recommendation.

## Open Recommendations by Program Office and Region

Responsible office	Report with open recommendation		Number of open recommendations
	Report no.	Report title	
Office of the Administrator*	<a href="#">20-P-0173</a>	Further Efforts Needed to Uphold Scientific Integrity Policy at EPA	1
	<a href="#">20-N-0128</a>	Management Alert: Prompt Action Needed to Inform Residents Living Near Ethylene Oxide-Emitting Facilities About Health Concerns and Actions to Address Those Concerns	1
	<a href="#">18-P-0240</a>	EPA Needs a Comprehensive Vision and Strategy for Citizen Science that Aligns with Its Strategic Objectives on Public Participation	2
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3 reports</b>		<b>4 open recommendations</b>
Office of Air and Radiation	<a href="#">21-P-0175</a>	EPA Should Conduct More Oversight of Synthetic-Minor-Source Permitting to Assure Permits Adhere to EPA Guidance	5
	<a href="#">21-P-0129</a>	EPA Should Conduct New Residual Risk and Technology Reviews for Chloroprene- and Ethylene Oxide-Emitting Source Categories to Protect Human Health	1
	<a href="#">21-E-0125</a>	Concerns About the Process Used for the SAFE Vehicles Rule Demonstrate the Need for a Policy on EPA's Role in Joint Rulemakings	1
	<a href="#">21-P-0123</a>	EPA Delayed Risk Communication and Issued Instructions Hindering Region 5's Ability to Address Ethylene Oxide Emissions	2
	<a href="#">20-P-0236</a>	EPA Needs to Improve Oversight of How States Implement Air Emissions Regulations for Municipal Solid Waste Landfills	1
	<a href="#">20-P-0146</a>	EPA's Processing Times for New Source Air Permits in Indian Country Have Improved, but Many Still Exceed Regulatory Time Frames	6
	<a href="#">20-P-0047</a>	EPA Failed to Develop Required Cost and Benefit Analyses and to Assess Air Quality Impacts on Children's Health for Proposed Glider Repeal Rule Allowing Used Engines in Heavy-Duty Trucks	1
	<a href="#">19-P-0207</a>	EPA Effectively Screens Air Emissions Data from Continuous Monitoring Systems but Could Enhance Verification of System Performance	1
	<a href="#">16-P-0275</a>	EPA Has Not Met Certain Statutory Requirements to Identify Environmental Impacts of Renewable Fuel Standard	2
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>9 reports</b>		<b>20 open recommendations</b>
Office of the Chief Financial Officer	<a href="#">21-P-0265</a>	EPA Needs to Strengthen Oversight of Its Travel Program Authorization and Voucher Approval Processes	1
	<a href="#">21-F-0045</a>	EPA's Fiscal Years 2019 and 2018 Hazardous Waste Electronic Manifest System Fund	4
	<a href="#">21-P-0042</a>	EPA Needs to Substantially Improve Oversight of Its Military Leave Processes to Prevent Improper Payments	1
	<a href="#">20-F-0033</a>	EPA's Fiscal Years 2019 and 2018 (Restated) Consolidated Financial Statements	4
	<a href="#">19-P-0155</a>	Actions Needed to Strengthen Controls over the EPA Administrator's and Associated Staff's Travel	2
	<a href="#">21-E-0219</a>	EPA Needs to Measure and Track Performance of Programs Eliminated in President's Budget but Later Funded by Congress	2
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>6 reports</b>		<b>14 open recommendations</b>
Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention	<a href="#">19-P-0195</a>	Pesticide Registration Fee, Vulnerability Mitigation and Database Security Controls for EPA's FIFRA and PRIA Systems Need Improvement	1
	<a href="#">21-E-0072</a>	EPA Is at Risk of Not Achieving Special Local Needs Program Goals for Pesticides	1



Responsible office	Report with open recommendation		Number of open recommendations
	Report no.	Report title	
	<a href="#">18-P-0080</a>	EPA Needs to Evaluate the Impact of the Revised Agricultural Worker Protection Standard on Pesticide Exposure Incidents	1
	<a href="#">17-P-0053</a>	Additional Measures Can Be Taken to Prevent Deaths and Serious Injuries from Residential Fumigations	1
	<a href="#">11-P-0215</a>	EPA's Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program Should Establish Management Controls to Ensure More Timely Results	3
	<a href="#">21-E-0186</a>	EPA's Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program Has Made Limited Progress in Assessing Pesticides	9
	<a href="#">21-E-0146</a>	EPA Deviated from Typical Procedures in Its 2018 Dicamba Pesticide Registration Decision	3
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>7 reports</b>		<b>19 open recommendations</b>
<b>Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance</b>	<a href="#">21-P-0132</a>	Resource Constraints, Leadership Decisions, and Workforce Culture Led to a Decline in Federal Enforcement	4
	<a href="#">21-P-0131</a>	Staffing Constraints, Safety and Health Concerns at EPA's National Enforcement Investigations Center May Compromise Ability to Achieve Mission	3
	<a href="#">20-P-0012</a>	Tribal Pesticide Enforcement Comes Close to Achieving EPA Goals, but Circuit Rider Inspector Guidance Needed	3
	<a href="#">16-P-0104</a>	EPA Has Not Met Statutory Requirements for Hazardous Waste Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facility Inspections, but Inspection Rates Are High	1
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>4 reports</b>		<b>11 open recommendations</b>
<b>Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance and Office of Water</b>	<a href="#">18-P-0221</a>	Management Weaknesses Delayed Response to Flint Water Crisis	2
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1 report</b>		<b>2 open recommendations</b>
<b>Office of General Counsel</b>	<a href="#">20-E-0333</a>	Improved EPA Oversight of Funding Recipients' Title VI Programs Could Prevent Discrimination	5
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1 report</b>		<b>5 open recommendations</b>
<b>Office of Land and Emergency Management</b>	<a href="#">21-E-0226</a>	EPA's Emergency Response Systems at Risk of Having Inadequate Security Controls	2
	<a href="#">20-E-0332</a>	EPA Has Sufficiently Managed Emergency Responses During the Pandemic but Needs to Procure More Supplies and Clarify Guidance	1
	<a href="#">18-P-0059</a>	Self-Insurance for Companies with Multiple Cleanup Liabilities Presents Financial and Environmental Risks for EPA and the Public	4
	<a href="#">17-P-0368</a>	Improved Management of the Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Program Is Required to Maximize Cleanups	5
	<a href="#">21-P-0223</a>	EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management Lacked a Nationally Consistent Strategy for Communicating Health Risks at Contaminated Sites	3
	<a href="#">21-P-0114</a>	EPA Does Not Consistently Monitor Hazardous Waste Units Closed with Waste in Place or Track and Report on Facilities That Fall Under the Two Responsible Programs	4
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>6 reports</b>		<b>19 open recommendations</b>
<b>Office of Mission Support</b>	<a href="#">21-P-0242</a>	EPA Needs to Strengthen Its Purchase Card Program Approval Process	2
	<a href="#">21-E-0226</a>	EPA's Emergency Response Systems at Risk of Having Inadequate Security Controls	4
	<a href="#">21-E-0124</a>	EPA Needs to Improve Processes for Updating Guidance, Monitoring Corrective Actions, and Managing Remote Access for External Users	1
	<a href="#">21-P-0094</a>	EPA Improperly Awarded and Managed Information Technology Contracts	1
	<a href="#">21-E-0033</a>	EPA Needs to Improve Its Planning and Management of Laboratory Consolidation Efforts	1



Responsible office	Report with open recommendation		Number of open recommendations
	Report no.	Report title	
	<a href="#">20-P-0245</a>	EPA Needs to Strengthen Controls Over Required Documentation and Tracking of Intergovernmental Personnel Act Assignments	3
	<a href="#">20-P-0120</a>	EPA Needs to Improve Its Risk Management and Incident Response Information Security Functions	2
	<a href="#">20-P-0065</a>	EPA Needs to Improve Management and Monitoring of Time-Off Awards	2
	<a href="#">16-P-0333</a>	Enhanced Controls Needed to Prevent Further Abuse of Religious Compensatory Time	1
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>9 reports</b>		<b>17 open recommendations</b>
<b>Office of Mission Support and Office of the Chief Financial Officer</b>	<a href="#">21-P-0042</a>	EPA Needs to Substantially Improve Oversight of Its Military Leave Processes to Prevent Improper Payments	8
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1 report</b>		<b>8 open recommendations</b>
<b>Office of Research and Development</b>	<a href="#">21-E-0226</a>	EPA's Emergency Response Systems at Risk of Having Inadequate Security Controls	1
	<a href="#">20-P-0173</a>	Further Efforts Needed to Uphold Scientific Integrity Policy at EPA	3
	<a href="#">18-P-0240</a>	EPA Needs a Comprehensive Vision and Strategy for Citizen Science that Aligns with Its Strategic Objectives on Public Participation	1
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3 reports</b>		<b>5 open recommendations</b>
<b>Office of Water</b>	<a href="#">21-E-0264</a>	EPA Needs an Agencywide Strategic Action Plan to Address Harmful Algal Blooms	3
	<a href="#">21-P-0130</a>	EPA Helps States Reduce Trash, Including Plastic, in U.S. Waterways but Needs to Identify Obstacles and Develop Strategies for Further Progress	2
	<a href="#">19-P-0318</a>	EPA Must Improve Oversight of Notice to the Public on Drinking Water Risks to Better Protect Human Health	2
	<a href="#">19-P-0002</a>	EPA Unable to Assess the Impact of Hundreds of Unregulated Pollutants in Land-Applied Biosolids on Human Health and the Environment	4
	<a href="#">10-P-0224</a>	EPA Should Revise Outdated or Inconsistent EPA-State Clean Water Memoranda of Agreement	1
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>5 reports</b>		<b>12 open recommendations</b>
<b>Region 2</b>	<a href="#">21-P-0032</a>	Region 2's Hurricanes Irma and Maria Response Efforts in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands Show the Need for Improved Planning, Communications, and Assistance for Small Drinking Water Systems	2
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1 report</b>		<b>2 open recommendations</b>
<b>Region 3</b>	<a href="#">21-P-0122</a>	Improved Review Processes Could Advance EPA Regions 3 and 5 Oversight of State-Issued National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits	3
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1 report</b>		<b>3 open recommendations</b>
<b>Region 5</b>	<a href="#">19-N-0154</a>	EPA Region 5 Needs to Act on Transfer Request and Petition Regarding Ohio's Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation Permit Program	1
	<a href="#">21-P-0122</a>	Improved Review Processes Could Advance EPA Regions 3 and 5 Oversight of State-Issued National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits	1
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2 reports</b>		<b>2 open recommendations</b>
<b>Region 6</b>	<a href="#">14-P-0109</a>	Internal Controls Needed to Control Costs of Emergency and Rapid Response Services Contracts, as Exemplified in Region 6	1
	<a href="#">20-P-0236</a>	EPA Needs to Improve Oversight of How States Implement Air Emissions Regulations for Municipal Solid Waste Landfills	1
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2 reports</b>		<b>2 open recommendations</b>

Responsible office	Report with open recommendation		Number of open recommendations
	Report no.	Report title	
Region 9	<a href="#">08-P-0196</a>	Making Better Use of Stringfellow Superfund Special Accounts	1
	<a href="#">21-E-0254</a>	Pandemic Highlights Need for Additional Tribal Drinking Water Assistance and Oversight in EPA Regions 9 and 10	4
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2 reports</b>		<b>5 open recommendations</b>
Regions 10	<a href="#">19-P-0251</a>	More Effective EPA Oversight Is Needed for Particulate Matter Emissions Compliance Testing	2
	<a href="#">21-E-0254</a>	Pandemic Highlights Need for Additional Tribal Drinking Water Assistance and Oversight in EPA Regions 9 and 10	4
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2 reports</b>		<b>6 open recommendations</b>

## Corrective Actions Taking Three Years or More to Implement

### Actions Needed to Strengthen Controls over the EPA Administrator's and Associated Staff's Travel

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">19-P-0155</a>
Date issued	May 16, 2019
Summary of findings	<p>The OIG identified 40 trips and \$985,037 in costs associated with the former administrator's travel for the ten-month period from March 1, 2017, to December 31, 2017. This covered 34 completed and six canceled trips and included costs incurred not only by the former administrator but by his protective service detail, or PSD, and other staff. Of the 40 trips, 16 included travel to or had stops in Tulsa, Oklahoma—the location of the former administrator's personal residence.</p> <p>We estimated excessive costs of \$123,942 regarding the former administrator's and accompanying PSD agents' use of first or business-class travel because the exception that allowed for the travel accommodation was granted without sufficient justification and, initially, without appropriate approval authority. Although the EPA's travel policy is sufficiently designed to prevent fraud, waste and abuse and is consistent with the Federal Travel Regulation, we found that the policy did not initially outline who had the authority to approve the administrator's travel authorizations and vouchers.</p> <p>We also found that not all applicable provisions of the Federal Travel Regulation or EPA travel policy were followed. We identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improper granting of first or business-class exceptions</li> <li>• Unjustified use of noncontract air carriers</li> <li>• Improper approval of lodging costs above per diem</li> <li>• Missing detailed support for trips with stops in Tulsa</li> <li>• Improper approval of international business-class travel</li> <li>• Inaccurate and incomplete international trip reports</li> </ul> <p>The former administrator's use of military or chartered flights was justified and approved in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulation and EPA policy.</p>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of the Chief Financial Officer
Recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Evaluate and determine whether the increased airfare costs estimated at \$123,942 related to former Administrator Pruitt's use of first/business-class travel without sufficient justification and proper approval, for the period March 1, 2017, through December 31, 2017, should be recovered and, if so, from which responsible official or officials, and direct recovery of the funds.</li> <li>2. For the period January 1, 2018, through his resignation in July 2018, evaluate and determine whether any costs related to former Administrator Pruitt's use of first/business-class travel without sufficient justification and proper approval should be recovered and, if so, from which responsible official or officials, and direct recovery of the funds.</li> </ol>
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: Unresolved</li> <li>○ Revised: November 30, 2021; December 16, 2022 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommendation 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: Unresolved</li> <li>○ Revised: November 30, 2021; December 16, 2022 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	Actions need to be taken to strengthen controls over Administrator travel to help prevent the potential for fraud, waste, and abuse.

## Additional Measures Can Be Taken to Prevent Deaths and Serious Injuries from Residential Fumigations

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">17-P-0053</a>
Date issued	December 12, 2016
Summary of findings	<p>Since 2002, at least 11 deaths and two serious injuries occurred during residential fumigations in the two U.S. states with the most fumigation treatments—California and Florida. Compliance with current pesticide use requirements does not always prevent adverse impacts.</p> <p>We identified multiple factors that contributed to these adverse impacts, including: (1) no requirement to secure tenting around structures undergoing fumigation, (2) ineffective devices used to detect pesticide levels inside of structures, and (3) failure to attend mandatory training for residential pesticide applicators who conduct fumigations.</p> <p>In addition, we identified other program control risks that, if addressed, could reduce the risk of future deaths and serious injuries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EPA could designate residential fumigation as a priority area for enforcement, with special emphasis placed on locations such as Puerto Rico, which has a high demand for residential fumigations but lacks information to effectively oversee such fumigations. Data on sales and use of sulfuryl fluoride in Puerto Rico are not reported and are unknown.</li> <li>• The EPA could require site-specific residential fumigation management plans. Such plans can prevent accidents, identify appropriate emergency procedures, and demonstrate compliance with requirements.</li> <li>• The EPA could complete work to develop a comprehensive national pesticide incident database to monitor residential fumigation risks. The EPA has an ongoing pesticide incident database initiative to collect data, but there is no scheduled completion date.</li> </ul>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention
Recommendation	3. Conduct an assessment of clearance devices to validate their effectiveness in detecting required clearance levels, as part of the Office of Pesticide Programs ongoing reevaluation of structural fumigants.
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon issuance: November 30, 2017</li> <li>• Revised: August 31, 2021; December 31, 2022 (<i>more than six years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul>
Impact	The EPA can better prevent deaths and serious injuries caused during residential fumigations by amending sulfuryl fluoride labels and monitoring compliance.

## Enhanced Controls Needed to Prevent Further Abuse of Religious Compensatory Time

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">16-P-0333</a>
Date issued	September 27, 2016
Summary of findings	<p>Based on our analysis, time and attendance records support that the retired Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, or OCSPP, employee earned the accumulated Religious Compensatory Time hours. However, we identified concerns with the EPA's internal controls that allowed the excessive accumulation of Religious Compensatory hours by agency employees, and the OCSPP employee received a payout of \$32,469 for unused Religious Compensatory Time upon retirement.</p> <p>EPA policy and procedures on accumulation and use of Religious Compensatory Time meet the requirements of federal laws and regulations. But they are not specific enough to prevent abuse. The Agency's controls do not enforce the requirement for employees to link the earning of Religious Compensatory Time to specific religious observances. The EPA lacks detailed controls covering the accumulation, use and monitoring of Religious Compensatory Time. This leaves practices noncompliant with the intent of federal law and regulations, and not consistent with U.S. Office of Personnel Management best practices.</p> <p>Inadequate controls allowed several agency employees to maintain significant positive Religious Compensatory Time balances for extended periods of time without intended use plans. Also, the Agency retained significant negative balances without a plan to repay the hours. The Agency has not provided staff with training or established adequate guidance to effectively manage and monitor Religious Compensatory Time. As a result, in addition to the OCSPP employee, the EPA paid 13 other employees \$41,045 for unused Religious Compensatory Time upon separation. Further, if no action is taken to reduce additional employees' high balances, future payments totaling up to \$81,927 could be made.</p>
Recommendations open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Mission Support, formerly Office of Administration and Resources Management
Recommendations	3. Develop training on the proper use of Religious Compensatory Time and require all managers approving, and employees using, Religious Compensatory Time to complete the course.
Planned completion dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: January 12, 2022 (<i>more than five years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	Inadequate controls for Religious Compensatory Time resulted in payouts to employees of \$73,514, and may result in additional payouts of up to \$81,927.

## The EPA Deviated from Typical Procedures in Its 2018 Dicamba Pesticide Registration Decision

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">21-E-0146</a>
Date issued	May 24, 2021
Summary of findings	<p>The EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy affirms that the Agency's ability to pursue its mission to protect human health and the environment depends upon the integrity of the science on which the EPA relies. Per the policy, the EPA's scientists and managers are expected to represent the Agency's scientific activities clearly, accurately, honestly, objectively, thoroughly, without political or other interference, and in a timely manner, consistent with their official responsibilities. Additionally, federal and EPA requirements include documenting the formulation and execution of policies and decisions. For pesticide registration decisions, the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention's Office of Pesticide Programs must review registrations and document its decisions.</p> <p>We found that the EPA's 2018 decision to extend registrations for three dicamba pesticide products varied from typical operating procedures. Namely, the EPA did not conduct the required internal peer reviews of scientific documents created to support the dicamba decision. While division-level management review is part of the typical operating procedure, interviewees said that senior leaders in the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention's immediate office were more involved in the dicamba decision than in other pesticide registration decisions. This led to senior-level changes to or omissions from scientific documents. For instance, these documents excluded some conclusions initially assessed by staff scientists to address stakeholder risks. We also found that staff felt constrained or muted in sharing their concerns on the dicamba registrations.</p> <p>The EPA's actions on the dicamba registrations left the decision legally vulnerable, resulting in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals vacating the 2018 registrations for violating FIFRA by substantially understating some risks and failing to acknowledge others entirely.</p>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention
Recommendation	3. Annually conduct and document training for all staff and senior managers and policy makers to affirm the office's commitment to the Scientific Integrity Policy and principles and to promote a culture of scientific integrity.
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: March 31, 2022</li> <li>Revised: March 31, 2026 (<b>more than four years after issuance</b>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	The EPA needs to document and follow established procedures to ensure scientifically sound decisions regarding pesticides.

## The EPA Effectively Screens Air Emissions Data from Continuous Monitoring Systems but Could Enhance Verification of System Performance

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">19-P-0207</a>
Date issued	June 27, 2019
Summary of findings	<p>The EPA's automated screening of facility-reported continuous emissions monitoring systems, or CEMS, data worked as intended and was effective in verifying the quality of the reported data. However, we found a small number of inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the reported data. While these instances had no impact on whether the data met quality assurance requirements, the inaccurate data could have a negative impact on data users by providing inaccurate or misleading information. The EPA can prevent these problems by adding specific screening checks to its existing reporting software.</p> <p>Although the EPA's automated screening process was effective, the validity of the reported data can only be fully established when that process is supplemented with on-site field audits to verify that CEMS monitoring requirements were met. However, we found that the EPA and state agencies conducted a limited number of these audits. Out of over 1,000 facilities subject to ARP or CSAPR requirements, or both, the EPA conducted field audits at only 16 facilities between 2016 and the end of June 2018. In addition, nine of the ten state agencies we contacted were not conducting field audits. In response to our work, the EPA initiated a process to develop a streamlined CEMS field audit approach that state and local agencies can use when conducting other on-site visits at facilities.</p>
Recommendations open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Air and Radiation
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement electronic checks in the EPA's Emissions Collection and Monitoring Plan System or through an alternative mechanism to retroactively evaluate emissions and quality assurance data in instances where monitoring plan changes are submitted after the emissions and quality assurance data have already been accepted by the EPA.</li> </ol>
Planned completion dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: March 31, 2025 (<i>more than five years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	Data from CEMS are used to determine whether sources, such as power plants, comply with emissions limits designed to improve air quality and achieve environmental and public health goals.

## The EPA Has Not Met Certain Statutory Requirements to Identify Environmental Impacts of Renewable Fuel Standard

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">16-P-0275</a>
Date issued	August 18, 2016
Summary of findings	<p>The EPA's Office of Research and Development has not complied with the requirement to provide a report every three years to Congress on the impacts of biofuels. The EPA provided a report to Congress in 2011 but has not provided subsequent reports as required.</p> <p>In addition, the EPA's Office of Air and Radiation has not fulfilled the anti-backsliding requirements for Renewable Fuel Standard, or RFS, which are to analyze and address any negative air quality impacts of RFS. In 2010, the EPA completed a comprehensive lifecycle analysis to determine greenhouse gas reduction thresholds for RFS. Although not required to do so, the EPA committed to update this analysis as lifecycle science evolves. However, it does not have a process for initiating an update.</p> <p>The RFS reporting requirement provides for an objective analysis on the environmental impacts and unintended consequences of U.S. biofuel policy. This analysis is important given conflicting scientific opinions about biofuel impacts, potential impacts outside of the EPA's regulatory control, and divergent RFS interests. The EPA does not have an assessment that meets the requirement to identify whether RFS creates any impacts on air quality and, thus, take required measures to mitigate impacts. This information is needed to fully inform the EPA, Congress and other stakeholders of the environmental impacts of U.S. biofuel policy. In June 2016, Congress held a hearing on RFS implementation. Members expressed bipartisan interest in receiving more information from the EPA on the environmental impacts. This would help assess whether the law's original intent is being achieved and at what cost.</p>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Air and Radiation
Recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the anti-backsliding study on the air quality impacts of the Renewable Fuel Standard as required by the Energy Independence and Security Act.</li> <li>Determine whether additional action is needed to mitigate any adverse air quality impacts of the Renewable Fuel Standard as required by the Energy Independence and Security Act.</li> </ol>
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation 2 and 3:</li> <li>Upon issuance: September 30, 2024 (<i>more than eight years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>Revised: none</li> </ul>
Impact	The EPA, Congress and other stakeholders lack key information on biofuel impacts needed to make science-based decisions about RFS.



## ***The EPA Has Not Met Statutory Requirements for Hazardous Waste Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facility Inspections, but Inspection Rates Are High***

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">16-P-0104</a>
Date issued	March 11, 2016
Summary of findings	<p>Overall, the EPA had a high inspection completion rate of 91 percent (656 out of a universe of 718 treatment storage and disposal facilities, or TSDFs, reviewed. However, specific inspection completion rates varied for the three types of TSDFs: 94 percent for private TSDFs; 85 percent for federal TSDFs; and 54 percent for state or local TSDFs. Although the EPA's overall inspection completion rate is high, the Agency did not fully meet the legal requirement for inspecting 100 percent of operating TSDFs for fiscal year 2014. As noted above, the inspection rate for state and local TSDFs is just over 50 percent.</p> <p>We also found that the EPA recognizes state-conducted inspections of federal TSDFs as meeting the federal inspection requirement. Because this practice was inconsistent with the EPA's documented compliance monitoring strategy, the Agency updated its strategy in September 2015 to allow this practice.</p> <p>Inspections deter and monitor for noncompliance. TSDF inspections can identify and reduce potential risks to human health and the environment resulting from operations that treat, store and dispose of hazardous waste. TSDF inspections have identified violations, such as storage of hazardous waste in an unpermitted area and failure to minimize the possibility of the release of hazardous waste.</p> <p>The EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, or OECA, acknowledged that the Agency is not meeting the inspections requirement due to resource limitations from other competing priorities, such as inspector training or state oversight activities. OECA was unable to provide an estimate of the additional resources it would need to meet TSDF inspection requirements</p>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
Recommendation	1. Implement management controls to complete the required TSDF inspections.
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: March 19, 2019 (<b><i>more than three years after issuance</i></b>)</li> <li>Revised: none</li> </ul>
Impact	Missed TSDF inspections violate the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act legal requirement and can increase the risk of exposure to hazardous substances.

## Self-Insurance for Companies with Multiple Cleanup Liabilities Presents Financial and Environmental Risks for the EPA and the Public

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">18-P-0059</a>
Date issued	December 22, 2017
Summary of findings	<p>The EPA does not include and verify all self-insured environmental cleanup liabilities when evaluating requests for and reviewing corporate self-insurance. The EPA faces significant challenges to validating forms of self-insurance, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Regulatory constraints.</i> Most Resource Conservation and Recovery Act regulations and Superfund guidance we reviewed do not require full disclosure of all environmental liabilities, and the EPA lacks the information needed to independently validate all forms of self-insured liabilities. EPA guidance also does not require regional staff to check whether a company has multiple liabilities in other regions when validating a self-insurance instrument.</li> <li>• <i>Data and technical gaps.</i> The EPA lacks a data system with the capability to track multiple environmental liabilities and the resources and technical ability to validate self-insurance for companies with multiple environmental liabilities. Survey responses from all ten EPA regions showed that 70 percent of respondents believe insufficient staff training and expertise are moderate or extreme barriers to the efficient management and review of financial assurance instruments.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, we found a lack of compliance with physical safeguards for hard-copy financial assurance instruments. The inability to validate a company's self-insurance is a high-risk issue for the EPA. If self-insurance is not valid, a company may default on its obligation to pay for cleanup or closure activities, in some cases necessitating a government response. This threatens the effectiveness of cleanup programs, as the EPA—and, ultimately, the taxpayers—could be left with billions of dollars in cleanup costs. If a cleanup is not performed by the facility as required, it can result in longer human and environmental exposures to unsafe substances. The EPA could mitigate the risks by requiring full disclosure of all self-insured environmental liabilities, or it could seek regulatory or statutory changes.</p>
Recommendations open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Land and Emergency Management
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Develop or update existing standard operating procedures to outline the Office of Land and Emergency Management and Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance roles and responsibilities for overseeing the validity of Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and Superfund financial assurance instruments, where needed.</li> <li>6. Develop and include procedures for checking with other regions for facilities/sites with multiple self-insured liabilities in the standard operating procedures created for Recommendation 5.</li> <li>7. Develop and include instructions on the steps to take when an invalid financial assurance instrument (expired, insufficient in dollar amount, or not provided) is identified in the standard operating procedures created for Recommendation 5 and collect information on the causes of invalid financial assurance.</li> <li>8. Train staff on the procedures and instructions developed for Recommendation 5 through 7.</li> </ol>
Planned completion dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations 5, 6, and 7: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: June 30, 2020</li> <li>○ Revised: September 30, 2021 (<i>more than four years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommendation 8: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: September 30, 2020</li> <li>○ Revised: September 30, 2021 (<i>more than four years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	The EPA's ability to oversee self-insurance instruments is impaired, leaving the Agency and taxpayers vulnerable to billions of dollars in financial risk and the public vulnerable to environmental risk. Unlike the EPA, some federal agencies do not accept corporate self-insurance.

## The EPA Needs a Comprehensive Vision and Strategy for Citizen Science that Aligns with Its Strategic Objectives on Public Participation

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">18-P-0240</a>
Date issued	September 5, 2018
Summary of findings	<p>Although citizen science is carried out throughout the EPA, the Agency has not developed controls necessary to manage citizen science agencywide, including a clear vision and objectives for using results. Absent this, the EPA cannot undertake a systematic effort to analyze the risks and opportunities that citizen science presents.</p> <p>EPA staff identified barriers to effectively using citizen science results—including lack of a comprehensive vision and support or resources from senior management, and lack of understanding and buy-in for citizen science—that exist because EPA leadership has not developed a strategy for citizen science. Citizen science is evolving as advancements in technology provide greater access to the public. Thus, public involvement grows it will place pressure on the EPA to understand and determine how to use the data collected and provided to the Agency.</p>
Recommendations open three or more years	
Responsible office	Deputy Administrator (within the Office of the Administrator)
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a strategic vision and objectives for managing the use of citizen science that identifies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Linkage to the Agency's strategic goals.</li> <li>b. Roles and responsibilities for implementation.</li> <li>c. Resources to maintain and build upon existing Agency expertise.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Through appropriate EPA offices, direct completion of an assessment to identify the data management requirements for using citizen science data and an action plan for addressing those requirements, including those on sharing and using data, data format/standards, and data testing/validation.</li> </ol>
Responsible office	Office of Research and Development
Recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Build capacity for managing the use of citizen science, and expand awareness of citizen science resources, by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Finalizing the checklist on administrative and legal factors for agency staff to consider when developing citizen science projects, as well as identifying and developing any procedures needed to ensure compliance with steps in the checklist;</li> <li>b. Conducting training and/or marketing on the EPA's citizen science intranet site for program and regional staff in developing projects; and</li> <li>c. Finalizing and distributing materials highlighting project successes and how the EPA has used results of its investment in citizen science.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
Planned completion dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: December 31, 2020</li> <li>○ Revised: September 30, 2022 (<i>more than four years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommendation 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: December 31, 2020</li> <li>○ Revised: March 31, 2023 (<i>more than four years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommendation 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: December 31, 2020</li> <li>○ Revised: December 31, 2021; November 1, 2022 (<i>more than four years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	Without uniform guidance and direction, the EPA will be unable to fully use citizen science data that could contribute to the Agency's mission.

## The EPA Unable to Assess the Impact of Hundreds of Unregulated Pollutants in Land-Applied Biosolids on Human Health and the Environment

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">19-P-0002</a>
Date issued	November 15, 2018
Summary of findings	<p>The EPA's controls over the land application of sewage sludge, also referred to as biosolids, were incomplete or had weaknesses and may not fully protect human health and the environment. The EPA consistently monitored biosolids for nine regulated pollutants. However, it lacked the data or risk assessment tools needed to determine the safety of 352 pollutants found in biosolids. The EPA identified these pollutants in a variety of studies from 1989 through 2015. Our analysis determined that the 352 pollutants include 61 designated as acutely hazardous, hazardous, or priority pollutants in other programs.</p> <p>The Clean Water Act requires the EPA to review biosolids regulations at least every two years to identify additional toxic pollutants and promulgate regulations for such pollutants. Existing controls based on the Clean Water Act and the EPA's Biosolids Rule include testing for nine pollutants, all of which are heavy metals; researching for additional pollutants that may need regulation; reducing pathogens and the attractiveness of biosolids to potential disease-carrying organisms; and conducting compliance monitoring activities. The EPA's risk communication regarding biosolids should also be transparent.</p> <p>The EPA has reduced staff and resources in the biosolids program over time, creating barriers to addressing control weaknesses identified in the program. Past audits showed that the EPA needed more information to fully examine the health effects and ecological impacts of land-applied biosolids. Although the EPA could obtain additional data to complete biosolids risk assessments, it is not required to do so. Without such data, the Agency cannot determine whether biosolids pollutants with incomplete risk assessments are safe. The EPA's website, public documents, and biosolids labels do not explain the full spectrum of pollutants in biosolids and the uncertainty regarding their safety. Consequently, the biosolids program is at risk of not achieving its goal to protect public health and the environment.</p>
Recommendations open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Water
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Complete development of the probabilistic risk assessment tool and screening tool for biosolids land application scenarios.</li> <li>4. Develop and implement a plan to obtain the additional data needed to complete risk assessments and finalize safety determinations on the 352 identified pollutants in biosolids and promulgate regulations as needed.</li> <li>6. Publish guidance on the methods for the biosolids pathogen alternatives 3 and 4.</li> <li>8. Issue updated and consistent guidance on biosolids fecal coliform sampling practices.</li> </ol>
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: December 31, 2021</li> <li>○ Revised: March 31, 2023 (<i>more than four years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommendation 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: December 31, 2022 (<i>more than four years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>○ Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommendation 6: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: December 31, 2020</li> <li>○ Revised: May 31, 2021; December 31, 2021; July 1, 2022 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommendation 8: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: December 31, 2020</li> <li>○ Revised: May 31, 2021; December 31, 2021; July 1, 2022 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	The EPA identified 352 pollutants in biosolids but cannot yet consider these pollutants for further regulation due to either a lack of data or risk assessment tools. Pollutants found in biosolids can include pharmaceuticals, steroids, and flame retardants.

## The EPA Should Revise Outdated or Inconsistent EPA-State Clean Water Act Memoranda of Agreement

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">10-P-0224</a>
Date issued	September 14, 2010
Summary of findings	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System memorandums of agreement between the EPA and states do not ensure that the Agency has management control and effective oversight over a national program administered by states. EPA headquarters does not hold EPA regional or state offices accountable for updating their memorandums of agreement when necessary and relies on other planning and management mechanisms to exercise control over state programs. However, memorandums of agreement are critical because they are the common denominator for state-authorized programs and should represent a common baseline. Memorandums of agreement that are outdated or that are not adhered to reduce the EPA's ability to maintain a uniform program across states that meets the goals of Clean Water Act Sections 101 and 402. An effective national program must maintain consistent management control and oversight of state programs.
Recommendations open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Water
Recommendation	2-2. Develop a systematic approach to identify which states have outdated or inconsistent memorandums of agreements; renegotiate and update those memorandums of agreements using the memorandum of agreements template; and secure the active involvement and final, documented concurrence of headquarters to ensure national consistency.
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation 2-2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: September 28, 2018</li> <li>Revised: September 30, 2020; September 30, 2022 (<i>more than 12 years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	The current state of the memorandums of agreement means that the EPA cannot confirm it has effective management control over state programs, which would assure the public that Clean Water Act objectives are being achieved.

## The EPA Must Improve Oversight of Notice to the Public on Drinking Water Risks to Better Protect Human Health

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">19-P-0318</a>
Date issued	September 25, 2019
Summary of findings	<p>Primacy agencies have the responsibility to oversee whether public water systems meet federal requirements, including notifying consumers of certain situations regarding their drinking water. We found that some primacy agencies do not consistently fulfill their responsibility to enforce drinking water public notice requirements. Specifically, some primacy agencies do not consistently record violations, nor do they track the need for and issuance of public notices. In addition, the EPA's protocol for assessing primacy agency oversight does not fully cover all public notice requirements. As a result, not all primacy agencies know whether public water systems under their supervision appropriately notify consumers about drinking water problems, and the EPA and primacy agencies do not hold all public water systems to the same compliance standards.</p> <p>The EPA does not have complete and nationally consistent information about public water systems' compliance with public notice requirements because primacy agencies do not use consistent methods to identify problems with public notice or record violations in the national drinking water database. As a result, the EPA cannot fully monitor compliance and oversee the implementation of this important part of the drinking water program. Additionally, the EPA's public notice guidance documents to primacy agencies and public water systems are inconsistent with regulations and out of date. Consequently, primacy agencies lack accurate guidance on their oversight responsibilities. Public water systems also lack guidance about current, relevant tools to provide effective public notices and may miss opportunities to efficiently inform consumers about drinking water problems.</p>
Recommendations open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Water
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Update and revise the 2010 Revised State Implementation Guidance for the Public Notification Rule to include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Public notice delivery methods that are consistent with regulations.</li> <li>b. Information on modern methods for delivery of public notice.</li> </ol> </li> <li>6. Update and revise the 2010 <i>Public Notification Handbooks</i> to include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Public notice delivery methods that are consistent with regulations.</li> <li>b. Information on modern methods for delivery of public notice.</li> <li>c. Public notice requirements for the latest drinking water regulations.</li> <li>d. Procedures for public water systems to achieve compliance after violating a public notice regulation.</li> <li>e. Up-to-date references to compliance assistance tools.</li> <li>f. Additional resources for providing public notice in languages other than English.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
Planned completion dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: September 30, 2020</li> <li>○ Revised: September 30, 2022 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommendation 6: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: September 30, 2020</li> <li>○ Revised: September 30, 2022 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	Without reliable information about drinking water, consumers cannot make informed health decisions, and the EPA cannot provide effective oversight.

## Internal Controls Needed to Control Costs of Emergency and Rapid Response Services Contracts as Exemplified in Region 6

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">14-P-0109</a>
Date issued	February 4, 2014
Summary of findings	<p>Region 6 manages field activities under the Emergency and Rapid Response Services contracts. However, when we reviewed files and invoices submitted under the contracts' task orders, we found that infrequent internal control reviews and inadequate staffing levels hamper Region 6's ability to prevent and detect many contract management shortcomings. For example, Region 6 was not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performing required annual invoice reviews.</li> <li>• Monitoring contractor adjustment vouchers.</li> <li>• Receiving prime contractor negotiated team subcontract agreements on time.</li> <li>• Correctly coding task orders in the EPA Acquisition System.</li> <li>• Performing adequate internal control reviews.</li> </ul> <p>Without adequate staffing levels, Region 6 is unable to conduct internal control reviews. Such reviews are a tool for ensuring that products comply with regulations and are consistently of high quality. Without internal control reviews, crucial aspects of the acquisition cycle cannot be assessed, and management cannot determine and properly address weaknesses and vulnerabilities.</p> <p>We identified two conditions that resulted in higher costs to the government. One prime contractor was applying a general and administrative indirect rate to its subcontractors' other direct costs, which went against the prime contractor's proposal and indirect cost rate letter. Also, both prime contractors were receiving additional profit because the fixed labor rates negotiated between the EPA and the prime contractors were based solely on the prime's labor rates.</p>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Region 6
Recommendation	3. Direct contracting officers to require that the contractor adjust all its billings to reflect the application of the correct rate to team subcontract other direct costs.
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: September 30, 2024 (<i>more than ten years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>○ Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	Improper application of general and administrative rates resulted in higher costs to the government.

## The EPA Needs to Evaluate the Impact of the Revised Agricultural Worker Protection Standard on Pesticide Exposure Incidents

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">18-P-0080</a>
Date issued	February 15, 2018
Summary of findings	<p>The EPA had policies and procedures in place to implement the revised Agricultural Worker Protection Standard, or WPS. Further, the Agency provided training to regional staff, state inspectors and program leads. However, we found that management controls to implement the revised WPS were not fully adequate as of January 2, 2017, when compliance with most of the revised rule was required.</p> <p>Essential training and implementation materials were not available by January 2, 2017. In addition, two key documents—the WPS Inspection Manual and the How to Comply manual—were not available when the EPA conducted the majority of its training and outreach activities for states and tribes in 2016. As a result, many state officials said they did not have the time, tools or resources to successfully implement the revised WPS by the January 2, 2017, compliance date. The EPA granted a state agricultural association's petition to delay the compliance date until the necessary training resources and educational materials were made available to state agencies responsible for implementing the WPS. However, in a December 21, 2017, Federal Register notice, the EPA rescinded its plan to delay compliance dates. The Agency announced that compliance dates in the revised WPS published on November 2, 2015, remain in effect and that the Agency does not intend to extend them. The EPA also announced plans to revise certain WPS requirements.</p> <p>The EPA does not have the ability to collect agricultural pesticide exposure incident data to measure the impact of the revised WPS rule among target populations. The Agency relies on information assessed during pesticide re-evaluations and from voluntary reporting databases. The EPA is working on improving its Incident Data System, but the Agency stated that the improvements will not enable the collection of additional occupational exposure data.</p>
Recommendations open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention
Recommendations	1. In coordination with the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, develop and implement a methodology to evaluate the impact of the revised Agricultural Worker Protection Standard on pesticide exposure incidents among target populations.
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation 1:</li> <li>Upon issuance: December 31, 2022 (<i>more than four years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>Revised: none</li> </ul>
Impact	Over 2 million agricultural workers and pesticide handlers are protected by the WPS. Revisions to the standard are intended to reduce exposure to pesticides and provide enhanced protection to agricultural workers, pesticide handlers and their families.



## Making Better Use of Stringfellow Superfund Special Accounts

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">08-P-0196</a>
Date issued	July 9, 2008
Summary of findings	The Stringfellow special accounts had a balance of approximately \$117.8 million as of June 11, 2008. The \$70 million remaining in the accounts are to cover potential EPA cleanup costs if the responsible party—that is, California—is unable to pay. That leaves up to \$47.8 million that can be transferred to the EPA Hazardous Substance Superfund Trust Fund.
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Region 9
Open recommendation	2. Reclassify or transfer to the Trust Fund, as appropriate, \$27.8 million (plus any earned interest less oversight costs) of the Stringfellow special accounts in annual reviews, and at other milestones including the end of fiscal year 2010, when the record of decision is signed, and the final settlement is achieved.
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon issuance: December 31, 2012</li> <li>• Revised: September 30, 2023; September 30, 2026 (<i>more than 18 years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul>
Impact	The EPA could reallocate some portion of its other Trust Fund dollars to other priority sites or needs. Alternatively, if funds are transferred to the Trust Fund, there are numerous Superfund requirements and priorities elsewhere in the United States that could be addressed by putting these approximately \$27.8 million dollars of idle funds to better use.

## The EPA Needs to Improve Its Risk Management and Incident Response Information Security Functions

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">20-P-0120</a>
Date issued	March 24, 2020
Summary of findings	<p>We assessed the maturity of the EPA's information security program at Level 3, Consistently Implemented. A Level 3 designation means that the EPA's policies, procedures, and strategies are consistently implemented but quantitative and qualitative effectiveness measures are lacking. To determine the EPA's maturity level, we reviewed the five security function areas outlined in the FY 2019 IG FISMA, or Federal Information Security Modernization Act of 2014, Reporting Metrics: Identify, Protect, Detect, Respond, and Recover. We also reviewed the eight corresponding domains: Risk Management, Configuration Management, Identity and Access Management, Data Protection and Privacy, Security Training, Information Security Continuous Monitoring, Incident Response, and Contingency Planning.</p> <p>While the EPA consistently implemented policies, procedures, and strategies for many of these function areas and domains, improvements are still needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Risk Management:</i> The EPA did not implement standard data elements for software and associated licenses used within the Agency's information technology environment, and the plans of action and milestones were not consistently used to mitigate security weaknesses.</li> <li>• <i>Incident Response:</i> The EPA did not implement prescribed technologies to support its incident response program.</li> </ul>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Mission Support
Open recommendation	2. Establish a control to validate that Agency personnel are creating the required plans of action and milestones for weaknesses that are identified from vulnerability testing but not remediated within the Agency's established time frames per the EPA's information security procedures.
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon issuance: June 24, 2020. <i>The EPA closed the recommendation, but the OIG determined that the corrective action was not completed, and the EPA has not provided a revised completion date.</i></li> <li>• Revised: none</li> </ul>
Impact	Further implementation of risk management activities and incident response tools are needed to combat cybersecurity threats intended to steal and destroy confidential and sensitive information.

## The EPA Region 5 Needs to Act on Transfer Request and Petition Regarding Ohio's Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation Permit Program

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">19-N-0154</a>
Date issued	May 15, 2019
Summary of findings	<p>EPA Region 5 has not made a decision regarding Ohio's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, or NPDES, Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation permit program transfer request. The most recent request was made in 2015. Regulations per 40 C.F.R § 123.62 specify the process by which states may transfer all or part of their NPDES program from one state agency to another. However, these regulations do not establish timelines for the EPA to review and approve or disapprove such requests.</p> <p>We found that although EPA Region 5 began an informal investigation of the allegations raised in the citizen petition to commence withdrawal proceedings, more than 8 years after the 2011 submission the region still had not decided about the petition. When the EPA receives a citizen petition for withdrawal, it may conduct a review of the allegations to determine whether cause exists to prompt withdrawal proceedings per 40 C.F.R §123.64(b)(1). But the regulations impose no timeline for action.</p>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Region 5
Open recommendation	1. Issue a decision regarding Ohio's request to transfer from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to the Ohio Department of Agriculture its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program with respect to Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations and other elements of the program.
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon issuance: March 8, 2021</li> <li>• Revised: November 23, 2023 (<i>more than four years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul>
Impact	EPA Region 5's lack of timely decisions on program transfer requests and petitions leaves state programs without clarity and petitioners unaware of petition status.

## The EPA Should Conduct More Oversight of Synthetic-Minor Source Permitting to Assure Permits Adhere to EPA Guidance

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">21-P-0175</a>
Date issued	July 8, 2021
Summary of findings	<p>While the EPA oversees state and local compliance monitoring for synthetic-minor-source permits, the EPA conducts only limited oversight of the permits themselves. The EPA has issued guidance to state and local agencies to develop enforceable permit limitations in synthetic-minor-source permits, but the Agency does not review permits to assure the agencies meet this guidance.</p> <p>We reviewed 16 natural gas extraction industry synthetic-minor-source permits from Colorado and Oklahoma and found that many of the permit limitations did not adhere to the EPA's guidance. For example, in those permits, we found that 102 of 529 permit limits did not have sufficient information within the permit or its supporting documentation to determine whether the limits were technically accurate. We also found that 26 limits did not specify the method for assessing compliance. In addition, 55 limits did not have sufficient monitoring requirements to determine whether the facility's assumed pollution reduction from pollution control devices was being achieved. This could result in a synthetic-minor facility emitting pollutants at or above major-source levels without being detected.</p> <p>In addition, we found that the EPA had not communicated several key expectations for synthetic-minor-source permitting to state and local agencies via guidance. Further, Oklahoma does not allow the public to participate in its permitting process for certain synthetic-minor-source permits, as required by EPA regulations. EPA staff said this may be the case in other states as well.</p>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Air and Radiation
Open recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. In consultation with the EPA regions, develop and implement an oversight plan to include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. An initial review of a sample of synthetic-minor-source permits in different industries that are issued by state, local, and tribal agencies to assess whether the permits adhere to EPA guidance on practical enforceability, including limits that are technically accurate; have appropriate time periods; and include sufficient monitoring, record-keeping, and reporting requirements.</li> <li>b. A periodic review of a sample of synthetic-minor-source permits to occur, at a minimum, once every five years.</li> <li>c. Procedures to resolve any permitting deficiencies identified during the initial and periodic reviews.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Assess recent EPA studies of enclosed combustion device performance and compliance monitoring and other relevant Air and Radiation information during the next statutorily required review of 40 C.F.R Part 60 Subparts OOOO and OOOOa to determine whether revisions are needed to monitoring, record-keeping, and reporting requirements for enclosed combustion devices to assure continuous compliance with associated limits and revise the regulatory requirements as appropriate.</li> <li>4. Revise the Agency's guidance to communicate its key expectations for synthetic-minor-source permitting to state and Air and Radiation local agencies.</li> </ol>
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: October 31, 2024 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>○ Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommendation 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: December 31, 2024 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>○ Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommendation 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: October 31, 2024 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>○ Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	Without clear and enforceable limitations in synthetic-minor-source permits, facilities may emit excess pollution that would otherwise subject them to the more stringent requirements of the Clean Air Act major-source permitting programs.

## The EPA Should Conduct New Residual Risk and Technology Reviews for Chloroprene- and Ethylene Oxide-Emitting Source Categories to Protect Human Health

Report details	
Number	21-P-0129
Date issued	May 6, 2021
Summary of findings	<p>Results from the EPA's modeling and monitoring efforts indicate that people in some areas of the country may be exposed to unacceptable health risks from chloroprene and ethylene oxide emissions. Despite the EPA classifying chloroprene as a likely human carcinogen in 2010 and ethylene oxide a carcinogen in 2016, the EPA has not conducted new residual risk and technology reviews, RTRs, for most types of industrial sources, referred to as source categories, that emit chloroprene or ethylene oxide. The EPA should take the following steps to ensure its RTR process sufficiently identifies and addresses these emissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct new residual risk reviews for four major source categories that emit chloroprene or ethylene oxide using new risk values for these pollutants.</li> <li>• Conduct a residual risk review for the hospital sanitizers area source category using the new risk review for ethylene oxide.</li> <li>• Conduct overdue technology reviews for four source categories.</li> <li>• Develop new National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants, or NESHAPs, for chemical plant area sources that emit ethylene oxide.</li> <li>• Develop a process to initiate timely reviews of existing and uncontrolled emission sources when new or updated risk information becomes available.</li> </ul> <p>New RTRs should be conducted because the EPA issued new risk values for chloroprene and ethylene oxide in 2010 and 2016, respectively, to reflect their potent carcinogenicity, as found in newer scientific evidence. The EPA should exercise its discretionary authority to conduct new residual risk reviews under the Clean Air Act whenever new data or information indicates an air pollutant is more toxic than previously determined. Use of such discretionary authority is consistent with the Agency's position, stated in its April 2006 commercial sterilizer RTR rule.</p>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Air and Radiation
Open recommendation	4. Conduct overdue technology reviews for Group I polymers and resins that cover neoprene production, synthetic organic chemical manufacturing industry, commercial sterilizers, hospital sterilizers, and chemical manufacturing area sources, which are required to be completed at least every eight years by the Clean Air Act.
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: September 30, 2024 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>○ Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	The EPA should conduct new RTRs for chloroprene- and ethylene oxide-emitting source categories to address elevated individual lifetime cancer risks impacting over 464,000 people, as found in a modeling tool, and to achieve environmental justice.

## The EPA's Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program Has Made Limited Progress in Assessing Pesticides

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">21-E-0186</a>
Date issued	July 28, 2021
Summary of findings	<p>Twenty-four years after the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996 amendments were passed, the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention has not implemented Section 408(p)(3)(A) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to test all pesticide chemicals for endocrine-disruption activity. In addition, the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention's Office of Pesticide Programs recommended in 2015 that 17 pesticides needed additional testing for endocrine disruption in wildlife in order to provide the data needed to conduct an ecological risk assessment. However, that recommendation has not been implemented. Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program, or EDSP, testing delays are inconsistent with the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, which directs the EPA to take appropriate action to protect public health if a substance is found to influence the human endocrine system.</p> <p>We also found that the EPA does not have controls in place to effectively implement the EDSP, such as strategic guidance documents or performance measures. Additionally, the EDSP has not conducted annual internal program reviews to monitor or assess progress in fulfilling regulatory requirements. The EDSP has also not effectively communicated with internal and external stakeholders. Moreover, previous Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention leadership provided acceptable corrective actions to meet the recommendations in a 2011 EPA OIG report regarding the EDSP. However, they failed to implement those corrective actions beyond an initial period of compliance with them. Lastly, some EPA staff indicated that they were instructed to function as if the EDSP was eliminated from the EPA's budget.</p> <p>Because the EDSP has not had effective internal controls in place since 2015, it cannot have reasonable assurance that the program will accomplish its objectives and its resources will be allocated efficiently and effectively. Moreover, an established system of management controls would provide mechanisms for consistent program operations.</p>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention
Open recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Issue Tier 1 test orders for each List 2 chemical or publish an explanation for public comment on why Tier 1 data are no longer needed to characterize a List 2 chemical's endocrine-disruption activity.</li> <li>2. Determine whether the EPA should incorporate the Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program Tier 1 tests (or approved new approach methodologies) into the pesticide registration process as mandatory data requirements under 40 C.F.R. § 158 for all pesticide use patterns.</li> <li>3. Issue List 1–Tier 2 test orders for the 18 pesticides in which additional Tier 2 testing was recommended or publish an explanation for public comment on why Tier 2 data are no longer needed to characterize the endocrine-disruption activity for each of these 18 pesticides.</li> <li>6. Develop performance measures with reasonable time frames to document progress toward and achievement of milestones or targets. Specifically, the Endocrine Disruptor Screening Program should consider at least one performance measure that tracks progress in testing pesticides for human endocrine disruptor activity.</li> </ol>
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: September 30, 2025 (<i>more than four years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>○ Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommendation 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: September 30, 2024 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>○ Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommendation 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: September 30, 2024 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>○ Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation 6: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: October 1, 2024 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	Without the required testing and an effective system of internal controls, the EPA cannot make measurable progress toward complying with statutory requirements or safeguarding human health and the environment against risks from endocrine-disrupting chemicals.

### Further Efforts Needed to Uphold Scientific Integrity Policy at the EPA

Report details	
Number	20-P-0173
Date issued	May 20, 2020
Summary of findings	<p>The results of our 2018 agencywide survey on Scientific Integrity, or SI—which received 4,320 responses, or a 23.5 percent response rate—showed that 3,987 respondents were aware of or had some familiarity with the SI Policy. Among those respondents with a basis to judge, the majority (56 percent; 1,025 of 1,842) were satisfied with the overall implementation of the EPA's SI Policy. The survey also revealed some concerns with specific aspects of SI at the EPA, including dissatisfaction with the EPA's culture of SI (59 percent; 1,425 of 2,402) and the release of scientific information to the public (57 percent; 1,049 of 1,842).</p> <p>While our 2018 survey results provide only a snapshot in time, comparing them with the EPA's 2016 SI survey suggests areas that have improved and areas in need of improvement. Our 2018 survey results demonstrate higher levels of awareness of the SI Policy and how to report a potential SI violation. However, our survey revealed lower measures of perceived leadership support of SI and of satisfaction with the review and clearance of scientific documents.</p> <p>Also, while the SI Committee, including the scientific integrity official, have implemented many Policy requirements, and identified actions to improve SI at the EPA, we found that procedures to address potential violations were not finalized, mandatory training was not tracked, annual reporting was not timely, and the release of scientific products was not supported by a centralized clearance system. With improvements in these areas, the SI Committee could more consistently implement the SI Policy across the EPA.</p>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Research and Development and EPA Science Advisor
Open recommendation	6. In coordination with the assistant administrator for Mission Support, complete the development and implementation of the electronic clearance system for scientific products across the Agency.
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: June 30, 2022</li> <li>Revised: June 30, 2024 (<i>more than four years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul>
Impact	Improving implementation of the SI Policy will enable the EPA to more effectively carry out its mission to protect human health and the environment.

## Improved EPA Oversight of Funding Recipients' Title VI Programs Could Prevent Discrimination

Report details	
Number	20-E-0333
Date issued	September 28, 2020
Summary of findings	<p>EPA's External Civil Rights Compliance Office, or ECRCO, has not fully implemented an oversight system to reasonably assure that organizations receiving EPA funding are properly implementing Title VI. As an initial matter, ECRCO does not conduct proactive compliance reviews to determine funding recipients' compliance with Title VI. Instead, ECRCO will only review the foundational elements of the recipient's nondiscrimination program using a checklist once an investigation has been lodged. This checklist documents the existence of a nondiscrimination program but does not necessarily document the successful implementation of Title VI. We used the checklist to conduct a limited review of the nondiscrimination programs in all 50 states and three territories. We found that 81 percent lacked some of the required foundational elements on their websites. Meanwhile, ECRCO does not systematically collect program data from EPA funding recipients, and state personnel told us they need training and guidance to help them address discrimination complaints related to permits and cumulative impacts. Three of the seven states we interviewed indicated that they had not received training from ECRCO.</p> <p>Since ECRCO assumed management of the EPA's Title VI program in December 2016, it has focused its efforts on reducing a significant backlog of discrimination complaints while simultaneously developing policy and guidance documents. It resolved a backlog of 61 cases from fiscal years 2017 through 2019. Improved oversight could prevent future case backlogs at the EPA and help assure funding recipients comply with Title VI.</p>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of General Counsel
Open recommendation	6. Develop and deliver training for the deputy civil rights officials and EPA regional staff that focuses on their respective roles and responsibilities within the EPA's Title VI program.
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation 6: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: Unresolved</li> <li>Revised: March 31, 2022; September 30, 2023 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	Despite elimination of the case backlog, additional improvements in the EPA's oversight of Title VI funding recipients could prevent discrimination.



## Improved Management of the Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Program is Required to Maximize Cleanups

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">17-P-0368</a>
Date issued	August 23, 2017
Summary of findings	<p>Approximately \$10.9 million available to clean up brownfields is not being used as intended. Contaminated brownfield properties are not being cleaned up and redeveloped for ten of the 20 closed Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund, or RLF, cooperative agreements reviewed. The recipients of the cooperative agreements have not re-loaned or spent program income collected after the closeout agreement was signed.</p> <p>The EPA's 2008 Revolving Loan Fund Grant Program Administrative Manual states the following: "EPA regions should encourage the recipient to maximize the amount of money loaned out for cleanup purposes at all times. RLF funds should not remain idle."</p> <p>We found confusion among EPA regions and RLF recipients, and dissimilarities in terms and conditions, leading to inconsistencies in program application. Program income was not maximized by depositing funds into an interest-bearing account, and sources of program income were excluded from the terms and conditions of cooperative agreements and closeout agreements. Another source of confusion was knowing when post-closeout program income was used, and when a closeout agreement can be terminated. These issues resulted in inconsistencies that could potentially affect the long-term sustainability of the Brownfields RLF Program.</p> <p>We also found that the EPA's Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization's data management system did not meet federal standards. In addition, some regional project officers could not review annual reports for RLF recipients. We questioned over \$2.7 million from three recipients.</p>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Land and Emergency Management
Open recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a policy to reduce balances of available program income of Brownfields Revolving Loan Funds being held by recipients. The policy should establish a timeframe for recipients to use or return the funds to the EPA.</li> <li>Develop and implement required training for all regional Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund staff. Have the training include all program policy and guidance relating to maintaining a Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund after the cooperative agreement is closed if program income exists.</li> <li>Require regional project officers, through a policy, to be assigned and maintain information on all closed cooperative agreements with pre- and post-program income.</li> <li>Develop and implement a method for the Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization to track closed cooperative agreements with pre- and post-program income.</li> <li>Create a method for the Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization, and EPA regional managers, to track compliance with reporting requirements for closed cooperative agreements.</li> </ol>
Planned completion date	<p><i>The EPA closed the recommendations, but the OIG determined that the corrective action was not completed, and the EPA has not provided a revised completion date.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: March 19, 2019 (<i>more than four years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> <li>Recommendation 8: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: March 19, 2019 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> <li>Recommendation 13: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: March 19, 2019 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> <li>Recommendation 14: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: March 19, 2019 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation 16: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: March 19, 2019 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	For ten of the 20 closed Brownfields RLF cooperative agreements reviewed, approximately \$10.9 million available to clean up brownfields is not being used as intended.

## Improved Review Process Could Advance EPA Regions 3 and 5 Oversight of State-Issued National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permits

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">21-P-0122</a>
Date issued	April 21, 2021
Summary of findings	<p>In Regions 3 and 5, the EPA did not follow all relevant Clean Water Act and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System regulations and guidelines while reviewing permits.</p> <p>Region 3 did not adequately perform its oversight responsibilities to ensure that NPDES permits issued by the State of West Virginia meet CWA and NPDES regulatory requirements. Specifically, West Virginia reissued 286 NPDES mining permits to reflect revisions made to its water quality regulations in 2015, but it is unclear whether Region 3 took steps to verify that the CWA's anti-backsliding provisions were met. In addition, Region 3 experienced permit review delays, and states within the region issued permits without addressing the EPA's comments.</p> <p>Region 5 did not address all CWA and NPDES regulations during its review of a draft NPDES permit for a mine and processing facilities to be built by PolyMet Mining Inc. along the St. Louis River in northeastern Minnesota. Despite its concerns about the NPDES permit, Region 5 did not provide written comments to Minnesota, contrary to the region's standard operating procedures and per common EPA practice. In addition, Region 5 repeatedly declined to make a formal determination under CWA § 401(a)(2) regarding whether discharges from the PolyMet NorthMet project may impact the quality of waters within the jurisdiction of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, whose tribal lands are 125 miles downstream from the site of the PolyMet NorthMet project. The tribe was therefore unable to avail itself of the NPDES permit objection process set forth in CWA § 401(a)(2).</p>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Region 3
Open recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the modified National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System mining permits issued by West Virginia based on the 2019 revisions to its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program to determine whether the permits contain effluent limits for ionic pollution and other pollutants that are or may be discharged at a level that causes, has the reasonable potential to cause, or contributes to an excursion above any applicable water quality standard, as required by Clean Water Act regulations. If a permit lacks required effluent limits, take appropriate action to address such deficiencies.</li> </ol>
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: December 31, 2022; January 31, 2025</li> <li>Revised: January 31, 2025 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	Improved EPA oversight could ensure that state NPDES programs are protecting human health and the environment.

## More Effective EPA Oversight Is Needed for Particulate Matter Emissions Compliance Testing

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">19-P-0251</a>
Date issued	July 30, 2019
Summary of findings	<p>Our audit of 30 stack test reports from state and local agencies in Washington state found numerous examples of nonadherence to EPA test methods and inadequate supporting documentation to assess data quality. These problems were not identified by state and local regulatory agencies responsible for implementing Clean Air Act permitting programs in Washington state.</p> <p>We also found that some state and local agencies rarely observe stack tests to verify that EPA methods are properly followed. Several agencies told us that they needed additional training and tools from the EPA to help them conduct oversight of stack testing and reporting.</p> <p>Some stack testing problems that we identified could impact the reliability of stack test results and the resulting determination of whether a facility complies with its permit limits. Effective reviews of stack test reports to identify any errors in the implementation of stack test methods are particularly important when a facility's emissions are near or at the permit limit. Errors in such instances have a higher likelihood of affecting the reliability of the final compliance determination.</p> <p>While state and local agencies have been delegated responsibility for implementing Clean Air Act programs in Washington state, EPA Region 10 maintains responsibility and accountability for program compliance with federal statutes and regulations. Region 10 should improve its oversight activities to provide reasonable assurance that stack testing programs conducted in Washington state meet federal requirements. Although we only reviewed stack test reports from Washington state in EPA Region 10, EPA managers and staff responsible for overseeing the Clean Air Act program at the national level told us that they had observed similar problems in other states and EPA regions.</p>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Region 10
Open recommendation	6. Develop and implement controls to assess delegated agencies' stack testing oversight activities.
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation 6: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: March 31, 2022</li> <li>Revised: December 21, 2022, December 31, 2022 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	Effective EPA oversight of stack testing improves data quality for compliance determinations and other uses.

## Pesticide Registration Fee, Vulnerability Mitigation and Database Security Controls for the EPA's FIFRA and PRIA Systems Need Improvement

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">19-P-0195</a>
Date issued	June 21, 2019
Summary of findings	<p>The EPA has adequate controls over the posting of Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, or FIFRA, and Pesticide Registration Improvement Act, or PRIA, financial transactions into the Agency's accounting system, known as Compass Financials. However, the EPA's FIFRA and PRIA systems have internal control deficiencies relating to the fee registration process, system vulnerability mitigation and database security. We tested controls in these areas to verify their compliance with federal standards and guidance, as well as with EPA policies and procedures. We noted the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were inconsistencies and errors related to transactions in the FIFRA and PRIA fee data posted between the Office of Pesticide Programs' pesticide registration system and Compass Financials.</li> <li>• Twenty of the 29 high-level vulnerabilities identified by the Agency in 2015 and 2016 remained uncorrected after the allotted remediation time frame. In addition, we tested ten of the 20 uncorrected vulnerabilities and found that required plans of action and milestones for remediation were not created for any of them.</li> <li>• The Office of Pesticide Programs needs to improve the security for one of the FIFRA and PRIA databases, including password controls, timely installation of security updates and restriction of administrative privileges.</li> </ul>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention
Open recommendation	2. Complete the actions and milestones identified in the Office of Pesticide Programs' PRIA Maintenance Fee Risk Assessment document and associated plan regarding the fee payment and refund posting processes.
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: December 31, 2020</li> <li>○ Revised: December 31, 2022 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	Proper vulnerability testing, fee registration and database controls are essential to the security of the EPA's FIFRA and PRIA systems.

## Staffing Constraints, Safety and Health Concerns at the EPA's National Enforcement Investigations Center May Compromise Ability to Achieve Mission

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">21-P-0131</a>
Date issued	May 12, 2021
Summary of findings	<p>The National Enforcement Investigations Center, or NEIC, has addressed internal and external findings and implemented corrective actions related to safety and health, yet concerns persist. These concerns include unconduted internal safety and health audits and management reviews, hazardous waste mismanagement, noncompliance with safety procedures, and staff concerns about safety and health at NEIC.</p> <p>NEIC is addressing findings and implementing corrective actions related to its Quality Management System, which is designed to generate scientifically sound and legally defensible information to support environmental enforcement. We found that NEIC should improve tracking issues, such as observations, comments, concerns, and opportunities for improvement identified from audits; management review action items; and customer complaints.</p> <p>NEIC had unresolved action items from Office of Criminal Enforcement, Forensics, and Training's Professional Integrity and Quality Assurance unit's 2017 inspection report related to staffing shortages, trust in management, and hazardous waste management. OCEFT did not conduct a follow-up review to examine the effectiveness of the implemented corrective actions. In 2020, as a result of an inspection by the State of Colorado, NEIC was cited for several hazardous waste violations. Further, NEIC's 2019 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results are 22 percent lower than the EPA's averages for questions related to management and work environment.</p> <p>NEIC has been challenged by high attrition rates among staff and the inability to backfill vacant positions since 2016. If staffing levels continue to fall, NEIC risks a reduction in analytical capabilities and the ability to accomplish its mission.</p>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
Open recommendation	<p>9. Develop and incorporate metrics on the National Enforcement Investigations Center work environment and culture into Office of Criminal Enforcement, Forensics, and Training senior management performance standards, such as results from the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, periodic culture audits, or other methods to measure progress.</p> <p>10. Develop and incorporate metrics that address work environment and culture into National Enforcement Investigations Center senior management performance standards.</p>
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommendation 9: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: Unresolved</li> <li>Revised: June 28, 2024 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Recommendation 10: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon issuance: Unresolved</li> <li>Revised: June 28, 2024 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	Safety, health, and attrition issues may compromise NEIC's ability to support the EPA's civil and criminal enforcement efforts.

## Tribal Pesticide Enforcement Comes Close to Achieving EPA Goals, but “Circuit Rider” Inspector Guidance Needed

Report details	
Number	<a href="#">20-P-0012</a>
Date issued	October 29, 2019
Summary of findings	<p>The EPA's negotiation, review and approval of tribal pesticide cooperative agreement work plans were close to supporting achievement of the Agency's goals and requirements. We found that for the period covered by fiscal years 2016–2017, the 17 participating tribes completed 87 percent of projected inspections and met 86 percent of applicable work-plan requirements. Some tribes indicated they did not complete the projected number of inspections and enforcement activities in their cooperative agreements due to staff turnover. According to EPA program staff, some tribes have only one inspector. If the inspector departs the tribe must restart its pesticide compliance and enforcement program after a replacement inspector is found and trained.</p> <p>If a tribe is interested in establishing a pesticide cooperative enforcement agreement with the EPA but does not have enough inspectable entities, such as certified applicators or producing establishments, to justify its own cooperative agreement, the EPA guidance suggests investigating whether the tribe can affiliate with a circuit rider—an inspector who provides inspections to other tribes as well as his/her own. We found, however, that tribes which use circuit riders may not be fully aware of the scope or outcome of circuit riders' activities. The Agency can improve its tribal pesticide circuit rider agreements by setting clear performance expectations between circuit riders and their assigned tribes, developing priority-setting plans, and providing opportunities for the tribes to provide performance and concerns feedback directly to the EPA. Without these improvements, EPA regions are not able to gather feedback and concerns from tribes about circuit rider performance.</p>
Recommendation open three or more years	
Responsible office	Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
Open recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Require circuit riders to include the pesticide needs and risks of each tribe on their circuit in the development of their priority-setting plans, which are a required component of tribal pesticide enforcement cooperative agreements.</li> <li>2. Develop and implement tribal circuit rider guidance for pesticide inspectors that includes expectation-setting and communication with tribes that are being served under a tribal pesticide enforcement cooperative agreement.</li> <li>3. Develop and implement regional processes to receive feedback directly from tribes using pesticide circuit riders.</li> </ol>
Planned completion date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: December 31, 2022 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>○ Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommendation 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: December 31, 2022 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>○ Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Recommendation 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Upon issuance: December 31, 2022 (<i>more than three years after issuance</i>)</li> <li>○ Revised: none</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Impact	Improvements in the “circuit rider” program can enable the EPA to better detect and prevent pesticide misuse and unnecessary risks to human health and the environment in Indian country.