EPA OIG Report States Further Efforts Needed to Uphold Scientific Integrity Policy at EPA

On May 20, 2020, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Inspector General (OIG) released a report entitled Further Efforts Needed to Uphold Scientific Integrity Policy at EPA. OIG conducted an Agency-wide survey to determine whether EPA's Scientific Integrity Policy is being implemented as intended to ensure scientific integrity throughout EPA. OIG received 4,320 responses (a 23.5 percent response rate), showing that 3,987 respondents were aware of or had some familiarity with the Scientific Integrity Policy. According to OIG, 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 Policy. OIG states that the survey also revealed some concerns with specific aspects of scientific integrity at EPA, including dissatisfaction with EPA’s culture of scientific integrity (59 percent; 1,425 of 2,402) and the release of scientific information to the public (57 percent; 1,049 of
OIG recommends that EPA’s deputy administrator lead an effort to examine the causes associated with the scientific integrity concerns identified in the survey and communicate the results to EPA employees, including planned actions to address the causes. OIG also made 11 recommendations to the EPA science advisor, including developing procedures for addressing and resolving allegations of scientific integrity violations, communicating the outcomes of reports of scientific integrity violations, and improving the release of scientific information to the public. OIG states that EPA agreed with its recommendations and provided acceptable corrective actions. According to OIG, EPA has completed two recommendations, and the others are resolved with corrective actions pending.

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