



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

OCT 26 2010

Dear Colleagues:

This letter is an invitation to states to engage with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to strengthen the relationship and joint accountability of federal and state government to protect human health and the environment. This effort is to act upon commitments made in the Clean Water Act Action Plan and the "Coming Together for Clean Water" strategy to ensure our joint efforts in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program focus on the most serious problems affecting water quality, strengthen state programs and improve transparency to the public.

The Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA) and the Office of Water (OW) are working together to integrate NPDES permitting and enforcement efforts at the federal and state levels in order to more effectively address pollution and noncompliance affecting water quality. This initiative will help strengthen performance in the NPDES program and facilitate effective oversight by consolidating workloads and allowing more efficient resource utilization. This effort will also incorporate the implementation of recommendations made by the EPA Inspector General to consolidate and improve NPDES oversight and assess the status of NPDES program authorization agreements.

In a recent memorandum from Lisa Lund and Jim Hanlon (attached), EPA's Office of Compliance (OC) and Office of Wastewater Management (OWM) launched an initiative to integrate oversight reviews of NPDES permitting and enforcement programs. The involvement of states in this effort is critical to its success. We invite members of the Environmental Council of States (ECOS) and the Association of State and Interstate Water Pollution Control Agencies (ASIWPCA), as well as individual state environmental agency representatives, to participate in the design and implementation of this effort.

We have invited EPA regional representatives to work with us to develop ideas on how to integrate oversight of permitting and enforcement, building on OWM's Permit Quality Reviews, OECA's State Review Framework, and the Clean Water Act Action Plan. We will be discussing these ideas with regional water and enforcement managers in late October. After that discussion, we would like to share these ideas with states and begin a collaborative effort to integrate these reviews.

We look forward to working with you on this project. Please feel free to contact Deborah Nagle of the Office of Water (202-564-1185) or Chris Knopes of OECA (202-564-2337) if you have any questions.



Cynthia Giles  
Assistant Administrator  
Office of Enforcement and  
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Sincerely,



Peter S. Silva  
Assistant Administrator  
Office of Water