

# Screening Air Emissions Data from Continuous Monitoring Systems: U.S. EPA Office of Inspector General Report



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The United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) Office of Inspector General (“OIG”) issued a June 27th report (in the form of a memorandum) titled:

*EPA Effectively Screens Air Emissions Data from Continuous Monitoring Systems but Could Enhance Verification of System Performance (“Report”)*

See *Report* No. 19-P-0207.

The *Report* is transmitted from Charles J. Sheehan, OIG Inspector General, to the former Assistant Administrator, EPA Office of Air and Radiation, William Wehrum.

The opportunity to have available real time emission data led EPA and the state’s interest in requiring in some circumstances Continuous Emission Monitors (“CEMs”) at stationary sources in the early 1970s. A CEM is a device that measures the amount of pollutants passing through a facility’s stacks. Data generated by CEMs is often considered the most reliable estimate of long-term emissions. EPA , pursuant to the mandate in the 1990 Clean Air Act amendments, promulgated regulations a number of years ago increasing the use of CEMs. While significant design improvements have occurred, the installation and operation of such monitoring devices can be very expensive.

OIG states that it conducted the audit resulting in this *Report* to determine whether selected continuous emissions monitoring data meet applicable quality assurance and quality control criteria.

The *Report’s* overall two conclusions include:

- EPA automatic screening of CEMs data is effective but could be enhanced to reduce minor inaccuracies
- EPA should develop a streamline on-site verification approach to maximize state participation

A copy of the *Report* can be found [here](#).