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# Impacts of the Coronavirus Pandemic on State and Local Air Compliance Monitoring Activities: U.S. EPA Office of Inspector General Project Notification

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The United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) Office of Inspector General (“OIG”) issued a December 14th Project Notification titled:

*Impacts of the Coronavirus Pandemic on State and Local Air Compliance Monitoring Activities (“Notification”)*

See Project No. OE-FY21-0065.

The *Notification* is transmitted from OIG Acting Director, Air Directorate, Office of Evaluation to Susan Parker Bodine, Assistant Administrator, EPA Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance.

OIG states that it will assess how COVID-19 has:

. . . impacted air compliance monitoring activities undertaken by EPA-delegated state and local agencies to confirm that facilities that emit air pollution are complying with the Clean Air Act and federal air regulations.

Sampling ambient air conditions is an important part of the process for determining whether an area is and/or will remain in compliance with the relevant Clean Air Act National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Ambient air monitoring networks are, therefore, prescribed by Clean Air Act regulations. By way of example, the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment – Division of Environmental Quality operates a number of ambient air monitoring stations around the state to sample for various criteria air pollutants.

OIG states its objectives in undertaking the evaluation include:

- Assess the impacts of the pandemic on the number and type of compliance monitoring activities taken by state and local agencies at facilities that emit air pollution.
- Determine what guidance the EPA has provided to state and local agencies to target or prioritize compliance monitoring activities at facilities.
- Determine how state and local agencies have targeted or prioritized compliance monitoring activities at facilities during the pandemic.

EPA has been asked by OIG to provide, or refer OIG to, the locations of certain information which includes:

- EPA policies, procedures, and guidance from March 2020 to the present related to:
- How state and local agencies target and prioritize air compliance monitoring activities.
- How EPA regions oversee state and local agencies' reporting of air compliance monitoring activities.
- What virtual or remote tools are available to conduct air compliance monitoring activities.
- A list of provisions in the Clean Air Act and air regulations requiring state and local agencies to report compliance monitoring information to the EPA.
- Information on the accuracy, completeness, and upload time frames of air data into the Integrated Compliance Information System for Air and the Enforcement and Compliance History Online databases.
- Information on the EPA-Environmental Council of the States' remote virtual compliance pilot project workgroup, including:
  - A list of the air-related remote virtual compliance pilot projects, including a short description of each pilot project, the EPA regions and states where each pilot project took place, and the lead point of contact for each pilot project.
  - Workgroup charter, memorandum of understanding, or memorandum of agreement, as well as any expected deliverables.
  - Any workgroup meeting minutes or notes.

A copy of the *Notification* can be downloaded [here](#).