



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

APR - 4 2012

THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

Mr. Ed Thamke
President
Association of State and Territorial
Solid Waste Management Officials
444 North Capitol Street, NW, Suite 315
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. Thamke:

We have received your March 27, 2012, letter regarding a recent U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Inspector General (OIG) report entitled EPA Must Improve Oversight of State Enforcement. Your letter raised concerns that our report provides a misleading assessment of state hazardous waste program oversight of regulated entities within their jurisdictions, and you disagree with the conclusion that such programs are underperforming. Your letter also provided comments in support of three of the OIG recommendations in that report.


Our intent in this report was to evaluate how well EPA is overseeing state environmental enforcement programs. We concluded that EPA could be doing a better job to assist states in meeting national enforcement goals. We stand by the independent findings and conclusions in our report.

The OIG follows a prescribed process for conducting audits and evaluations of EPA programs and operations in accordance with appropriate Government Auditing Standards, as issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform our work to obtain sufficient and appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

In the course of our work, we reviewed state performance using the measures that EPA employs. We relied on EPA's enforcement data, and conducted analyses similar to those the Agency conducts. As noted in the report, and as EPA has acknowledged, there are limitations to this data, which we describe and account for in our analyses. We also used several other sources of information in our evaluation, such as descriptions of state performance that EPA included in State Review Framework reports and interviews with EPA and state officials and staff. We based our conclusions on information from all of these sources and corroborated our findings through document review and numerous interviews across six EPA regions. Our methodology is detailed in Appendix A of the report.

Thank you for providing comments on behalf of your members. Should you have any other concerns, please provide them and we will work to address them. In the meantime, if you have further questions, please contact Eileen McMahon, Assistant Inspector General for Congressional and Public Affairs, at (202) 566-2391.

Sincerely,



Arthur A. Elkins, Jr.