Office of Environmental Information (OEI) Environmental Justice Action Plan for FY 2004-2005

November 17, 2003

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: FY 2004-2005 Environmental Justice Action Plan

FROM: Maggie Mitchell, Director   /s/ *Maggie Mitchell*
                 Office of Planning, Resources, and Outreach

TO: Phyllis Harris, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator
                 Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

        Please find enclosed the Office of Environmental Information (OEI) Environmental Justice Action Plan for FY 2004-2005. It builds on the progress OEI made during FY 2003 in developing environmental justice training for our employees, and in developing electronic tools to support the Agency's environmental justice priorities. We are proud of the results we have been able to achieve in carrying out our environmental justice program despite severe resource constraints.

        We are planning to accomplish more during FY 2004-2005. I am delighted to advise you that our FY 2004-2005 Action Plan includes a greater number of activities supporting OEI's long-term goal of integrating environmental justice principles into our business practices. Given OEI's role in the Agency as the National Program Manager for information, our activities focus on ensuring that OEI products and services address the information and analytical needs of Agency managers and staff working with environmental justice communities. We are committed to the principles of environmental justice and support the Agency's goal of integrating environmental justice into all EPA programs, policies, and activities.

        If you have any questions, or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at 202-564-6665 or Ruth Alene Soward, Director of OEI's Policy and Program Development Staff, at 202-566-0985.

Attachment

cc: Barry E. Hill
       Linda Smith
       OEI Office Directors
       Reggie Cheatham
       Ruth Alene Soward

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Narrative

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Office of Environmental Information (OEI) supports the Agency's mission to protect public health and the environment by integrating quality environmental information to make it useful for informing decisions, improving management, documenting performance, and measuring success. OEI — working with our many different internal and external stakeholders and partners — establishes and oversees information-related policies and procedures that reflect the concerns of EPA managers and staff; local, state, and federal government; tribes; the regulated community; interest groups; and the general public. OEI's mission is cross-cutting in nature. That is, it supports virtually all of the Agency's programs through enterprise-wide efforts to improve the way that EPA collects, manages, stores and uses environmental information, provides public access to the information, manages its information technology architecture, and makes information technology investments.

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Organizational Infrastructure and Management Support:

Given OEI's role in the Agency as the National Program Manager for information, OEI's environmental justice (EJ) policy is to ensure that OEI products and services address the information and analytical needs of the EJ components of Agency programs. The OEI EJ Coordinator is organizationally located in the Chief Information Officer's (CIO) Immediate Office, specifically in the Policy and Program Development Staff (P2DS) within the Office of Planning, Resources, and Outreach. This organizational placement allows the EJ Coordinator to coordinate from the CIO's Immediate Office with each of the OEI line offices to promote the integration of EJ within all program areas. For the FY 2004-2005 EJ Action Plan, each OEI Office Director was required to submit at least one action item to promote this integration. During FY 2004-2005, each Office Director will report to the CIO and EJ Coordinator on their progress and performance in implementing these action items.

Operational Resources/Program Support:

The EJ Coordinator responsibilities are collateral duties for one employee within P2DS. Since March 2003, OEI's EJ Coordinator position has been vacant. During FY 2003, we were unable to backfill because OEI was over its full-time equivalent (FTE) ceiling, and other employees were unable to absorb the EJ Coordinator role due to their own heavy workload.

During FY 2004, OEI is recruiting to backfill this position. Approximately 0.5 of a full-time equivalent (FTE) will be devoted to serve in this role. The day-to-day responsibilities would include working with a vendor to provide EJ training to OEI staff and managers, tracking and reporting on FY 2004-2005 EJ Action Plan items, and participating in monthly EJ

conference calls and other meetings. In addition, we are bringing in an intern from a historically black college or university to support the EJ program.

In preparing the FY 2004-2005 EJ Action Plan, OEI identified actions which are integral to our mission, functions, and programs. Therefore, completion of the actions will be accomplished as part of our day-to-day program implementation and management, and separate mechanisms — such as teams and workgroups — will not be needed. If resources are available, we do intend to provide resources to the Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) to fund small EJ grants for information management or technology purposes. For instance, EPA would provide small grants to EJ communities to purchase personal computers to allow them access to on-line environmental data about their communities.

Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Alignment:

In EPA's draft 2003-2008 Strategic Plan (Plan), information is a cross-goal strategy:

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EPA's Cross-Cutting Environmental Information Strategy

Enhance environmental results through the improved use of quality environmental information by EPA decision-makers, states, tribes, and other partners, and the public to:

- ● *promote environmentally beneficial action;*
- ● *improve environmental decisions;*
- ● *promote more environmentally responsible attitudes; and*
- ● *improve knowledge.*

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The Plan states that during the next five years, EPA's cross-cutting information strategy will focus on:

● **Analytical Capacity:** providing access to new analytical tools that facilitate data interpretation and enable users to respond to environmental problems, set priorities, make sound decisions, manage for results, and measure performance;

● **Governance:** adopting an Agency-wide approach to managing information, including administrative and programmatic systems, data and investment priorities; and

● **Excellence in Information Service Delivery:** working collaboratively with states, tribes, other Federal agencies, and key stakeholders to improve the efficiency and utility of environmental information.

OEI's EJ activities are aligned with these priorities. For instance, OEI has been working with OEJ to develop the EJ Geographic Assessment Tool for use by EPA Headquarters and Regional Offices. This tool will assist EPA officials in assessing the environmental protection and human health in minority and/or low-income communities concerned that they may have disproportionate exposure to environmental harms and risks. In FY 2004-2005, OEI plans to

determine additional requirements and continue developing and improving the tool. In addition, OEI is assisting the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) in preparing a GPRA EJ Summary Report. This report will serve as a screening tool to compare the rate of GPRA progress made by the Regions near Resource Conservation and Recovery (RCRA)-permitted and Corrective Action (CA) facilities in potential EJ communities with the rate of progress in non-EJ communities.

INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

OEI has established mechanisms to communicate and coordinate internally on EJ issues. As noted earlier, to promote the integration of EJ within all OEI program areas, each OEI Office Director was required to submit at least one action item for the FY 2004-2005 EJ Action Plan. During FY 2004-2005, each Office Director will report to the CIO and EJ Coordinator on their progress and performance in implementing these action items. In addition, OEI has been working with a vendor to develop an EJ training program, tailored to the unique mission, functions, and needs of OEI. We intend to deploy this training program during FY 2004-2005, and believe it will provide OEI managers and staff the guidance needed to further integrate EJ principles into our programs, systems, and practices.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

OEI has a number of processes and mechanisms in place to share information, and receive input and feedback from external stakeholders, including EJ communities. Since its creation in 1999, OEI has held, and will continue to hold, national conferences and stakeholder meetings which include panels, listening sessions, and speakers interested in collaborating with OEI on a wide variety of programs, issues, and concerns.

OEI, with the Office of Public Affairs, is responsible for the Agency's web site, which offers information sources and educational resources. It also provides the public a means for commenting on documents, such as the *Draft Report on the Environment.* It also includes links to databases that the public can use to learn more about environmental conditions in their community or to comment on proposed regulations that could affect their community, such as:

- **Envirofacts:** The web site provides access to several EPA databases with information about environmental activities that may affect air, water, and land anywhere in the United States. With Envirofacts, the public can learn more about these environmental activities or generate maps of environmental information.

- **Window to My Environment (WME):** WME is a geographic portal to community-based environmental information combining state-of-the-art interactive maps with links to relevant Federal, State, and local environmental data. WME helps answer popular questions about a community's air, land, and water, as well as what is being done locally to protect the environment.

- **Toxics Release Inventory (TRI):** TRI is a publicly available EPA database that contains information regarding toxic chemicals that are being used, manufactured, treated, transported, or released into the environment.

- **EPA Dockets (EDOCKET):** EDOCKET The EDOCKET is an electronic public docket and on-line comment system designed to expand access to documents in EPA's major dockets. It is designed to expand access to Agency information by allowing the public to search, download, and print Headquarters and Regional materials, and to submit comments online. EDOCKET contains a variety of rulemaking documents, such as Federal Register notices and support documents. It also has materials related to non-regulatory activities, such as reports or announcements the Agency is making available for public review and, often, comment. Comments received for materials in EDOCKET are also available for review in the system.

- **Facility Registry System (FRS):** FRS is a centrally managed database that provides Internet access to a single source of comprehensive information on facilities subject to environmental regulations or of particular environmental interest.

The EPA web site also provides resources for citizens concerned about an environmental situation within their communities and looking for information on where to go for answers and assistance. These resources include links to information from other Agency offices on how to report a potential environmental violation or suspicious situation, and learn about programs, opportunities, and tools to get involved and make a difference in a community. A number of these resources are available in Spanish.

In FY 2004-2005, if resources are available, OEI will provide funds to OEJ's EJ small grant program to help EJ communities with information-related needs, or work with OEJ to create a special EJ grant program for information.

DATA COLLECTION, MANAGEMENT, AND EVALUATION

OEI does not have its own EJ data sets, but does manage the System of Registries (SoR). The SoR provides a gateway and search capability to several registries and repositories residing in OEI. These registries comprise a critical link in EPA's information architecture and are a vital component to the Environmental Information Exchange Network (Exchange Network). The registries provide identification information for objects of interest to EPA and Exchange Network trading partners, which includes states and tribal entities, the regulated community, and the public. These objects consist of data elements, Extensible Markup Language (XML) tags, data standards, substances (chemicals, biological organisms, and physical properties), terms, facilities, regulations, and data sets that the Agency uses in its core business processes. The SoR includes the:

- **Environmental Data Registry (EDR):** EDR is a comprehensive, authoritative reference for information about the definition, source, and uses of environmental data. The EDR supports the creation and implementation of data standards that are designed to promote the efficient sharing of environmental information among EPA, states, tribes, and other information trading partners. The EDR also catalogs data elements in application systems. The EDR does not contain environmental data; it provides descriptive information to make the data more meaningful.

- **Substance Registry System (SRS):** This system provides information on substances — such as chemicals, biological organisms, and miscellaneous substances — and how they are represented in EPA regulations and information systems.

- **Terminology Reference System (TRS):** TRS has been created as a single resource of environmental terminology for the Agency by compiling collections of terms from EPA and other sources.

- **FRS**: As noted earlier, FRS provides Internet access to a single source of comprehensive information on facilities subject to environmental regulations or of particular environmental interest, such as facility identification information.

- **Registry for EPA Applications and Databases (READ):** READ provides a single point of entry to identify, locate, and access Agency information resources. This registry includes EPA's Application Inventory, Organization Hierarchy, and other information resources.

- **XML Registry:** This registry provides the capability to share information about XML data exchange templates, XML schemas, definitional terms such as "namespaces," and other supporting files needed to map data flows between Exchange Network partners.

- **Environmental Information Management System (EIMS):** EIMS stores, manages, and delivers descriptive information (metadata) for data sets, databases, documents, models, multimedia, projects, and spatial information.

In addition, OEI is the Agency lead for information collection programs, including how EPA obtains and manages information. OEI works closely with many partners, stakeholders, facilities, other Federal Agencies and States to collect information through electronic and non-electronic reporting mechanisms. For instance, in FY 2004-2005, OEI will continue working with the Office of Water's American Indian Environmental Office to expand the Tribal Information Management System (TIMS) to incorporate data from other Federal agencies, such as the Bureau of Reclamation and the Indian Health Service. TIMS accesses data from many sources in order to provide information on environmental conditions and track the impact of environmental programs in Indian country.

PROFESSIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In FY 2003, OEI has been working with a vendor to develop an EJ training program, tailored to the unique mission, functions, and needs of OEI. We intend to deploy this training program during FY 2004-2005, and believe it will provide OEI managers and staff the guidance, best practices, and lessons learned needed to further integrate EJ principles into our programs, services, and practices.

EJ ASSESSMENT

OEI, as a support organization in the Agency, will not conduct EJ assessments in FY 2004-2005. However, OEI will continue to support those offices which do conduct EJ assessments by providing tools and technical support, as requested.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

In FY 2003, OEI was unable to fully implement its EJ program due to severe resource constraints. In FY 2004-2005, if resources are available, OEI will devote more attention to this program. OEI's FY 2004-2005 Action Plan includes a greater number of activities that support OEI's long-term goal of integrating environmental justice principles into our programs, services, and practices. It identifies outputs and outcomes for all planned EJ activities, which are described in the following Matrix of Activities. Accomplishments and results from our EJ program will be highlighted:

● in the CIO's annual accomplishment report;

● in the CIO Updates – an electronic newsletter issued to EPA managers, staff, and stakeholders; and

● at the OEI national conferences and meetings, and other appropriate settings.

Matrix of Activities

EPA's Overarching Environmental Justice Goal:

To integrate environmental justice into all EPA programs, policies, and activities that results in a measurable benefit to the environment and public health of affected communities.

EPA's Environmental Justice Objectives:

1. *Risk Reduction / Protect Environmental and/or Public Health* - To ensure equal implementation of environmental laws to achieve significant risk reduction which will improve the environment and/or public health of affected communities.

2. *Outreach and Communication* - To provide opportunities for meaningful involvement and ensure effective communication between the Agency decision-makers and stakeholders, including all affected communities.

3. *Training* - To provide training for EPA managers and staff to enable them to incorporate environmental justice considerations into their decision-making process.

4. *Federal, State, Tribal, and Local Government Coordination* - To ensure effective coordination across all levels of government to address the environmental and public health concerns of affected communities.

5. *Grants and Contracts Administration* - To promote effective and efficient management of all grants and contracts to ensure that the environmental and public health concerns of affected communities are addressed.

6. *Environmental Justice Assessment* - To conduct n assessment of the environmental justice indicators within affected communities as part of the decision-making process.

Objective 1. *Risk Reduction / Protect Environmental and/or Public Health* - To ensure equal implementation of environmental laws to achieve significant risk reduction which will improve the environment and/or public health of affected communities.

Activity	Output	Outcome	Resources (FTE/$)	Lead Contact
Of the 1.16 million facilities of interest to EPA (that are listed on EPA's Facility Registry System [FRS]), 45% have poor or missing locational coordinates.	By the end of FY 2005, OEI will reduce the percentage of facilities with poor or missing locational coordinates to 22%.	To ensure FRS has good quality (i.e., fully documented and <1,000 meters) latitude and longitude points for all facility data to allow for better decision making. Also, through Envirofacts, communities will be able to find out more about the facilities near them.	0.5 FTE	Mike Petruska OEI/OIC (202) 566-1686
Assist OSWER's Office of Solid Waste (OSW) in preparing a GPRA EJ Summary Report. This report will serve as a screening tool to compare the rate of GPRA progress made in the RCRA-permitted and CA facilities in potential EJ communities with the rate of progress in non-EJ communities.	By June 2004, the assessment of the RCRA permitted and CA facilities in potential EJ communities will be completed.	To ensure that the goals for bringing facilities into compliance will be attained by the 2005/2008 target dates.	0.2 FTE	Julie Kocher OEI/OIAA (202) 566 - 0710 Karen Randolph OSWER/OSW (703) 308-8651

Objective 2. *Outreach and Communication* - To provide opportunities for meaningful involvement and ensure effective communication between the Agency decision-makers and stakeholders, including all affected communities.

Activity	Output	Outcome	Resources (FTE/$)	Lead Contact
Work with OEJ to promote awareness of Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) reports that includes examples of how TRI data used in EJ activities.	By March 2004, OEI will place the link from OEJ home page to the TRI report entitled "How Are The Toxics Release Inventory Data Used?"	Stakeholders are made aware of how EJ groups, government, academia, and industry have used TRI data. New groups become aware of the data and begin to use it in their communities.	0.1 FTE	Michelle Price OEI/OIAA (202) 566-0744

Objective 3. *Training* - To provide training for EPA managers and staff to enable them to incorporate environmental justice considerations into their decision-making process.

Activity	Output	Outcome	Resources (FTE/$)	Lead Contact
Conduct *Fundamentals of Environmental Justice* training for OEI employees.	By September 2005, approximately 400 OEI employees will complete the basic training.	OEI employees learn to integrate EJ considerations into daily decisions and responsibilities.	0.25 FTE and $75,000-100,000	Ruth Alene Soward OEI/OPRO (202) 566-0985
Conduct Quality Systems Training for OEJ.	By September 2005, OEJ employees will complete the training, and have training materials and desk aids.	OEJ employees are better equipped to ensure that quality requirements are addressed in the EJ small grants programs. This will help ensure that environmental data collected or analyzed in EJ efforts is of sufficient quality for the intended use.	0.1 FTE	Diann Sims OEI/QS (202) 564-6872

Objective 4. *Federal, State, Tribal and Local Government Coordination* - To ensure effective coordination across all levels of government to address the environmental and public health concerns of affected communities.

Activity	Output	Outcome	Resources (FTE/$)	Lead Contact
Collaborate with the American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO) to expand the Tribal Information Management System (TIMS) to incorporate data from other Federal agencies (i.e. Bureau of Reclamation, Indian Health Services, etc.). TIMS accesses data from many sources in order to provide information on environmental conditions and track the impact of environmental programs in Indian country.	By September 2004, access and display data from multiple federal agencies including Bureau of Reclamation and Indian Health Services.	Provide a framework for federal agencies and Tribal governments to identify environmental risks and target resources.	0.5 FTE	Julie Kocher OEI/OIAA (202) 566 - 0710 Ed Liu OW/AIEO (202) 564-0287

Activity	Output	Outcome	Resources (FTE/$)	Lead Contact
Work with other EPA programs and Tribal organizations to improve Tribal access to environmental information.	By September 2005, enhance EPA Tribal Portal and provide additional Public Access Pilot workstations. (In FY03, Phase 1 of the new EPA Tribal Portal and Public Access Workstation Pilot will have been completed.)	Tribes and others will have improved access to pertinent environmental information to use for decision-making.	0.3FTE and $100,000	Jeff Tumarkin OEI/OIAA (202) 566-0681

Objective 5. *Grants and Contracts Administration* - To promote effective and efficient management of all grants and contracts to ensure that the environmental and public health concerns of affected communities are addressed.

Activity	Output	Outcome	Resources (FTE/$)	Lead Contact
If resources are available, provide funds to OEJ's EJ small grant program to help EJ communities with information-related needs, or work with OEJ to create a special EJ grant program for information.	By September 30, 2004, commitment notice prepared, approved, and funded for EJ small grants related to environmental information or technology.	Selected EJ communities have tools and information needed to access and use environmental and health-related information.	$30,000 to fund 3 small EJ grants.	Ruth Alene Soward OEI/OPRO 202-566-0985

Objective 6. *Environmental Justice Assessment* - To conduct an assessment of the environmental justice indicators within affected communities as part of the decision-making process.

Activity	Output	Outcome	Resources (FTE/$)	Lead Contact
Working with the Offices of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance; Research and Development; Children's Health Protection; and Policy, Economics, and Innovation, create applications of Dynamic Choropleth Maps, an interactive data visualization tool, to map EJ Indicators on the web.	(a) By October 2003, compile the list of important EJ indicators. (b) By December 2003, obtain county level data for the EJ indicators and build the data cubes. (c) By June 2004 complete development of the EJ tool.	Potential interactions between environmental data and other EJ indicators can be displayed visually to provide an interactive tool to screen for potential EJ issues.	0.3 FTE	William P. Smith OEI/OIAA (202) 566-0636

Activity	Output	Outcome	Resources (FTE/$)	Lead Contact
In cooperation with OEJ, develop the EJ Geographic Assessment Tool.	In FY04/05, work with and provide support to OEJ as OEJ coordinates with the EJ community to identify additional requirements for the tool; use an iterative process to continue to develop and improve the tool. (Note: In March, 2003 an Intranet version of the 'tool' was deployed. In August, 2003 the Internet version was deployed.)	A geographic interface to the OEJ EJ indicators is available for both internal and external access. Through interactive identification of a community, EPA and the public may generate a report with relevant statistics associated with the EJ Toolkit. The report may also be generated from other Agency business process applications.	0.33 FTE All extramural funds are from OEJ	Dave Wolf OEI/OIAA (202) 566-0690
Provide technology support for Agency's EJ efforts.	Necessary Information Technology infrastructure supporting Agency's EJ efforts, on an ongoing basis.	Agency's automated EJ efforts operate more effectively.	Covered under EPA Working Capital Fund technology support	Wanda L Johnson OEI/OTOP (202) 566-2136