



## EPA to Reorganize All 10 Regional Offices

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EPA recently released a final regional office realignment plan in response to President Trump's March 2017 Executive Order 13781. That order required EPA and other federal agencies to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability by determining whether functions and programs within the agency could be eliminated, consolidated or merged. The plan comes just one year after the Trump administration explored the possibility of closing and consolidating some of EPA's regional offices.

EPA last reorganized in the mid-1990s under Administrator Carol Browner. At present, every EPA regional office has a different structure. After reviewing information presented by an internal workgroup, the agency concluded that the regional offices needed to have the same organizational structure used by EPA headquarters. By making this change, EPA believes the regional offices will be better able to streamline decision-making. EPA also believes the change will allow it to better allocate resources based on needs among the regions.

Accordingly, EPA has established a standard organizational structure for its regional offices that is intended to:

- Increase coordination between EPA National Programs and their regional counterparts;
- Improve the consistent implementation of EPA regulations and policies;
- Allow for better resource allocation to more effectively carry out the agency's mission;
- Facilitate the agency's overall operational excellence; and
- Provide greater transparency for EPA customers.

The new standard structure for every regional office includes a Regional Administrator, a Deputy Regional Administrator, and the following divisions:

- Air and Radiation;
- Administration and Resource Management (to include Office of Administration and Resources Management, Office of the Chief Financial Officer and Office of Environmental Information functions);

- Enforcement and Compliance Assurance;
- Land and Redevelopment (to include Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention and Brownfields functions);
- Superfund and Emergency Management;
- Water;
- Laboratory Services and Applied Science; and
- Regional Counsel (to include the Freedom of Information Act program).

EPA says the plan maintains all 10 regional offices and does not move staff geographically, reduce or demote staff, downsize/close/move regional offices or laboratories, or make any changes to specific regional or geographic programs. With that said, leadership personnel within the regions could be in jeopardy because, as divisions are redefined and programs are consolidated, there could be two or more persons in line for the same job. In addition, considering the Trump administration's emphasis on "running lean" and on providing more power to state environmental agencies, there is concern among regional office personnel about how implementation of the plan will play out.

The reorganization plan is not a done deal; it has to be approved by Congress. The next step is for EPA's Office of Administration and Resources Management to prepare cost information and a realignment package to submit to the Senate and House Committees on Appropriations. Will the plan ever be approved and implemented? Considering that Democrats will control the House as of January 2019, that's not a sure bet. We'll keep you advised of developments.

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