



MESSAGE FROM THE  
**ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR,  
OFFICE OF CHEMICAL SAFETY AND POLLUTION PREVENTION**

This email message is being sent to EPA employees.

Dear OCSPP Colleagues,

I am pleased to announce that Denise Keehner will be returning to EPA beginning April 10<sup>th</sup> as the Director of the Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics (OPPT). Many of you may remember that Denise retired from EPA in 2013 after 35 years of service.

During her extensive time at the agency, Denise held multiple positions in OCSPP (including both OPPT and the Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP)), the Office of Land and Emergency Management (OLEM), and the Office of Water (OW). In these positions, she played key leadership roles in implementing multiple environmental statutes intersecting with TSCA, most notably the Clean Water Act, the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.

Upon her retirement from federal service, the agency honored Denise with the U.S. EPA Distinguished Career Award, which recognizes significant accomplishments over the course of an entire career of federal service. Over the past 6 years, Denise has served in executive positions at the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), where she has brought her demonstrated leadership skills to the state level. She currently serves as an Assistant Secretary at MDE.

During her stellar career at the agency, Denise demonstrated the ability to lead people in the implementation of highly complex scientific and regulatory programs, often being a pioneer in efforts to integrate new statutory requirements into the effective management of environmental programs. As Director of the Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds, Denise oversaw the development of national policy for some of the most complex water quality programs implemented by the agency, including the Wetlands Program, the Total Maximum Daily Load Program, the Non-point Source Grant Program under §319 of the Clean Water Act, and the Ocean Disposal Program under the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act. In this position, she effectively collaborated with multiple federal and state agencies to address water quality issues across the country.

Similarly, while serving as the Director of OPP's Biological and Economic Analysis Division, she led the agency's inaugural efforts to incorporate agricultural considerations into analyses necessary to support determinations under both the Clean Air Act and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, an international environmental treaty ratified by nearly 200 countries. In this work, she led OPP efforts to support EPA's collaboration with the Department of State, the Department of Agriculture, and the Council on Environmental Quality, working to ensure multiple policy equities were considered and integrated into the formation of a national position to be taken into international negotiations.

Denise also has considerable experience in the regulation of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Because OCSPP shares certain PCB oversight responsibilities with OLEM, Denise's familiarity with the nexus between OPPT and OLEM related to PCB regulations will also be invaluable to OPPT and the agency as a whole in addressing long-standing public health issues related to PCBs. EPA's regional offices, who lead the interactions with the states on PCB contamination issues, have faced many challenges in managing these issues and will greatly benefit from an OPPT Director with considerable experience in this complex environmental management issue.

Denise's recent experience with the Maryland Department of the Environment will also greatly benefit us as we continue our TSCA implementation efforts. As states will play a vital role in helping to implement rules enacted under the amended TSCA, having someone with Denise's federal and state experience will serve OPPT well as it grapples with the most effective ways to collaborate with state partners in the implementation of any needed public health and environmental protections. In her most recent position with MDE, Denise has been overseeing the Department's PFAS-related activities, leading the implementation of the Department's Environmental Justice Policy, and resolving difficult and sensitive case-specific policy issues in the context of water-related permitting decisions.

Denise is a pragmatic problem-solver with a strong commitment to sound science, public health, environmental protection, and to helping the people she works with excel and realize their potential. Denise believes that people are our greatest asset and that one of the most important responsibilities of a leader is to create an environment where people can learn, develop, and become exceptional leaders – whether in science or in public policy, regulation, and program management. She has a demonstrated record, across multiple federal and state positions, of seeking balanced solutions supported by strong science as the foundation for environmental decision making. With 40 years of government service at both the federal and state level, Denise has a proven track record of leading people and organizations to achieve their goals. She will provide the necessary leadership for OPPT at this critical time.

Please join me in welcoming Denise back to EPA!

All the best,  
Michal

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