



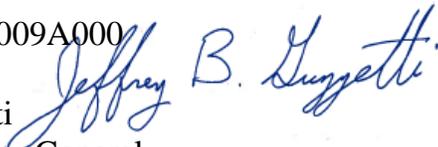
Memorandum

**U.S. Department of
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Audit Announcement -
Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness
Grants Program
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety
Administration
Project No. 10A3009A000

Date: October 1, 2010

From: Jeffrey B. Guzzetti 
Assistant Inspector General
for Aviation and Special Program Audits

Reply to
Attn. of: JA-10

To: PHMSA Assistant Administrator
and Chief Safety Officer

The safe transportation of hazardous materials is a nationwide concern and a top priority for the Department of Transportation. Between 2000 and 2009, there were 168,000 incidents that resulted in more than 2,900 fatalities or injuries. When incidents occur, first responders—such as firefighters—secure the immediate area, order evacuations, and protect people and property from further harm. The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) manages a grants program, Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP), to help states, local governments, and tribal organizations with emergency planning. Those entities use HMEP grants to train personnel on how to respond to hazardous materials incidents, analyze where hazardous materials should move within or between states, and determine whether a state needs equipment or regional emergency response teams. From 2005 through 2009, PHMSA awarded a total of \$91 million in grant funding. Program funding averaged \$13 million per year (2005 to 2007) until it was doubled to \$26 million in 2008 and 2009 to provide new grants for hazardous materials instructor training.

On March 11, 2010, the Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure requested that we review how PHMSA manages and oversees the HMEP grants program. The Chairman cited concerns with potential program mismanagement and misuse of grant funds, which the Committee identified during its investigation of PHMSA's Hazardous Materials Safety Program.

Accordingly, we plan to review PHMSA's management and oversight of the HMEP grants program. Specifically, we will evaluate the effectiveness of PHMSA's (1) policies, processes, and resources to execute the program; (2) outreach and coordination with states, local governments, and tribal organizations to enhance their approach to emergency planning and training; and (3) program oversight to ensure Federal funds are used for eligible activities in accordance with Federal law, regulations, and submitted grant applications. We will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference for the week of October 18, 2010. If you have any questions, please contact Scott Macey, Program Director, at (415) 744-0434 or Robert Falter, Project Manager, at (202) 366-2004.

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cc: PHMSA Associate Administrator
for Hazardous Materials Safety
Martin Gertel, M-1
George Delcambre, PHA-30