

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

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Give us *your* ideas on Open Government at EPA

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## Input from the Public on Ways EPA Can Increase Openness and Transparency

EPA's OpenEPA public engagement Web site was one of the most active and heavily visited of all federal agencies' sites during the development of the initial Open Government Plan 1.0. We addressed five of the most popular suggestions within our plan 1.0. We've kept our OneEPA site up since the plan 1.0 was published and included a blog feature to accept comments directly on portions of the plan. All of the comments received are in the process of being categorized and will be summarized and made available on EPA's Open web site. As suggestions are evaluated and a response is prepared, the status of the suggestion will be updated on the Open Web site. As follow up to the suggestions on the plan 1.0, responses to five additional top voting ideas are provided below:

- Idea: Create a policy allowing EPA employees to speak openly about their data.
  - ❖ Response: We received a recommendation to consider including a communication policy in our plan that "clearly describes the rules governing interactions between the public and agency staff." EPA will evaluate this recommendation within our established Open Government Governance process beginning in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2011, and we will provide updates on the status in future updates.
- Idea: Live webcast of all meetings focusing on proposed regulations.
  - ❖ Response: Web casts are increasingly being use for significant meetings and notice of these are often posted through EPA news releases available from the Agency's web site. Some projects included in EPA's Community Engagement Flagship Initiative relate to expanding public engagement in the regulatory process. Our Flagship teams are considering the use of various tools, including web casts, to assist in communicating more effectively with the public.. Best practices and lessons learned from the Flagship Initiative will be shared across the Agency so that other efforts can more easily use proven, effective communication tools.
- Idea: Regulate the growing use of antibiotics in farming animals.
  - ❖ Response: The commenter is correct in stating that this is a complex issue which requires coordination among multiple federal agencies and other organizations. This comment has been shared with the EPA program office responsible for developing suitable regulations to ensure the proper management of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations. The most current compilation of related documents can be found at <http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/afo/info.cfm>.
- Idea: Post examples of successful grant applications online.
  - ❖ Response: The State Innovation Program is one among many grant programs in the Agency. All State Innovation grant proposals - not just the successful ones - were made available on our web site (<http://www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants/competitionhistory.htm>) in order to make the concepts more widely known. Potential submitters were advised of the publication plan in the solicitation.

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- Idea: Create a Bill of Rights for the environment.
  - ❖ Response: EPA operates under the authorities provided by the various laws passed by Congress. Each of these laws has come about due to the identification of a particular need or condition that was recognized by the legislative branch sufficient to warrant support and ultimate approval. Laws and the corresponding regulations developed by EPA are intended to protect the environment. Protection of the environment is central to EPA's mission, that is, to protect human health and to safeguard the natural environment – air, water and land – upon which life depends.

All of the comments received through our OneEPA site on IdeaScale are viewable at <http://openepa.ideascale.com>. Comments received on our Open Government Plan blog through Greenversations have been categorized and are available at <http://www.epa.gov/open/BlogComments.pdf>. In addition to these sources, EPA has received approximately 60 public comments through the Open Government EPA email account. Unique comments with actionable requests have been captured and summarized in the document [http://www.epa.gov/open/public\\_email.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/open/public_email.pdf). Please note, email names and original comment content has been removed to protect the identity of the sender. We will continue to provide summary and status of actions related to suggestions we've heard in our quarterly updates available from the Open site (<http://www.epa.gov/open/>). To see all the ideas ranked by vote, see [OpenEPA Ideas by Vote](#)