

EDGI

Environmental Data and Governance Initiative

Envirodatagov.org

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Changes to EPA's Page About Office of Science and Technology within Office of Water

The description of the role of the Office of Science and Technology removed any mention of science, and replaced a mission of developing scientific foundations for protecting people with developing economically and technologically feasible industry performance standards.

Page: <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/about-office-water#science>

Description

There is a significant shift in the communicated mission and duty of the Office of Science and Technology (OST) within the Office of Water. The description of "What We Do" no longer references science-based standards, methods, etc and has changed the description of their work from "developing scientific and technological foundations..." to "develop[ing]...technologically and economically achievable performance standards...." There is no longer any mention of science.

The specific changes include:

1. Changed text. Instead of the OST being "responsible for developing sound, science-based standards, criteria, health advisories, test methods and guidelines under the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act," the OST "works with states, tribes, and other stakeholders to develop recommended safe water quality levels for toxics, nutrients and pathogens..." Note that the replacement does not provide information about what would establish recommendations (i.e. scientific research).
2. Changed text. Instead of the OST working to "develop scientific and technological foundations to achieve clean water," the OST is described as working to "develop technologically and economically achievable performance standards..."
3. Changed text. Instead of the asserted goal of OST being to "protect people and the aquatic environment," it is now to "address water pollution from industry" with the qualifier of economic feasibility. *Note that the mission of the EPA is "to protect human health and the environment."*

Screenshot 1: About Office of Science and Technology

- URL: <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/about-office-water#science>
- Side-by-side View: 1/23/17 - 1/30/17

Version comparison of <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/about-office-water> - history - dashboard - enable javascript - view as gist

Jan 23 2017 3:03 PM | Viewing side-by-side highlighted comparison | Jan 30 2017 5:17 AM

Jan 23 2017 3:03 PM	Jan 30 2017 5:17 AM
<p>Office of Science and Technology (OST)</p> <p>What We Do</p> <p>OST is responsible for developing sound, science-based standards, criteria, health advisories, test methods and guidelines under the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act. We work with partners and stakeholders to develop the scientific and technological foundations to achieve clean water through national programs that protect people and the aquatic environment.</p> <p>Programs managed by OST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical Methods to Assess Wastewater • Beaches • Biosolids • Cooling Water Intakes • Drinking Water Contaminant Human Health Effects 	<p>Office of Science and Technology (OST)</p> <p>What We Do</p> <p>OST works with states, tribes, and other stakeholders to develop recommended safe water quality levels for toxics, nutrients, and pathogens to help ensure our nation's waters can be used for fishing, swimming, and drinking water. OST also develops national economically and technologically achievable performance standards to address water pollution from industry.</p> <p>Programs managed by OST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical Methods to Assess Wastewater • Beaches • Biosolids • Cooling Water Intakes • Drinking Water Contaminant Human Health Effects

Internet Archive Page Status:

- The page we observed on Jan 23rd is the same in Internet Archive on Jan 24th - <https://web.archive.org/web/20170124061046/https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/about-office-water>
- The new page which no longer references science is stored in Internet Archive at 21:25:50 on January 26th - <https://web.archive.org/web/20170126212550/https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/about-office-water>