



FISCAL YEAR 2012 CONFERENCE SPENDING REPORT

January 31, 2013

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A. Background

Building on the Administration's efforts to eliminate wasteful and inefficient spending, the Office of Management and Budget issued Memorandum-12-12, "Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations," in May 2012, which established additional controls over conference spending.¹ This memorandum included a requirement for reporting of conference expenses on each agency's website starting January 31, 2013.

Per Memorandum-12-12, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will begin reporting on its official website, on January 31, 2013 and each subsequent year, conference expenses in excess of \$100,000 from the previous fiscal year. In this report, the agency provides a description of all conferences² where the net expenses for the agency associated with the conference were in excess of \$100,000, including:

- the total conference expenses incurred by the agency for the conference;
- the location of the conference;
- the date of the conference;
- a brief explanation how the conference advanced the mission of the agency; and
- the total number of individuals whose travel expenses or other conference expenses were paid by the agency.

In addition, this report includes information about the net conference expenses for the fiscal year incurred by the EPA as well as a general report about conference activities throughout the year. Accordingly, this report includes information on the activities agencies have taken to reduce conference spending and the controls agencies have enacted to ensure conferences are reviewed and approved at an appropriate level. It also includes agency-wide information about the size and scope of conference spending throughout the year.

B. Activities and Internal Controls Undertaken by the EPA

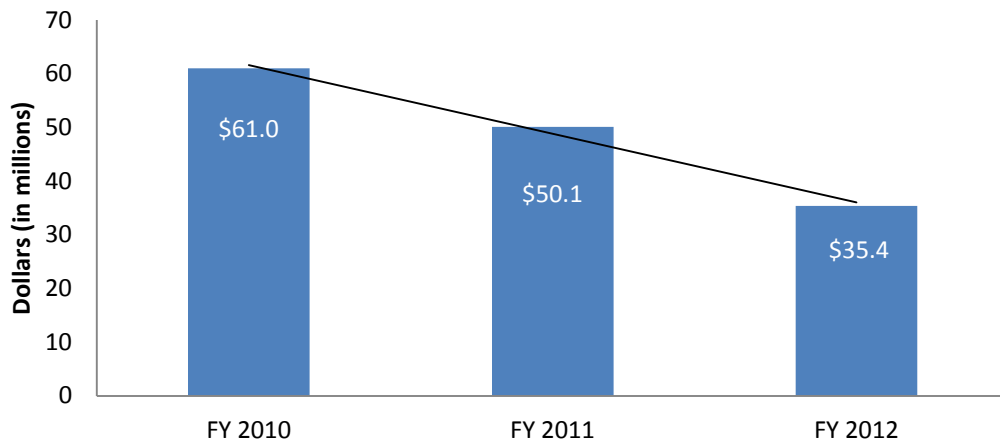
1. The EPA requires Assistant Administrator or Regional Administrator approval of all conference-related activities above \$25,000. The approval must be completed prior to obligating any funds for a conference-related activity above \$25,000.

¹"Conference expenses" are defined in OMB M-12-12 as "all direct and indirect conference costs paid by the Government, whether paid directly by agencies or reimbursed by agencies to travelers or others associated with the conference, but do not include funds paid under Federal grants to grantees. Conference expenses include any associated authorized travel and per diem expenses, hire of rooms for official business, audiovisual use, light refreshments, registration fees, ground transportation, and other expenses as defined by the Federal Travel Regulations. All outlays for conference preparation and planning should be included, but the Federal employee time for conference preparation should not be included. Conference expenses should be net of any fees or revenue received by the agency through the conference and should not include costs to ensure the safety of attending governmental officials."

² The EPA uses the same definition provided in OMB M-12-12: a "conference" is defined as "[a] meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium or event that involves attendee travel. The term 'conference' also applies to training activities that are considered to be conferences under 5 CFR 410.404."

2. The EPA’s Office of Acquisition Management conducted a biennial purchase card review to ensure that EPA organizations were in compliance with all conference-related policies and procedures. The biennial and supplemental purchase card review conducted by OAM during the first quarter of FY 2012 revealed that the EPA headquarter offices and regions have the appropriate policies, training, oversight and internal control mechanisms in place to ensure compliance with OMB policies, OAM purchase card transaction reviews and the biennial purchase card reviews.
3. The EPA’s Office of the Chief Financial Officer has made a review of conference-related activities part of the annual A-123 review. The FY 2012 review did not uncover any non-compliance with the newly implemented approval processes.
4. The EPA is maximizing use of government space. All EPA organizations are required to attest that no adequate federal space was available prior to obligating federal funds for non-federal space for conference-related activities.
5. The EPA is minimizing travel expenses. The agency reduced travel 42 percent from FY 2010 to FY 2012 through technology such as video-conferencing, webinars, teleconferencing, and other collaboration tools that enable a mobile workforce. The use of collaboration tools reduces the amount of in-person conferences. Additionally, in order to gain greater control over travel expenses, the EPA cut off “self-authorization” for travel and instituted procedures for travel justification that required multi-level authorization.

**EPA Travel Dollars
FY 2010 - FY 2012**



C. Overall size and scope of conference spending throughout the year

During FY 2012, the EPA spent \$3,656,948 for 20 conferences (as defined in footnote 2) above \$100,000. Attendance at the 20 conferences was estimated at 10,000 – 20,000, which includes visitors attending EPA’s Earth Day activities as well as representatives from industry, academia, and the non-governmental organizations attending several federally mandated workgroups. Conferences remain a vital means of sharing critical information on the environment. Conferences in which EPA employees traveled to the event were generally for training such as conducting emergency preparedness training for environmental hazards.

The EPA uses the following definitions when reporting conference-related events:

- **Date:** the beginning and end date of the event. This typically does not include planning and close-out phases.
- **Location:** the city and state in which the event was held.
- **Conference expenses:** net expenses to the agency, as defined in OMB M-12-12 and footnote 1 of this report (page 3), which include all direct and indirect conference costs paid by EPA not including funds paid under EPA grants to grantees. The EPA includes interagency agreements in this total when it is the lead agency.
- **Total attendees:** the total number of people attending the event. This includes both federal and non-federal attendees, regardless of travel status.
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** if EPA conference expenses included funds for travel to the conference, the total number of individuals traveling on agency funds. This includes both EPA employees on official duty travel and non-employees such as contractors or those on invitational travel.
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** a brief description of the purpose of the event.

The EPA did not hold any conferences that individually exceeded \$500,000 in FY 2012. Below is a complete listing of individual conference-related activities above \$100,000.

D. “Conferences” above \$100,000

Peer Review Panel Meeting: Research and Demonstration of Innovative Water Treatment in Small Systems

- **Date:** 10/3/2011 – 10/4/2011
- **Location:** Arlington, VA
- **Conference Expenses:** \$126,447.90
- **Total Attendees:** 30
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 27 (27 non-EPA travelers)

- ***How the conference advances the agency mission:*** EPA's peer review process helps the agency carry out its mission by engaging with leading scientists and engineers outside of EPA. The peer review meeting on innovative water treatment in small systems enabled scientist and stakeholders to effectively participate in assessing EPA research products and led to evaluations of drinking water applications for small grants. As a result of the peer review evaluations, eleven grants awarded. More information is available here: http://cfpub.epa.gov/ncer_abstracts/index.cfm/fuseaction/recipients.display/rfa_id/537/recor ds_per_page/ALL. Authorizing statutes include the Safe Drinking Water Act, Section 1442, 42 U.S.C. 300j-1 and the Clean Water Act, Section 104, 33 U.S.C. 1254 available at http://www.epa.gov/ncer/rfa/2011/2011_star_drinkingwater.html#Authorities_Regulations.

State/ EPA Bioconfirmation, Independent Applicability Workshop

- ***Date:*** 10/5/2011 – 10/6/2011
- ***Location:*** Crystal City, VA
- ***Conference Expenses:*** \$103,632
- ***Total Attendees:*** 40
- ***Individuals traveling on agency funds:*** 20 (18 non-EPA travelers)
- ***How the conference advances the agency mission/key outcomes:*** The Clean Water Act establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States and regulating quality standards for surface waters. To help meet the Clean Water Act's mission, EPA partners with states to make progress in accelerating the reduction of pollution in our nation's waters by adopting numeric nutrient criteria. The Independent Applicability Workshop helped EPA work with states to further define policy on using biological indicators as part of clean water criteria.

National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) Public Meeting

- ***Date:*** 10/25/2011 – 10/26/2011
- ***Location:*** Albuquerque, NM
- ***Conference Expenses:*** \$206,507
- ***Total Attendees:*** 247
- ***Individuals traveling on agency funds:*** 64 (17 non-EPA travelers)
- ***How the conference advances the agency mission:*** The National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) is a federal advisory committee to EPA. The Federal Advisory Committee Act was passed by Congress to allow government agencies to receive advice or recommendations from a broad range of external stakeholders in a manner that is open to the public. The fall 2011 NEJAC meeting led to the Council's commitment to work with EPA to

draft a charge on best practices for toxic chemical handling and storage related to storm surge issues and the Chemical Security Act.

All-Hazards Emergency Preparedness Training

- ***Date:*** 10/30/2011 – 11/2/2011
- ***Location:*** Pittsburgh, PA
- ***Conference Expenses:*** \$121,374
- ***Total Attendees:*** 525
- ***Individuals traveling on agency funds:*** 13
- ***How the conference advances the agency mission:*** To ensure the United States is better prepared for environmental emergencies, EPA works with other federal partners to prevent accidents as well as to maintain superior response capabilities. The emergency preparedness training event promoted emergency preparedness for "all-hazards" through training and helped agency staff maintain effective working relationships with state and local responders and local emergency planning committees.

The On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Readiness Training Program

- ***Date:*** 2/6/2012 – 2/10/2012
- ***Location:*** Henderson, NV
- ***Conference Expenses:*** \$399,926.24
- ***Total Attendees:*** 331
- ***Individuals traveling on agency funds:*** 226
- ***How the conference advances the agency mission:*** EPA On-Scene Coordinators (OSC) are responsible for monitoring or directing responses to oil spills and hazardous substance releases reported to the federal government. The OSC coordinates federal efforts. The OSC Readiness Training Event is an annual training program for hazardous waste professionals and emergency responders on state-of-the-art technical approaches and policy developments on site characterization, cleanup approaches and new policy developments. The training was held in Henderson, Nevada in February 2012 to avoid construction and hurricane seasons, when OSCs are needed in the field, and to provide the necessary outdoor venue for critical training curriculum.

Peer Review Panel Meeting: Fall 2012 Greater Research Opportunities Fellowship for Environmental Study

- **Date:** 3/13/2012 – 3/15/2012
- **Location:** Arlington, VA
- **Conference Expenses:** \$139,044
- **Total Attendees:** 33
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 29 (29 non-EPA travelers)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** EPA's peer review process helps the agency carry out its mission by engaging with leading scientists and engineers outside of EPA. This event was a peer review meeting which evaluated the fellowship applications that the EPA received. Peer review is a critical tool used by the EPA to ensure high quality science and technology is released and/or used by the Agency. Scientific peer reviews enable scientists and stakeholders alike to effectively participate in assessing fellowship applications. Thirty nine fellowships were awarded and accepted as a result of this meeting's evaluations. To see a list of awardees, visit: http://www.epa.gov/ncer/fellow/recipients/gro_undergrad_fellow12.html. The authority for the GRO fellowship awards is contained in one or more of the following: Clean Air Act (CAA), Section 103, 42 U.S.C. 7403; Clean Water Act (CWA), Section 104, 33 U.S.C. 1254; the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), Section 1442, 42 U.S.C. 300j-1; the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), Section 20, 7 U.S.C. 136r; the Solid Waste Disposal Act (SWDA), Section 8001, 42 U.S.C. 6981; and the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), Section 10, 15 U.S.C. 2609. For fellowships with an international aspect, the above statutes are supplemented, as appropriate, by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 102(2)(F). For more information on GRO's authorizing statutes, please see http://www.epa.gov/ncer/rfa/2013/2013_gro_undergrad.html#Authorities_Regulations.

2012 Technology Market Summit

- **Date:** 4/3/2012
- **Location:** Washington, D.C.
- **Conference Expenses:** \$132,143
- **Total Attendees:** 200
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 1 (1 non-EPA traveler)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** EPA, in partnership with American University, hosted the Technology Market Summit to focus attention on accelerating technology innovation and deployment to produce a more sustainable environment, create jobs, and grow the economy. The Summit brought together approximately 200 senior leaders from government, academia, industry and the investment community for dialogue in

this area to advance EPA's mission of environmental and human health protection. The Summit was convened under EPA's authority to engage in research and development that can spur commercialization of environmental technologies, including the Federal Tech Transfer Act (FTTA), America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010, 15 U.S.C. § 4728, 22 U.S.C. § 7905, and Executive Order 12870 (September 30, 1993).

US Hard Rock Mining, Advancing Solutions for a New Legacy

- **Date:** 4/3/2012 – 4/5/2012
- **Location:** Denver, CO
- **Conference Expenses:** \$106,275
- **Total Attendees:** 420
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 8
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** To carry out its mission to protect human health and the environment, the EPA relies on high quality science and technology. The Office of Research and Development, the scientific research arm of EPA, provides leading-edge research to carry out this mission effectively. The conference on hard rock mining provided participants with an opportunity to examine and discuss current and future environmental issues while providing a forum for the exchange of scientific information. The event included 420 participants from academia, private sector, non-profit, and other public sector entities. Authorizing statutes include the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) and Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (Abandoned Mine Lands Program).

National Sustainable Design Expo and P3 Awards Ceremony Held on the National Mall

- **Date:** 4/21/2012
- **Location:** Washington, D.C.
- **Conference Expenses:** \$446,893
- **Total Attendees:** Approximately 5,000 (public expo)
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 10 (10 non-EPA travelers)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** EPA's People, Prosperity & the Planet (P3) program is designed to develop the next generation of environmental scientists and engineers. At the 2012 Expo, attended by more than 5,000 individuals, 45 teams of more than 600 college engineers and scientists showcased their work on designing real-world solutions to environmental and public health problems. In addition to the competitors, the Expo highlighted the work of the business community, government agencies and the non-profit community. The annual Expo promotes the agency's mission of developing a world-class science base in the United States for environmental and public health issues and is sponsored by the agency's Office of Research and Development.

Clean Air Act Advisory Committee Meeting

- **Date:** 4/24/2012 – 4/25/2012
- **Location:** Washington, D.C.
- **Conference Expenses:** \$108,996
- **Total Attendees:** 70
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 18 (12 non-EPA travelers)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The Clean Air Act Advisory Committee is a senior-level policy committee established to advise the EPA on issues related to implementing the Clean Air Act Amendments. The CAAAC meets three times a year. It provides advice and counsel to the EPA on a variety of important air quality policy issues. Major topics of discussion for the April meeting of the CAAAC included the Energy Star Program, Title V Permits, and a progress report from the Permit Streamlining Workgroup

Budget Technical Workshop

- **Date:** 4/24/2012 – 4/26/2012
- **Location:** Chicago, IL
- **Conference Expenses:** \$104,440
- **Total Attendees:** 96
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 96
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** EPA's annual Budget Technical Workshop is designed to provide training opportunities for employees performing administrative or management functions for budget resources. A combination of hands-on computer training, presentations and plenary discussions and training sessions ensured that agency and federal-wide appropriations laws are known, understood, and implemented. In addition, this forum provided an opportunity to explore challenges and share best practices.

8th National Water Monitoring Conference

- **Date:** 4/29/2012 – 5/3/2012
- **Location:** Portland, OR
- **Conference Expenses:** \$216,626
- **Total Attendees:** 550

- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 123
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** Water quality monitoring is a key component of the EPA's mission under the Clean Water Act. This conference provided a national, biannual forum for state, federal, local, academic, and watershed-based monitoring managers and practitioners to exchange information on new findings, methods, innovations, and issues related to water quality monitoring. The EPA is a co-chair of the National Water Quality Monitoring Council, which organized the event.

Host National Air Quality Conference

- **Date:** 5/14/2012 – 5/17/2012
- **Location:** Denver, CO
- **Conference Expenses:** \$169,608
- **Total Attendees:** 509
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 67
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The National Air Quality Conference brings together federal, state, local, tribal, international, and academic air quality professionals and provides them a forum for discussing the implementation of monitoring changes to the monitoring networks as a result of the revisions to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and ambient air monitoring regulations. It also provides a forum for data users to discuss and share information learned as a result of the data analysis.

Security and Operations Summit

- **Date:** 5/15/2012 – 5/17/2012
- **Location:** Research Triangle Park, NC
- **Conference Expenses:** \$104,447
- **Total Attendees:** 111
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 76
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** EPA's Office of Environmental Information helps to ensure that the agency has a secure information technology infrastructure while providing information that to the public that communicates the agency's mission. Participants in the Security and Operations Summit completed a rigorous training course, which included lectures on hacking methodology overview, malware analysis, and scanning. These trainings provided participants with the insight to handle the significant security responsibilities that are required to fulfill the agency's mission of protecting human health and the environment through the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of IT systems.

Science Advisory Board and Board of Scientific Counselors: Discussion of Strategic Research Directions for the Office of Research and Development

- **Date:** 7/10/2012 – 7/11/2012
- **Location:** Raleigh, NC
- **Conference Expenses:** \$132,625
- **Total Attendees:** 192
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 100 (51 of the 100 travelers serve on the SAB and the BOSC)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The EPA Science Advisory Board was established by Congress in 1978 to advise the agency on technical matters. The EPA Board of Scientific Counselors, established as federal advisory committee in 1996, provides advice, information, and recommendations to the EPA’s ORD on technical and management issues of its research programs. The July 2012 meeting was a joint meeting of the two bodies to discuss and provide advice on the ORD’s plans to implement its strategic research directions in six major program areas and resulted in a report with recommendations for EPA research programs. The report can be found at <http://epa.gov/osp/bosc/reports.htm>. The SAB was formed through the Environmental Research, Development and Demonstration Authorization Act.

National Environmental Justice Advisory Council Public Meeting

- **Date:** 7/24/2012 – 7/25/2012
- **Location:** Arlington, VA
- **Conference Expenses:** \$139,247
- **Total Attendees:** 364
- **Individuals traveling on agency fund** 42 (26 non-EPA travelers)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC) is a federal advisory committee to EPA. The Federal Advisory Committee Act was passed by Congress to allow government agencies to receive advice or recommendations from a broad range of external stakeholders in a manner that is open to the public. The summer 2012 NEJAC public meeting focused on the implementation of EPA’s Plan EJ 2014, and led to key outcomes, including the NEJAC’s commitment to update the “Model Plan for Public Participation” and to develop a recommendation on the “Community Resiliency in Industrial Waterfront Areas” report.

Bristol Bay Assessment Peer Review Meeting

- **Date:** 8/7/2012 – 8/9/2012
- **Location:** Anchorage, AK
- **Conference Expenses:** \$169,381
- **Total Attendees:** approximately 220
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 16
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The Bristol Bay Assessment Peer Review Meeting was held to provide members of the public, especially people from the involved community, the opportunity to observe and provide oral comment to the external peer reviewers for the draft Bristol Bay Assessment. Public participation in the external peer review process of highly influential science products is encouraged by OMB and agency peer review guidance. Public and peer review is a critical tool used by the EPA to ensure that research and assessment reports are based upon the best available science and that all conclusions are fully supported by that science. The peer review meeting in August 2012 was a critical component of the overall peer review of the Bristol Bay Assessment and was held in August 2012 to avoid the hunting and fishing seasons so that Alaskan native tribes were available to participate, as well as provide the necessary 60 day public comment period. Clean Water Act Sections 104(a) and (b) provide EPA the authority to conduct the Bristol Bay Assessment.

International Emission Inventory Conference

- **Date:** 8/13/2012 – 8/16/2012
- **Location:** Tampa, FL
- **Conference Expenses:** \$114,237
- **Total Attendees:** 200
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 35
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** EPA's International Emission Inventory Conference was held by the agency's Office of Air and Radiation and was designed to facilitate dialogue between the agency and its stakeholders regarding the latest developments in emissions reporting requirements and associated implementation approaches. It directly supports reporting and data use goals for Measure E1 of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, which are in direct support of the mission of the EPA, including the Office of Air's Office of Air Quality Planning Standards.

Environmentally Friendly Vehicles Conference

- **Date:** 9/10/2012 – 9/12/2012
- **Location:** Baltimore, MD
- **Conference Expenses:** \$213,515
\$126,142 in EPA funds;
\$87,373 from the Department of Energy
- **Total Attendees:** 300
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 16
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The fifth summit of the International Environmentally Friendly Vehicle Conference was a showcase of progress and innovation in transportation. The conference brought together industry leaders and representatives from around the world to share the latest innovations and experience on how to shape the market for clean and fuel efficient vehicles. Associated with the United Nations, the results of the conference will be used to continue an international dialogue on harmonization of global standards for and promotion of advanced vehicle technologies.

Clean Air Act Advisory Committee/Awards

- **Date:** 9/19/2012 – 9/20/2012
- **Location:** Arlington, VA
- **Conference Expenses:** \$108,996
- **Total Attendees:** 100
- **Individuals traveling on agency funds:** 16 (10 non-EPA travelers)
- **How the conference advances the agency mission:** The Clean Air Act Advisory Committee is a senior-level policy committee established to advise EPA on issues related to implementing the Clean Air Act Amendments. The CAAAC meets three times a year. It provides advice and counsel to EPA on a variety of important air quality policy issues. The September meeting focused on air quality issues including EPA permitting requirements.