UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF
SOLID WASTE AND
EMERGENCY RESPONSE

NOW THE
OFFICE OF LAND AND
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

FEB 0 6 2019

Mr. Samuel Shayeb
13 Nickelby Court
Damascus, MD 20872

Dear Mr. Shayeb:

Thank you for your letter of December 17, 2018, concerning oil spills. I enjoy hearing from students who care so much about the environment and have great insight on the environmental challenges facing our planet. Despite environmental challenges ahead, concerned students like you are one of the reasons I am optimistic about the environmental health of our nation and planet.

In the United States, many agencies work together when cleaning oil spills. There are different methods that can be used to reduce the impacts an oil spill can have on the water and on the shore. For example, mechanical clean-up tools include booms, barriers, skimmers and sorbent materials; and they serve as a primary response method. In addition, the EPA is responsible for managing a list of chemical products that can be considered for use when responding to oil spills. However, when deciding what chemical products are used and how they are used depends on the specific spill (such as the type of oil) and the environment it may impact (such as a marsh or a beach). The decision to use chemical products as a response tool is made carefully and in consultation with our partners that participate in the response. This consultation includes input from those agencies with responsibilities for protecting wildlife, such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Protecting human health and the environment is the EPA's mission, but we cannot do this work alone, and therefore we encourage you to stay involved. You can find more information and ideas on how you can help your friends, classmates and family to do more to protect human health and our environment at www.epa.gov/students .

Thank you again for your concerns about the quality of the environment and sharing your ideas on how to protect it.

Sincerely,

Reggie Cheatham, Director
Office of Emergency Management