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EPA Awards State Innovations Grants to Environmental Agencies In Maine, Vermont and Rhode Island

BOSTON - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's New England office today announced the award of three State Innovation Grants to state environmental agencies in Maine, Rhode Island, and Vermont. In its second year of giving money to state environmental agencies under its "State Innovation Grant Program," EPA awarded 12 grants nationwide.

During an environmental results workshop related to the auto body, auto repair, and auto salvage industry in Portland, ME this morning, checks in the amounts of \$152,000, \$200,075 and \$200,000, were presented to environmental agency representatives from ME, RI, and VT, respectively.

The EPA State Innovation Grant Program was established to help strengthen EPA's partnerships with states and tribes. The program awards money to state environmental agencies for projects aimed at achieving improved environmental results across industry sectors by using compliance assistance and other innovative tools.

"I am so pleased that we are not only looking at ways of getting better environmental results for entire sectors, but we are also providing critical funding so that our state partners can get these creative ideas off the ground," said Robert W. Varney, EPA's regional administrator.

This year EPA sought proposals from states and tribes that would utilize its "Environmental Results Program" a program which uses self-certification along with other tools, such as random inspections and statistical analysis, to promote improved compliance and performance across entire business sectors. The Environmental Results Program was pioneered several years ago in Massachusetts and is now being implemented in fourteen states. The awards will support the following activities:

ME DEP will use its \$152,000 award to begin a self-certification "Environmental Results Program" for automotive body and repair shops and will assist auto shops that need help complying with environmental laws.

"I always support my department's innovative approaches to achieve

environmental excellence. This program gives small businesses, such as the auto body sector, the tools to achieve environmental compliance," said Maine DEP Commissioner Gallagher.

VT ANR will spend the \$200,000 innovation grant to develop a self-certification "Environmental Results Program" for gas stations and will also help retail gas stations understand the rules for underground storage tanks and other applicable environmental requirements.

Vermont's Secretary of the Agency for Natural Resources, Elizabeth McClain, stated, "This is great news and a wonderful opportunity. We are looking forward to collaborating with Vermont's gasoline retailers and others to develop cross-media best management practices and other compliance guidance materials related to environmental considerations at gas stations."

RI DEM's award of \$200,075 will use the "Environmental Results Program" to help measure the environmental performance of auto salvage yards, and will provide on-site compliance assistance to salvage yards using a multi-media approach.

Acting DEM Director Frederick Vincent said, "We are very pleased with EPA's initiative in providing funds for innovative environmental results programs, and we are sure that Rhode Island's program will provide great benefit to both the local auto salvage industry and the Rhode Island environment. Our auto salvage program is the latest of a series of initiatives we have undertaken to help businesses reduce and prevent pollution."

For more information on EPA's State Innovation Grant Program visit:
<http://www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants>

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