

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



State Innovation Grant Program

Vermont:

A Cross-Media Environmental Results Project for the Retail Gasoline Sales Sector

The EPA State Innovation Grant Program was established in 2002 to help strengthen EPA's innovation partnerships with States and Tribes and is a direct result of the Agency's innovation strategy, *Innovating for Better Environmental Results: A Strategy to Guide the Next Generation of Innovation at EPA* (<http://www.epa.gov/innovation/strategy>). To support the *Innovation Strategy*, the 2002 grant program focused its efforts on projects that related to one of four priority issues: reducing greenhouse gases, reducing smog, improving water quality, and reducing the cost of drinking water or wastewater infrastructure. In addition, EPA sought projects that test incentives that motivate "beyond-compliance" environmental performance, or move whole sectors toward improved environmental performance. This series of fact sheets features the State projects selected for funding under the Grant Program.

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Background

With a small staff, the Vermont Underground Storage Tank (UST) program currently conducts approximately 100 environmental compliance inspections per year and does not anticipate having new resources in the foreseeable future to significantly increase the number of inspections. At the current rate of inspection, it would take the Vermont UST Program over 10 years to evaluate its facilities once. Under the Environmental Results Program (ERP) model, an assessment of every facility's compliance status would be conducted and submitted to VT DEC on an annual basis.

The Vermont UST program is an established program seeking improved sector-wide compliance. The ERP model can achieve this goal through a combination of enhanced technical assistance, outreach, and a mandatory self-certification program. The Vermont Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Program under which USTs are regulated has found the retail gasoline sector to have unique, and altogether too common, compliance problems. In the last few years, the Vermont RCRA program has forwarded formal enforcement cases against retail gasoline sector facilities involving 18 locations. Several of these cases also involved violations of the Vermont Underground Storage Tank Regulations and Clean Air Act (CAA).

Project Description

This project uses the ERP model to achieve a measurable improvement in compliance with sections of four federally-delegated regulatory programs (UST, RCRA generator requirements, the CAA Stage II requirements, and the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) Underground Injection Control (UIC) requirements) at facilities within the retail gasoline sales sector as well as other facilities regulated by the Vermont UST program.

This project establishes sector-specific, cross-media Best Management Practices (BMPs) as well as other compliance guidance materials. The purpose of the BMPs encourage facilities to go “beyond compliance” to reduce waste, pollution and emissions. This project encourages the regulated community to achieve reduced compliance costs by addressing all compliance and environmental issues at once through cross-media BMPs (that lead to compliance) rather than narrowly focusing on specific problems identified during the last regulatory inspection.

Benefits of the Project

In the long-term, it is expected that this approach will yield these benefits:

- Annual multi-media compliance measures across 100% of the facilities in the sector (compared to less than 10% currently)
- Improved sector-wide compliance
- Reduced emissions and releases
- Reduced costs of compliance and program administration
- Improved communication between the regulated community and the VT DEC concerning compliance (regulatory improvements, self-reporting)

The compliance goals so the project will achieve the benefits are:

- To reach approximately 85% participation by the sector facilities during the first implementation year
- To reach 95% participation by the sector facilities by the end of the second implementation year
- To improve the initial rates of compliance (as determined by the initial and follow-up random inspections) with the involved UST, RCRA, Air and UIC requirements by at least 15% by the end of the second implementation year (the third project year)

Project Plan

The project will last two years, beginning late 2004.