

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**ML Strategies, Inc.**

One Financial Center  
Boston, Massachusetts 02111  
617 348 4400  
617 542 2241 fax

701 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20004  
202 296 3622  
202 434 7400 fax

January 27, 1999

Mr. Paul Burns  
Massachusetts PIRG  
29 Temple Place  
Boston, MA 02111



Dear Paul,

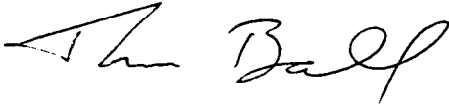
Enclosed please relevant draft documents concerning the Laboratory Project XL. As we discussed a few months ago, this XL Project would test an alternative system for managing hazardous wastes in laboratories at the University of Vermont, University of Massachusetts-Boston and Boston College. It is our contention that such a system will promote pollution prevention and the reuse of hazardous chemicals that might otherwise be discarded as hazardous waste and increase environmental awareness among laboratory workers. The Universities commit to track environmental performance using certain environmental performance indicators and report annually on their implementation progress and environmental performance. All this is described more fully in the enclosed documents.

At our last discussion, you expressed concerns regarding treatment of hazardous wastes in laboratories. A number of other environmental community members have expressed similar concerns. As a result, none of the schools in this Project will be seeking relief from federal or state treatment regulations. You also expressed interest in tracking the environmental performance of the institutions over the course of this four year pilot. Those conditions have not changed nor our commitment to "transparency." Each institution will post on its web site, and make available to interested parties, a copy of its Environmental Management Plan -- the policies and procedures governing the management of laboratory waste and the implementation of reduction and reuse programs. Additionally, as mentioned above, annual reports concerning environmental performance will be publicly available and shared with interested parties. In this manner, the bottom line - superior environmental performance - can be effectively used to evaluate the merits of this regulatory approach for laboratories, compared to the traditional command and control RCRA approach.

If you have any comments, please forward them to me no later than February 5. The institutions and the EPA have worked diligently over the last six months addressing various concerns expressed by agency personnel and environmental community stakeholders. This last draft review is designed to serve as a final "check" before the proposed rule is published in the Federal Register. The proposed rule should be published in the Federal Register by mid to late February and will include a 30 day comment period.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 617-348-1838.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Balf". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas P. Balf

cc: Anne Kelly, EPA Region I

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