

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Project XL: Massachusetts Environmental Results Program (ERP)



WHAT IS PROJECT XL?



Project XL, which stands for “eXcellence and Leadership,” is a national initiative that tests innovative ways of achieving better and more cost-effective public health and environmental protection. The experience and lessons learned from Project XL will assist EPA in redesigning its current regulatory and policy-setting approaches. Project XL encourages testing of cleaner, cheaper, and smarter ways to attain environmental results superior to those achieved under current regulations and policies. It also requires greater involvement by stakeholders, i.e. the people and organizations affected by EPA’s decisions. Project XL is limited in scope, with a goal commitment of 50 pilot projects. Therefore, it is vital that each project test new ideas with the potential for wide application and broad environmental benefits. As of October 1998, ten pilot projects are being implemented and sixteen additional experiments are being developed. Project XL offers a tremendous opportunity for everyone to think “outside the box” of our current system and to find solutions to obstacles that limit environmental performance.

SUMMARY OF THE MASSACHUSETTS ERP PROJECT

The Environmental Results Program (ERP) was developed by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to streamline permitting and reporting processes in the state for approximately 5,000 small businesses to begin with, and possibly 10,000 by the end of the year. It will reduce the number of traditional permits and reporting requirements through a program of facility-wide, performance-based self-certification. Industry representatives have cooperated with Massachusetts DEP to establish criteria for reporting compliance with stringent state performance and operating standards in certain industrial categories, without developing permits for each facility. The ERP currently applies to three industrial sectors—dry cleaners, photo processors and printers. Massachusetts DEP will guide companies through the process, providing explanations of laws and regulations and ideas for meeting associated requirements. The project is intended to reduce resources expended by both the DEP and industry in the permitting process, as well as improve compliance by offering companies flexibility in pollution prevention. Massachusetts DEP believes that after an initial evaluation and revision phase, the program will be transferable to other industry sectors throughout Massachusetts and other states.

SUPERIOR ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

The Environmental Results Program will achieve superior environmental performance beyond what is achieved by the current federal and state regulatory systems. By converting permit requirements into industry-wide performance standards, DEP anticipates superior environmental performance since facility managers will be aware of their environmental obligations before they make decisions about modifying equipment and operations, rather than at the end of a long, expensive permitting process. For example, the new system is expected to reduce wastewater discharges of silver by 99 percent from

photo processors, and to achieve a 43 percent reduction in emissions of perchlorethylene from dry cleaners. Since all companies will ultimately be held to strict ERP performance standards, environmental protection will be strengthened.

FLEXIBILITY

ERP improves accountability and increases flexibility for companies. For the first time ever, top management of the companies involved will certify annually that their facilities are in compliance with all applicable air, water and hazardous waste management performance standards. Facilities not in compliance will be required to specify interim milestones toward achieving compliance by a certain date. This will give companies more flexibility to choose cost-effective compliance strategies for themselves, thereby reducing the "time-to-market" for new products and removing regulatory obstacles to pollution prevention.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

As part of its draft Final Project Agreement, Massachusetts DEP will actively work to ensure and maintain involvement of key stakeholders and the general public in ERP implementation. DEP has been and will continue to work with an ERP Design Team comprised of representatives from EPA, other government entities, environmental advocacy groups, business and industry, consulting firms, and the legal community.

APPROACHES TO BE TESTED

The Massachusetts ERP has taken the bold step of streamlining permitting and reporting processes for three industrial sectors in order to achieve more effective environmental protection. ERP promises to make it easier for the regulated community to meet and exceed Massachusetts' stringent environmental standards by giving them flexibility to decide the best, most cost-effective ways to comply with performance standards.

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More information about Project XL is available on the Internet at [http://www.epa.gov/Project XL](http://www.epa.gov/Project%20XL), via Project XL's fax-on-demand line at 202-260-8590, or via Project XL's Information Line at 703-934-3239.

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