

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Project XL: Narragansett Bay Commission



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 information and lessons learned from Project XL are being used to assist the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (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, in conjunction with greater accountability to stakeholders. It is vital that each project tests new ideas with the potential for wide application and broad environmental benefits. As of September 2000, thirty-one pilot experiments are being implemented and over thirty additional projects are in various stages of development.

SUMMARY OF THE NARRAGANSETT BAY COMMISSION PROJECT

The Narragansett Bay Commission (NBC), a publicly owned wastewater treatment facility, treats wastewaters from domestic, commercial, and industrial sources in the Metropolitan Providence area in Rhode Island. Through this XL project, NBC is seeking relief from portions of the national wastewater pretreatment regulations for ten metal finishing companies that have established a history of exemplary environmental performance and compliance. This regulatory flexibility will act as an incentive for the companies to maintain their high performance. Perhaps more importantly, eliminating certain requirements for these high performing companies (Tier 1 facilities) will allow NBC to target its resources at increased compliance inspections, pollution prevention audits, and technical assistance for lower level performers (Tier 2 facilities). This XL project, EPA’s 40th, was signed on September 25, 2000.

SUPERIOR ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

The NBC Pretreatment XL Project will promote pollution prevention by identifying source reduction opportunities, process optimization, and alternative material inputs at Tier 2 facilities. Reallocating resources from high performers to low performers will allow NBC to improve compliance and significantly reduce pollution for Tier 2 facilities compared to what is currently required by pretreatment regulations. Over the six years of this project, NBC expects that Tier 2 facilities will reduce their process water usage by 25 percent, total metals loadings (which include the regulated metal finishing pollutants along with arsenic and selenium) in their effluent discharge by 25 percent, and their generation of F006 waste by 25 percent. NBC also anticipates that Tier 2 facilities will improve their compliance rate by 75percent.

EPA will grant regulatory flexibility allowing NBC to offer program

FLEXIBILITY

modifications to Tier 1 facilities in three areas: 1) reduced frequency of compliance inspections, 2) reduced frequency of self-monitoring of wastewater effluent, and 3) elimination of self-monitoring for certain substances not used within a facility. Each facility must meet specific criteria for each type of regulatory relief being sought. The exact qualifications necessary to obtain each of the three regulatory benefits being offered as part of this project are described in the Final Project Agreement.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

The stakeholder process is essential to the potential success of this XL Project. The first NBC Project XL stakeholder meeting was held on June 13, 2000, at NBC's offices. In attendance at this meeting were representatives from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM), U.S. EPA, the Rhode Island Council of Electroplaters (RICE), the American Electroplaters and Surface Finishers Society (AESF), NBC's Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC), Save the Bay, and several individual metal finishing companies. Members from each of these organizations have been involved with other NBC initiatives such as: Metal Finishing 2000, CLEAN P2, NBC's Regulatory Advisory Committee, and the Rhode Island Pollution Prevention Conference Committee. Additional stakeholder meetings will be held on a regular basis. In addition to these groups, all other organizations and individuals are welcome to participate as stakeholders during project implementation.

CONTACTS APPROACHES TO BE TESTED

Can NBC demonstrate that through more efficient use of existing resources, a POTW can achieve measurable improvements in the environmental performance levels of Tier II companies while encouraging and assisting Tier I companies to maintain or possibly improve their current level of environmental performance?

FOR ELECTRONIC INFORMATION

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More information about Project XL is available on the Internet at <http://www.epa.gov/ProjectXL>, or via Project XL's Information Line at 202-260-5754.