State Innovation Grant Program

Michigan:

Michigan Environmental Results Program (MERP) – Dry Cleaning 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

The dry cleaning industry is subject to both federal and state environmental regulations pertaining to air, water, and solid and hazardous waste generation. With regards to air quality, dry cleaners are subject to the federal National Emission Standard for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP) or New Source Performance Standard (NSPS). The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) regulatory divisions recognize that there is a need to work more closely with the dry cleaning industry to improve their understanding of and compliance with all applicable environmental regulations, especially the monitoring, record keeping and waste characterization requirements. The MDEQ plans to incorporate the air, water and waste requirements for the dry cleaner sector into a multi-media, self-certification, compliance assistance package through the Michigan Environmental Results Program (MERP). MDEQ is proposing to pilot the MERP as a voluntary program.

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Project Description

The Michigan DEQ will work with hundreds of small businesses in the dry cleaning sector to implement an Environmental Results Program based upon similar programs in other states.

The dry cleaner self-certification project will use MDEQ resources and leverage outside community partners including USEPA Region 5, local trade associations, community organizations, businesses and economic development agencies. The MDEQ will take a multi-media approach to prepare fact sheets, self-assessment checklists, a workbook for guidance on how to complete the self-assessment checklists and compliance assistance tools for the dry cleaning establishments on pollution prevention, solid and hazardous waste generation, air and water pollution (including release notification). MDEQ will provide additional training through on-site assessments and workshops. The tools and process will also be available as models for other states.

Project implementation begins with the initial compliance inspection assessment by MDEQ to determine the baseline compliance rate. After the baseline assessment, MDEQ provides a self-assessment checklist and workbook to each dry cleaner establishment. Owners are encouraged to participate with the MERP project in lieu of pursuing a traditional permitting approach. The participating establishments must complete and submit multi-media self-certified checklists to MDEQ. The dry cleaners correct any observed deviations with the aid of a return to compliance (RTC) plan. The RTC plans are submitted along with the self-certification package to MDEQ. MDEQ reviews the checklists and RTC plans and a post inspection list is developed. Both the baseline and post inspections are multi-media inspections.

Benefits of the Project

The benefits realized as a result of the MERP will be to eliminate traditional time-consuming and expensive permit application and review process for both the facility and MDEQ, produce a greater level of continuous compliance, increase compliance resulting in a reducted environmental and public health exposures to toxic substances, minimize traditional inspection time through the use of multi-media compliance and enforcement tools, and provide an enhanced level of compliance assistance to all facilities so that each facility will know their compliance status.

Project Plan

The program is set to run three years.

United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Office of Policy,
Economics and Innovation
(1807T)

January 2005
EPA-100-F-05-003