E-Enterprise: Combined Air Emissions Reporting (CAER)

The US Environmental Protection Agency, The Environmental Council of State, Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Southwest Clean Air Agency, Texas, Vermont, Virginia and Wyoming.

What is E-Enterprise?

E-Enterprise for the Environment (E-Enterprise) is a strategy to reshape how government agencies deliver environmental protection. Through joint governance, States, Territories, Tribes, and EPA are collaboratively modernizing business processes and sharing innovations across agencies and programs. These changes will improve environmental results and enhance services to the industry and the public by making government more efficient and effective. The Combined Air Emissions Reporting (CAER) is one of the initial E-Enterprise projects.

See more at http://e-enterprisefortheenvironment.net/

The Project

The EPA and State, Local and Tribal air agencies are working together to identify opportunities to streamline how industry reports air emissions and associated data from their facilities. Some have called it "Turbo Tax for emissions." A successful project would reduce the emissions reporting burden for industry by supporting one submission that will meet multiple EPA and State reporting requirements.

This project is currently in a preliminary implementation phase, with a Product Design Team (PDT) members from State/Local agencies and the EPA. The PDT manages policy, research and prototyping activities that support the development of the proposed CAER future state. The PDT oversees the work of smaller research and development (R&D) teams that are focused on individual projects related to specific research and prototype activities.

Benefits

Industry: Reduced reporting burden for industry by avoiding duplicative efforts across different programs and improved reporter experience through integrated electronic reporting and shared services.

Co-regulators: Support timely decision making and analyses with more consistent, accessible, and higher quality emissions data.

Public: Improvements to the availability, timeliness and transparency of data; also, higher quality and consistent data for various end users.

Research and Development - Phase 1

- Develop a common set of quality assurance and quality control steps that could be used for combined reporting

- Research pollutant definitions and possible workflows for sharing emissions data among multiple programs

- Develop a set of data elements that can be used for a common emission reporting form

- Identify needed improvements to process codes and emission factors

The Problem Statement

Currently, air emissions information is collected by the EPA and State/Local/Tribal air agencies through numerous separate regulations, in a variety of formats, according to different reporting schedules, and using multiple routes of data transfer. This project is examining duplication of emissions data reporting across the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program (GHGRP), the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI), the National Emissions Inventory (NEI) (via state air agencies), and compliance reporting requirements for Part 60, 62, and 63 regulations to the Compliance and Emissions Data Reporting Interface (CEDRI). The separate requirements can result in duplication of effort by industry reporters, inconsistent information in EPA and state databases, and results in extra work by agencies to reconcile data and explain differences. As a result of these challenges, conflicting information is sometimes found in the publicly available datasets, which can undermine confidence in government.

Collectively, these data programs are extremely important for air quality protection, informing the public, implementing the Clean Air Act, evaluating compliance, and informing applied research. However, as a result of the current paradigm, adverse impacts have been observed that include:

- Increased cost to government (EPA and State, and possibly Local air agencies) due to managing differing schedules, reconciling data after the fact, etc.;
- Increased burden to the reporting community due to managing schedules, submitting potentially redundant information, and the use of different formats; and
- Issues with access to data such as timeliness, completeness, consistency and data quality for both government data users and the public, which may result in less use of the data as well as incomplete analyses.
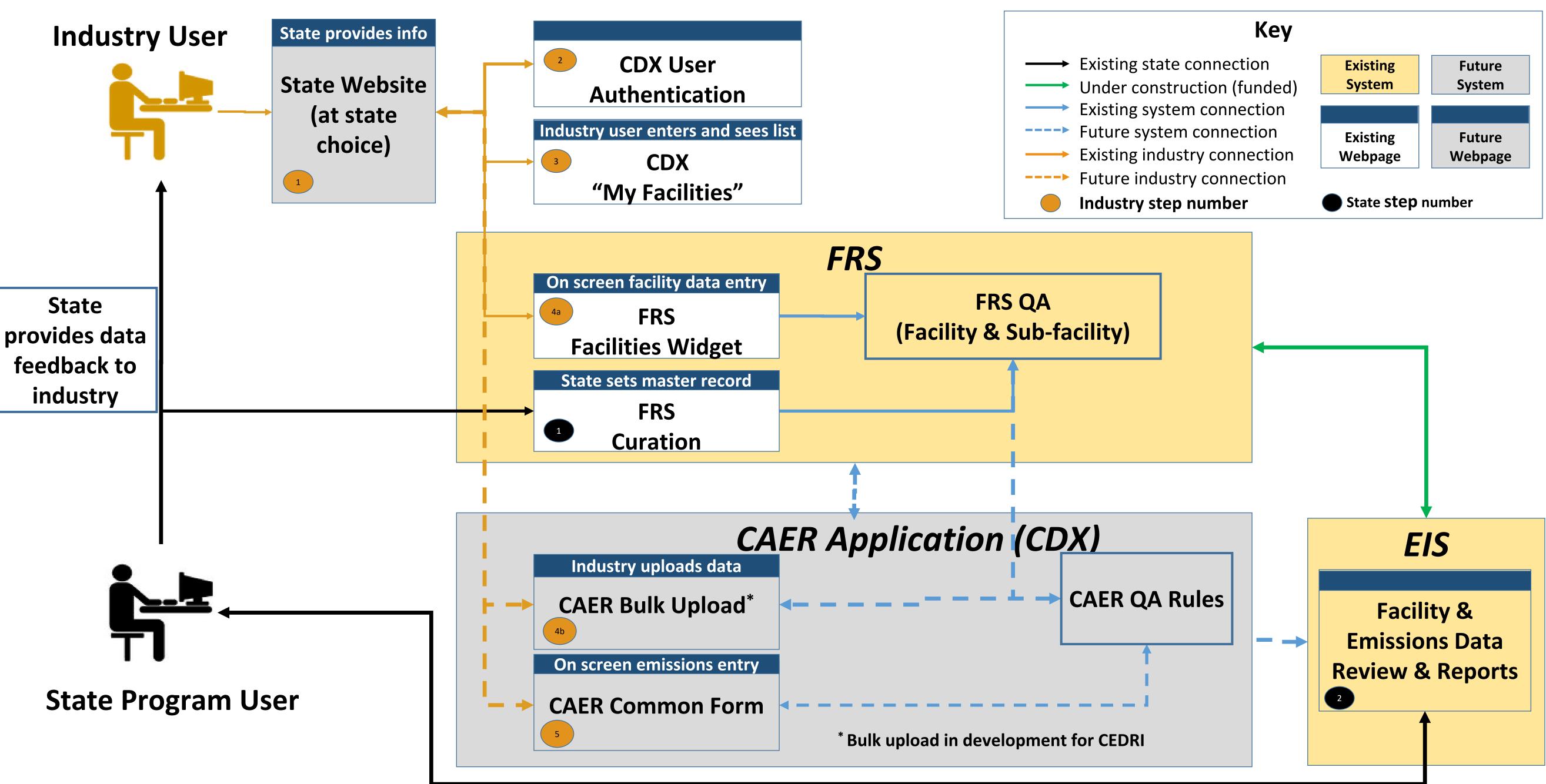
Example Concept for EIS Data Process Flow under CAER