

Meeting Summary - RCRA E-Permitting Meeting October 30, 2002

The EPA convened a meeting to discuss the evolving e-permitting initiative. The purpose of the meeting was to obtain input from industry and non-governmental organizations on the RCRA e-permitting initiative. Beyond the information summarized below, additional information (including presentations made by EPA's Office of Solid Waste and the states of Mississippi, New Jersey, and Texas) is posted at EPA's e-permitting web site:
<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/permit/epmt/epermit.htm>

Meeting Goals

1. To obtain input from industry and non-governmental groups on features they would like to have in an e-permitting system
2. Identify how technology could make permitting more be more effective and efficient.

EPA Presentations

Vern Myers, Office of Solid Waste

- Eleven states participated in the last e-permitting meeting in July and chose three areas to focus on – share information of e-permitting systems used by states, develop smart forms, develop permit shell (modules).
- Visited states (New York, Mississippi, and Texas) to gather information on design/structure and functionality of systems in place
 - Selected states to visit
 - Looking for state partners to develop RCRA permit module
 - Review various modules (e.g., 6-7 states using AMS' TEMPO system vs. non-TEMPO states) and common components to develop a template module – as we progress, continue to discuss design development
- Need to keep in mind relationship to enforcement – when a permit is written, it needs to be enforced
- Industry would like permitting program to be consistent - current permitting program can be subjective. This allows people (with different backgrounds) to make different decisions on similar permit applications.
- Draft model permits for proposed standardized permit on web site (see above); feedback is appreciated

Meeting Summary - RCRA E-Permitting Meeting October 30, 2002

- Benefits: e-permits would reduce paper – background materials are very extensive (see web site, above)
- E-permitting can be resource intensive (depending on how its implemented)
- RCRA is developing interactive forms: (1) hazardous waste identification; (2) Part A
- EPA's role: assist states in developing RCRA portion of multi-media e-permitting systems

Pat Garvey, Office of Environmental Information

- Central Data Exchange: develop data standards for data integration – common definitions that states can identify
- Security – partners will have one way to identify the person responsible for sending data
 - ID management
 - Data integrity
 - EPA sends information to appropriate place
- Facility Registration System: Agency, states, and others can create tools for integration for cross-media analysis
- Data standards, data integration, and enterprise repository help to develop future regulations
- OEI is working to get the enterprise repository up and running
- Look at operational guidelines

Comments from EPA presentations can be found under the “Other Comments from States and NGOs” section.

Marasco Newton Group (consultant to EPA) Presentation

- Initially looked for a “pure” e-permitting system (very rare)
- Most states are using e-permitting as a tracking system
- Design issues
- Barriers to greater use include security (e.g., many parties still using CD-ROM submittal to agency)
- MNG's role: help engage stakeholders (learn from other systems) and suggest system logic to EPA for eventual use by states
- Electronic features vary from state to state (i.e., Texas has multiple databases but is looking to consolidate)
- Requested feedback on chart titled “Proposed E-Permitting Process”

State Presentations

Meeting Summary - RCRA E-Permitting Meeting
October 30, 2002

The following parties participated by teleconference and did not provide formal presentations:

Alabama – Not much has changed since the meeting in July 2002; use electronic reporting; use the web for dissemination; 40-60 RCRA facilities

California – Not much has changed in permitting since the meeting in July 2002; interested in electronic forms; use the web for dissemination; large number of RCRA facilities

New York – Not doing anything currently with RCRA; not moving forward; WordPerfect modules are in place and instructions are built into files; engineer interfaces; 65 RCRA facilities

Maryland – Not currently working on e-permitting system

The following parties were present and provided formal presentations (See EPA website for details):

Mississippi – Practicing integrated multi-media permitting; 40 RCRA TSD sites – 20,000 permitted entities; enSite (TEMPO system); change management to increase buy-in; standardized process; data is available internally/externally; no fee system; refresh database daily; goal is to have customized applications; RADIUS – send on CD-ROM; clients only need to enter information into system once

New Jersey – E-Government effort; web-based business program; real-time data; built with AMS; facility managed security to control access; electronic signatures, credit cards, checks; permit work folders; email messaging; on-line web forms; RADIUS has “application administrative check” to reduce errors and the percentage of applications that are returned

Texas – The RCRA program is beginning to design a system, have limited resources. Features they would like to have are described below: concentrating on non-land based units; Part A application can be hyperlinked—general information completed in Part A can populate rest of application; guide applicant through process to Part B; lead applicant through questions—answers to those questions (e.g., commercial vs. non-commercial; type of units, etc.) will lead applicant to different parts of application; look at the whole application as a set of data; use Cold Fusion/ORACLE; goal is to build a permit as an application is being filled out

Comments from Industry

Meeting Summary - RCRA E-Permitting Meeting October 30, 2002

- Do not make systems more burdensome for industry users
- Make system user-friendly to get an eager response from users (public, community)
- Keep in mind that while the system is being developed, it can have an adverse on industry users
- Make all systems consistent within the same regions (including states)
- Allow for direct inputting of data by industry
- Navigational tools should be easy to use
 - In RADIUS, it is difficult to move from screen to screen
- Use embedded guidance
- Support use of standardized permits as first step
- There are timelines and resource concerns; do these initiatives take away from other RCRA programs (e.g., permit writers working on e-permitting system versus processing renewals, which are already behind schedule)
- Need to prioritize efforts; due dates
- Deal with e-signature issues
- CBI – how do you protect confidential information
- Benefit could be quick turnaround
- Visit industry groups within each of the states already visited to get their views on the system
- Find out if there are barriers to moving forward with e-permitting initiative within the agencies themselves

Other Comments from States and NGOs

- Re-look at overall permit process
- Many people may not support e-permitting because they think you need to reinvent the permitting process
- Effective public participation requires real-time updating and sharing of information
- More information should be made available
- Latitude/longitude critical for analysis (should tie into GIS program)
 - Which fields should be made publicly accessible should be discussed
- Directly integrated or links to other information
 - Multimedia data
 - Compliance data
 - Data from other states (EnviroFacts)
- Analysis/output tools to reduce user burden should be made publically available
- Analytical tools to enhance technical assistance needs (simple click to get to compliance history)
- Give people the ability to download the entire database
- Develop a place (on the web) for public comment
- Business rules need to be institutionalized before we get too far with e-permitting

Meeting Summary - RCRA E-Permitting Meeting October 30, 2002

- Modeling can be done by EPA staff to answer site-specific concerns, but others will also contribute (university, non-profit companies)
- Environmental Information Consortium (Academia, Industry, Environmental Groups)
 - Revamp information practices
 - Data integration to eliminate redundancy
 - Issue – no business rules
 - Issue – no ID number (Corporate ID – ACES framework: push from national security)—facility/agency points of contact needed
 - Will help to broaden the transition of secure identity
- Go to states to see how these approaches affect them
- EPA should embrace any reporting format industry provides (Text File, XML, spreadsheet etc)
 - EPA does not currently accept States' format
 - Interoperability among software components
 - Stay away from proprietary solutions; need standards
 - Robot that does format conversion
- Make permitting process smooth across all media
- Add Form F (TRI?) (to include core data)
- Intelligent form (“Smart Form”) as an option
- User explanation on what these systems are used for and where information should be inputted
- Updating software can be major challenge
- Consultants to industry may not always have incentives to want to use systems

Direction of E-Permitting

- Develop model permits
- After feedback, develop applications
- Get Part A Form up and running electronically
- EPA can facilitate state efforts and data sharing
- Study attributes/features of the e-permitting systems and share information
- Make information exchange as seamless as the state databases that are directly used
- Biggest challenge – understanding business processes
 - Design with help from industry
 - Reach out to people who do not like or understand how to use computers
- Provide web-based training every four to six months.
- Provide for tracking of applications
- Keep application information and process secure, industry does not want to be monitored
- Money and funding issues and change management issues within agencies and industries may be more difficult to surmount than technology issues

Meeting Summary - RCRA E-Permitting Meeting
October 30, 2002

Wrap-Up

- Continue to work with ECOS on an on-going basis
- Continue to seek community/environmental group input, possible through separate meeting in 2003
- Possibly conduct online discussion
- Continue conference calls

Meeting Summary - RCRA E-Permitting Meeting
October 30, 2002

• **Attendees**

Maria Angelo, DuPont
Robert Carlitz, Information Renaissance
John Chelen, Hampshire Research, Inc.
Eric Clark, Synthetic Organic Chemicals Manufacturing Association (SOCMA)
Garwin Eng, VA-Department of Environmental Quality.
Martin Fontenot, Syngenta (GB Bioscience)
Jeff Gaines, EPA Office of Solid Waste
Pat Garvey, EPA Office of Environmental Information
Mark Grove, Marasco Newton Group
Jeff Gunnelfson, SOCMA
Rosemary Gunn, Information Renaissance
Michael Hillard, EPA Office of Solid Waste
Tooran Khosh, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Dorothy LaRusso, DK Tech (subcontractor to Marasco Newton Group)
Megan McClosky, Marasco Newton Group
Vernon Myers, EPA Office of Solid Waste
Baruch Onyekwelu, Maryland Department of the Environment
Sonya Sasseville, EPA Office of Solid Waste
Alan Strasser, Marasco Newton Group
Tab Tesnau, EPA Office of Solid Waste
Pete Tenebruso, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Jim Tillman, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
Debbie Weiss, Marasco Newton Group

Phone Participants:

Chip Crockett, Alabama Department of Environmental Management
Chelsea Westerberg, California Department of Toxic Substances
Jim Dolen, New York Department of Environmental Conservation
Erik Blackwell, New York Department of Environmental Conservation
Richard Carmichael, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

