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# science in ACTION

INNOVATIVE RESEARCH FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

## REGIONAL APPLIED RESEARCH EFFORT PROGRAM

The Regional Applied Research Effort (RARE) is an Office of Research and Development (ORD) program administered by the Office of Science Policy (OSP) that responds to the high-priority research needs of EPA Regions. RARE projects address a wide array of environmental science issues critical to ORD's regional partners. The Regional Science Liaisons (RSLs) manage the RARE process. RSLs play a vital role in delivering ORD science, including RARE project results, to support regional environmental decision-making.

### Goals of the RARE Program

- Provide near-term research (1–2 years) to address high-priority, regional applied science needs
- Foster collaboration between EPA Regions and ORD laboratories and centers
- Build a regional/ORD network for future scientific interaction
- Provide opportunities for ORD scientists to apply their expertise to regional issues and explore new research challenges

### RARE Funding and Process

Annually, ORD allocates resources for each of EPA's ten regional offices to pursue collaborative research efforts. Each Region conducts its own solicitation and, in collaboration with ORD, selects projects that best address the Region's highest priority needs.

The RSLs engage ORD scientists early in the process, ensure the projects are within the scope of ORD's mission, and secure regional and ORD management support for the selected projects. OSP manages the funding process for the chosen projects.

### Sample RARE Projects

#### Improving Drinking Water Quality in Rural Puerto Rico

The potential for outbreaks of waterborne disease due to inadequate water treatment is a concern in many small communities in rural Puerto Rico with drinking water systems that are not under the purview of the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority. EPA technical experts, working closely with these communities, installed treatment systems that combine chlorination with ultraviolet disinfection as a double barrier against contamination. In addition, two slow sand filtration systems were constructed in a remote location in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico. The improved systems now provide a sustainable and safe drinking water supply, and the pilot/demonstration site serves as a training center for drinking water system operators.

#### Greener Cleanups at Hazardous Waste Sites

Superfund sites require a lot of energy to operate. On-site equipment can emit massive amounts of greenhouse gases and other pollutants.

ORD and Region 9 developed a document, known as the [Smart Energy Resources Guide \(SERG\)](#), that provides tools to Superfund site managers for "greener" clean up operations. The resources found in SERG have helped to implement green remediation practices at sites across the country. SERG has also sparked the development of [RE-Powering America's Lands](#), an EPA/DOE joint venture focusing on renewable energy development on contaminated lands.

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