

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

APR - 8 2011

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Integrating 2012 NPDES Permitting and Enforcement Planning

FROM:

Lisa C. Lund, Director
Office of Compliance

For James A. Hanlon, Director Call Z. 114

Office of Wastewater Manageme

TO:

Regional Enforcement Directors

Regional Water Directors

The 2009 Clean Water Act (CWA) Action Plan is built on the premise that the NPDES permitting and enforcement programs must work together to succeed in addressing the many significant threats to water quality. In order to ensure the strategic use of limited resources, EPA in the June 2010 Interim Guidance on Strengthening EPA and State Performance Oversight asked regions and states to conduct annual planning processes that integrated both the NPDES permitting and enforcement programs. This integrated planning was conducted in 2010 for FY2011, with the regions submitting written summaries of the processes and results. This memorandum is requesting that regions and states again conduct integrated planning processes for FY2012.

The summaries you provided for FY2011 contained much useful information regarding state and regional priorities and the approach used in the planning process. Attached are summaries of the regional feedback, including identified state priorities, lessons learned and best practices. The overall assessment was that there was value in the integration of the planning process.

For the FY2012 planning cycle we are specifically asking regions to continue to:

- · Ensure coordinated and integrated planning across permitting and enforcement programs as part of the §106 grant work plan development process
- · Use information coming from other CWA program areas such as water quality standards and monitoring and assessments to help make strategic decisions
- · Identify and agree on the highest priority problems, as well as EPA and state roles, and responsibilities to make sure the most important permitting and enforcement work gets done
- · Ensure protection of watersheds and water quality through stringent permits and robust enforcement to ensure compliance with those permits

- Before conducting a State Review Framework or a permit quality review, evaluate past performance issues and determine if progress has been made to improve those areas of performance
- As a part of regular progress meetings (at least twice a year), look at outstanding performance issues and negotiated work plan commitments to ensure progress.

Again in 2012, this integrated planning should be part of the §106 work plan process, not in addition to or outside of the development of §106 work plans. Where states do not develop a specific §106 work plan for permitting and enforcement activities, planning discussions should still be held, and an agreement developed on what the most significant problems are and the steps the state and region intend to carry out to address those problems.

We have attached a template similar to that used last year for regions and states to use in preparing their summary of the regional and state negotiated work plans and process. We encourage you to follow the template, using brief bullets to describe your actions in each of the five areas. We are especially interested in getting a state-by-state summary that includes priority areas of interest. These summaries are due on October 31, 2011. Please send them to Susan Gilbertson at gilbertson.sue@epa.gov and Sarita Hoyt at hoyt.sarita@epa.gov. We will use this information in the ongoing discussions at the Assistant Administrator and Regional Administrator level about program results and regional and state performance. Thank you for your assistance.

Attachments: Template for Summary

Memorandum on Regional Summaries

Summary of Priorities

Table of Lessons Learned and Best Practices

cc: Michael Shapiro Catherine McCabe bcc: Randy Hill

David Hindin Chris Knopes Susan Gilbertson Chad Carbone Martha Segall

Deborah Nagle Tom Laverty Sarita Hoyt

Template for Summary of Regional and State Negotiated Work plans for FY2012

I. Process for Negotiating Work plans:

Please use brief paragraphs or succinct bullets to describe each of the following:

- What parts of the CWA program were involved in discussions (permitting, enforcement, monitoring and assessment, water quality standards, etc)?
- · What levels of management were involved?
- What initial information was used to set up discussions (past permit or enforcement reviews, performance in meeting last year's commitments, possible priorities for coming year at national, regional and state levels, water quality assessment information, permit backlog, past inspection coverage information, etc)?
- Did the region and state have to revisit work plans to have an integrated discussion? How did this fit into the §106 negotiation process?

II. Priority Areas

Please use brief paragraphs or succinct bullets to describe what areas the region and state agreed are priorities, and what are the most important problems. Please address:

- National initiatives or priorities starting in FY2012
- · Regional priorities
- · State priorities

III. New or Innovative Approaches

Please use brief paragraphs or succinct bullets to describe any new or innovative approaches for addressing permitting or noncompliance problems. How do these innovative approaches propose to improve permits and/or promote compliance?

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

Please use brief paragraphs or succinct bullets to describe:

- Agreements to ensure the most important work are addressed?
- Any work sharing agreements?
- · Roles of the region?
- Roles of the state?
- · Support needed from Headquarters?
- What work will go undone as a result of prioritizing regional/state resources?

V. Summary

Please use brief paragraphs or succinct bullets to describe:

- What worked well in this process?
- Benefits to integrating planning for permits and enforcement?
- · Barriers that were encountered?
- Suggestions for future planning processes?

Summary of Priorities

In general, regions and their states were supportive of the integrated planning exercise. Most of the reports from the regions were well-written, thoughtful, and informative, painting a clear picture of the work plan process and their substance throughout the region. While challenges were encountered in the planning process, some of these challenges can be remedied (e.g., timing and clarity of the guidance), enabling a smoother process for the next fiscal year.

Benefits realized in integrated planning:

Benefits of the integrated planning efforts were seen in a number of ways. Some of the benefits that regions reported were: developing letters of agreement that focus on common priorities, obtain commitments, and address critical programmatic areas; leveraging knowledge; issuing more enforceable permits; developing innovative approaches to partnering with state agencies that possess limited NPDES enforcement and permitting authority; fostering relationships; gaining knowledge and understanding of other programs; and linking program priorities, enabling shared use of tools/resources.

Challenges to effectively integrate planning:

Although states and regions saw benefits from the integrated planning, there were challenges that they faced in the process. Four main issues were identified as barriers to the integrated planning exercise: timing, confusion about the assignment, lack of resources, and difficulty coordinating. A majority of the regions stated that the timing of the exercise proved to be challenging. Many of the states had already completed, in large part, their FY11 work plans. Some regions recommended receiving the planning guidance by the February, and no later than April, prior to the next fiscal year to effectively complete the joint work plans.

Many of the regions also noted that the states did not understand what was being asked of them, particularly with regard to the Clean Water Action Plan. Regions were unsure of what should be incorporated into the work plans, how they related to Section 106 work plans, and the magnitude of the task. One region noted that they were unsure if a separate work plan was being requested, or if it was additional language in the existing work plan.

A lack of resources was also a barrier to integrated planning. Some states were unable to pay for travel across state lines, limiting the opportunities for states to meet and share approaches with each other. Some states were also concerned that EPA was trying to drive priorities and the use of limited resources. Additionally, because some regions need to focus resources on direct implementation programs, some states are left to do more of the planning on their own. However, while current budget issues constrain the activities of state programs and make integrated planning difficult, it is also a primary reason that integration is now necessary.

Coordination was also seen as a barrier in some regions. Because states and regions are organized differently, coordination between the necessary offices or departments was sometimes difficult. Difficulty obtaining time commitments from the highest level of management also proved to be challenging in some instances.

Priorities for FY11:

Priorities listed in the regions' joint work plan summaries indicate the large number of areas that states are committed to focusing on in FY11. National NPDES priorities, particularly CAFOs and MS4s, will be the primary focus in a number of states. States also indicated a number of state-specific priorities, including watershed approaches, beach clean-up, mountain-top mining, using PQRs to improve permit quality, timely enforcement, and energy extraction. Many regions listed each individual state's priorities in their respective summaries, which was particularly useful. This approach is recommended in future summaries.

Summary of Priorities

Region	Priorities			
1	 National: CAFOs, stormwater, municipal wet weather, issuance and 			
	implementation of new pesticide handlers general permit, ensuring up-to-date			
	construction and industrial stormwater permits, issuing priority permits.			
	 Region: residual designation, MS4, incorporating narrative nutrient standards 			
	into water quality based effluent limits.			
	State:			
	Connecticut:			
(• Lean – More Efficient Processes for Water, Waste, Underground Storage Tanks and			
	Air programs			
	Ensuring Return to Compliance – Enforcement Follow-up			
	• Environmental Justice			
	Auto Recycling Compliance West West land in Compliance			
	Wet Weather - Industrial Stormwater General Permit Compliance Initiative			
	Marinas Compliance Initiative:			
	Pharmaceutical Disposal: HGT/GOG G H: HG/GOG G H: HG/GOG G HI/GOG G H			
	UST/SQG Compliance Initiative:			
	Construction Industry			
	Retail Home Improvement/Small Commercial Entities			
	Electronic Equipment Recycling			
	• Financial Assurance			
	Air Toxics - Anti-Idling Strategy			
	Food Preparation Establishments			
	• E-Government			
	 Projects to Promote Low Impact Development and Engage Communities in Urban Watershed 			
	 Additional Compliance Assistance and Pollution Prevention Initiatives in Priority 			
	Sectors			
	MAINE: Licensed Facilities, Automotive Fuel Dispensing Facilities, Hazardous Air Pollutants, MACT, Residential Wood Heaters, Training, HPVs, Educational Materials, Regulatory assistance, RCRAInfo database, Manifest database, Licensing, Inspections, Governor's Carbon Challenge, Green Lodging and Restaurant Program, Green Grocery Store Program, Lean project, Small Business Technical Assistance and Pollution Prevention, Toxics and Hazardous Waste Reduction Initiative			
	Massachusetts: promoting healthy communities and protecting resource areas through environmental compliance, compliance assessment, verification of compliance			
	information, targeted enforcement, integrated environmental justice, partnering with			
	local/state/federal enforcement agencies.			
	Rhode Island: Title 5 and Synthetic Minors, TSDF inspections (100%); LQG			
	inspections (at least 20% of universe), SQG compliance inspections, Major			
	POTW/WWTFs; Pretreatment inspections including audits and annual report review;			
	investigate WWTF collection system by-pass/over flow events; Freshwater Wetland and			

Septic System complaint response, Small MS4 General Permit 1st permit term Compliance Audit Enforcement, inspections of Construction Activity storm water management, revision 3 of the RIPDES EMS, Facility inspections consistent with Energy Act, ERP compliance, Alternative Inspection Program (ERP) Study, ERP for Storm water Control at Construction Sites – Baseline analysis, etc., Hospitality Certification Program, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Projects, Lean Analysis National: NY: CSOs, MS4s and CAFOS. Long Island, Chesapeake Bay, and Hutchinson River are MS4 focuses. NI: CSOs for both permitting and enforcement; working with state to finalize LTCPs. NI: SSOs. Regional: Maintenance of Significant Noncompliance Action Program; construction and MSGP inspections to support Chesapeake Bay strategy; enforcement work share agreements; emphasizing permit quality and using PQR to improve quality; development of nutrient water quality criteria and implementation through permits; development of TMDLs. National: CAFO and MS4 Regional/State: Chesapeake Bay Watershed Point Sources, MS4, SRF-PQR; mining VA: Chesapeake Bay Watershed Point Sources, MS4, SRF-PQR, mining VA: Chesapeake Bay Watershed Point Sources, SRF-PQR, mining DE: CAFO, MS4, Chesapeake Bay Watershed Point Sources, SRF-PQR, MD: CAFO, MS4, Chesapeake Bay Watershed Point Sources, SRF-PQR DC: Compliance Monitoring Strategy, SRF National: CAFO (4/6 states), SSOs (6/6); CSOs (3/6), Minors (4/6); Geographic (5/6); Nutrients (6/6); Permits/PER (5/6). (see chart in summary). States: individual state priorities are listed in work plans. National: CAFO, MS4, Chesapeake Bay Watershed Point Sources, SRF-PQR National: CAFO (4/6 states), SSOs (6/6); CSOs (3/6), Minors (4/6); Geographic (5/6); Nutrients (6/6); Permits/PER (5/6). (see chart in summary). States: individual state priorities are listed in work plans. National: CAFO, MS4, Chesapeake Bay Watershed point Sources, compliance assistance National: Nutrient water quality standards; addressing		
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		0	NE: Timely permitting; balanced enforcement; focus on fundamental
			aspects of program intended by legislature; assistance to regulated
	ŀ	0	community. IA: Prioritize and address water quality problems on basin scale; improve
1 61		O	and implement IA's water quality standards; improve water quality in 5
			lakes; review and update water plans; compile pollutant load reductions
			resulting from NPDES permitting; improve compliance; provide
			technical education
		0	MO: Achieving regulatory compliance; improving water quality; addressing funding needs—seek efficiencies.
8	•	States:	
		0	WY: Energy extraction, particularly coalbed methane
		0	CO: focus on watershed approach to permitting and
			inspection/enforcement; focus priority permits renewals with greatest
			effect; energy extraction—stormwater issues at oil and gas facilities;
			SSO; MS4; CAFO
		0	MT: CAFOs; need to address DMR violations at minor facilities in more
		0	streamlined fashion; address permit backlog issue
		0	SD: exemplary CAFO program, and will continue to focus on it; stormwater—use impaired watershed based approach; SSOs
		0	UT: SSOs; Great Salt Lake watershed
9		States:	
		0	AZ: MS4; strive for permit reissuance rate of 90% for all NPDES
			permits; SSO evaluations; 20% of CAFOs to go through second round of
			inspections; restoration of certain watersheds
		0	CA: National Wet Weather priorities; pretreatment and biosolids
100	1		programs; working with R9 to improve CA's NPDES permit provisions
			(WET requirements, TMDL integration, and antidegradation); assist
			historically underserved communities; build state programs for regulating
			agricultural and forestry discharges (per CA statute).
		0	HI: improving coastal water quality, e.g., beach monitoring program,
	1		developing high quality MS4 permits, upgrades to wastewater treatment
		0	plants through consent decree with Honolulu. NV: maintain its base NPDES permitting and compliance program.
10		States:	
		0	WA: Protecting and restoring Puget Sound (nutrients, toxics,
			stormwater); facing climate change; reducing toxic threats; managing
			water successfully; making wetland mitigation work. (Specific priorities
			for compliance and enforcement, permits, and groundwater/drinking
			water also listed.)
		0	AK: Build AK's NPDES program in general. Also, mining; oil and gas;
			seafood; municipal WWTPs; stormwater.
		0	OR: Continued implementation of Blue Ribbon Committee's
			commitments for water quality; implement a state stormwater program;
			ensure appropriate controls on CSOs; Compliance and enforcement.

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2	What worked/Best Practices	Benefits to Integrated Planning	Barriers/ Lessons Learned	Suggestions
-	Communication/coordination: R1 holds annual enforcement and PPA planning meeting with all 6 states, supplemented with monthly and quarterly meetings with	R1 has two direct implementation states, so has always been coordination between the enforcement and	States are unable to pay for travel across state lines, limiting the opportunities for states to meet and share approaches with each other.	New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission will
	individual states and groups of states.	permits offices.	Lack of resources to directly implement NPDES permits and oversee delegated states in a	hold integrated permits and enforcement
			 comprehensive manner. Deficiencies in PQR not same priority as issues of noncompliance. 	meeting for all K1 states using 106(b) grant funds in FY11.
7	Workplans and the way that they have been developed have always been fairly integrated. The addition of EPA inspection		 Resources (demands of program allow insufficient resources to be devoted to planning) 	OECA should set targets and goals for following fiscal
	workplans (and other work sharing agreements) is what R2 believes will lead to the changes envisioned by the CWA Action		 Unclear idea of what commitments from OECA would be in time to factor into planning process. 	year >6mths prior to start of that year.
	rian. Process of identifying EPA s annual targets and plans allows the states to identify their needs to achieve less duplication of effort and better communication.		 Lack of TMDLs prevent from setting goals to issue permits requiring LTCP development and implementation. 	
	Focus on enforcement follow-up to assure compliance with administrative orders and consent decrees—especially important where agreements may last over a decade and cost hundreds of millions in injunctive			
	The additional funds to support CWA Action Plan activities allowed new discussions on proposals from states that			

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	involved enforcement and program staff.				
	Attention to SNAP process (and specifically mentioning SNAP in workplans) is effective.				
	Effective worksharing: NY joint inspection workplan				
3	Extensive regional discussions identified	One of the more successful	•	Initial apprehension from states due	EPA should build
	critical state, regional and national program	outcomes: Developed an		to timing of request.	the states into the
	resources on most significant water quality	partnering with state agencies			process as early as
	challenges.	that possess limited NPDES			possible and allow
		enforcement and permitting			for state input when
	R3 made every attempt to avoid requiring	authority (e.g., Va DMME &			developing national
	states to agree to undertake additional	DCR)—it fostered a			and regional
	activities that would create undue resource	cooperative relationship with			priorities.
	burden or conflict. Worked with prior	agencies that didn't possess a			OECA and OW
	constraints, given that many of the Section	long history of program			should consider
	106 workplans were in final stages of	planning or coordination with			additional national
	completion.	EPA. Resulted in letters of			guidance to assist
		agreement that focused on			with next year's
	R3 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Point Source	common priorities and			planning process
	workplans are designed to integrate and	obtained substantive			and convey
	coordinate permitting and enforcement	commitments that address			direction to the
	activities.	critical programmatic areas.			regions early.
4	R4 did not have to revisit the workplans to	By working together with the			
	have an integrated discussion; R4 has used	permits section, R4 ensures			
	an integrated approach for several years	that it achieves improvements			
	when negotiating 106 grant workplans to	by issuing better, more			
	establish state programs expectations and to	enforceable permits.			
	plan activities for upcoming year.	Leverages each other's			
		knowledge.			
S	R5 interpreted guidance to focus on adding	Region and states gained	•	skepticism re: joint work planning.	Joint Work Plan

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process needs to be integrated with existing processes (e.g., 106, annual ACS commitment roll-out)	Start earlier so that work plans can be integrated with grants. Include other health, assessment and funding entities whose authorities overlap on CWA issues.
Initial confusion due to broad scope of Clean Water Action Plan. Lack of clear guidance on what should be in the work plans, how the work plans related to the 106 work plans, and magnitude of the task. Timing of the creation of Joint Work Plans did not allow good integration with existing processes. States' 106 planning were largely complete, compliance monitoring strategy not yet begun; also added delay to Region's annual compliance monitoring planning.	Lack of clear guidance from OW; getting time commitments from highest levels of state management; resistance from states concerned that EPA was trying to drive priorities and use of limited resources; coordination with necessary offices/depts was difficult b/c state/fed are organized differently
increased knowledge of each other's priorities and processes. Enforcement and permitting understanding also enhanced.	Integration of all CWA elements helped to see opportunities across regional and state structures. Because program priorities are linked, helped to use tools in tandem. Having states and EPA working together to improve CWA tools and enforcement would send a strong message
value to existing planning process. Included commitments that: Added value in addressing concerns above usual operations; Describe ways of targeting existing program resources, including work sharing; Document work not captured well by traditional work reporting processes (e.g., 106 reporting, compliance monitoring strategies); Provide remedial actions to address longstrategies); Provide remedial actions to address longstrategies); Provide remedial actions to address longstrategies); Another or more action by R & S; and whether or not work is considered work share. Will be attached to each State's 106 work plans. Now have one or more work share activities for each state.	Due to timing of exercise and need to finalize work plans far in advance, the negotiated work plans will only be informative for next grant year; however, the system sets up excellent opportunity to integrate all programs for future work plans. Having upper level management engaged helped focus discussions on highest priorities and kept meetings productive—also facilitated new thinking, avoiding historical arguments. Used non-partisan facilitator. Noted that Enforcement Division

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	tended to place higher priority on development and success of meetings.	to the regulated community. (re: request from TX that EPA and state share lab		
	Most states interested in Real Time enforcement tools. Great impact in getting corrective actions initiated immediately following an identification of violations; reduces process and time for issuing orders. SNC timliness is improved b/c violations are addressed more quickly.	workspace.)		
<u></u>	Timely elevation of issues and frequently scheduled interactions with the state; establishing specific points of contact and a lead for negotiations of all water elements; better perspective on balancing state resources across water programs. In 2008, EPA/R7/states conducted Lean Kaizen event on the permitting and enforcement process of NPDES; resulted in redesigned process that clarified how to address critical technical issues, plan and conduct inspections, and collaborate.	Improved coordination; permit issues flagged during enforcement discussions identifies permit weaknesses; integrated planning enables opportunities for increase use of PPG flexibilities	Barriers: economic issues (declining general revenue, no increase and/or expiring fees, and hiring freezes and early retirements; data quality does not always provide a complete picture; leadership transitions in MO picture.	Suggestions: more planning at program level; time for refinement of existing process before introducing a new process; establish a clear path for escalation of issues when state or a portion of state programs are underperforming; focus on improvement of data quality and improvement of state performance issues.
∞	WY, MT is interested in applying Action Plan to its planning process; CO and UT liked approach of working together, as opposed to receiving a laundry list of	Better understanding between various programs, their goals, and how programs can work together;	• Timing was biggest barrier. Process for negotiating truly integrated work plans must be started much earlier in the fiscal year (goal is feb 2011 for	Begin process earlier (ideally by Feb)

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	changes to its procedures and upper	•	Coordinating meetings with	
	management supported this approach. SD		necessary state and region groups is	
	middle management is supportive of joint		difficult (e.g., for UT, there are three	
	approach and willing to continue joint		groups in region and three in state to	
	quarterly calls.		coordinate);	
		•	Strained relations between R8 and	
			states: with WY due to concerns	
			identified by enforcement and	
			permitting; with SD, because it is	
			very unhappy with current CAFO	
			work = upper management not	
			engaged in planning process.	
6	3 year performance period for CWA 106	•	Ongoing budget crises in R9 states.	EPA should
	grants works well.	•	OW's Nov 22, 2002 memo on storm	establish a
	CA and HI use federal 106 funds for		water and TMDS is an obstacle to	requirement for
	contracts, as state hudget constraints prevent		immen MCA normite it is	electronic submittal
	the state from fully using federal finds to			of disabates date
	the state moin funty using federal fulles to			oi discharge data.
	nire state statt.		those opposing improvements to	Kecommend
	EPA, CA and NV are working together to			against "one size
	improve water clarity in Lake Tahoe; part of	S Proposition of	revisions to this memo in 2009.)	fits all" approach
	a bi-state partnership that involves many			for how program
	levels of government.			integration should
				be achieved. Keep
	Appx 50% of CA's 106 grant is used to fund			reporting
	in-kind service contracts. CA works closely			requirements to a
	with R9 in managing the contracts.			minimum, as they
				are burdensome
	R9 assigns place-based staff to gain			(HI).
	appreciation for local issues and work more			
	closely with local water boards.			
	Increased workhsharing (e.g., with HI) to			
	partially illingate state outget shortialis.			

Lessons Learned and Best Practices

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Has been very effective to work closely with
AK on permits and compliance; R10 speaks
with one voice in flagging performance
problems and developing strategies to assist
the State.

Identifying a few key priorities and focusing resources on them pays off: made progress on WA's NPDES data system since R10 made it as SRF and PPA priority.

In OR, good working relationship and honest dialogue between ODEQ and EPA managers has been beneficial. Was able to include "placeholder" language in PPA to signal intent to work together, even though CWA Action Plan Interim Guidance came out very late in the Oregon PPA negotiations.

- Due to demands of direct implementation programs in ID and AK and demands of NPDES phasein in AK, oversight in WA is light and PPA details are largely left to program managers and staff.
 - Unable to implement new collaborative planning model with WA, due to the timing of their PPA cycle. With AK, an obstacle is turnover of staff at ADEC; also legislative and budget pressures.
- In OR and WA, challenge to effective collaborative planning include communication and coordination challenges caused by decentralized organization and no single enforcement contact short of Deputy Director (in WA).
 - Budget problems
- Litigious nature of permittees in WA and delays from litigation in OR.