United States Environmental Protection Agency
Office of the Administrator [Mail Code 1802]
EPA-100-F-99-023
July 1999
(http://www.epa.gov)

EPA

Project XL: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

WHAT IS PROJECT XL?

Project XL, which stands for "e**X**cellence and **L**eadership," is a national initiative that tests innovative ways of achieving better and more cost-effective public health and environmental protection. The experience and lessons learned from Project XL will assist EPA in redesigning its current regulatory and policy-setting approaches. Project XL encourages testing of cleaner, cheaper, and smarter ways to attain environmental results superior to those achieved under current regulations and policies. It also requires greater involvement by stakeholders, i.e., the people and organizations affected by EPA's decisions. It is vital that each project test new ideas with the potential for wide application and broad environmental benefits. As of July 1999, thirteen pilot projects are being implemented and about twentyfive additional experiments are in negotiation.

SUMMARY OF THE NYSDEC PROJECT

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act currently requires producers of hazardous wastes at remote locations (e.g., manholes and pipelines away from their staffed facilities) to transport all quantities of waste--no matter how small -- to an often distant treatment, storage, and disposal facility (TSDF). The waste producers, which include public utilities, may keep the waste at the remote location for up to 90 days before transporting it to the TSDF. Under the new Project XL agreement between EPA and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), public utilities in New York State will be able to transport wastes to a nearby central collection facility, provided they do it as soon as the waste has been collected. They then can store the waste at the central collection facility - designated by the state - for up to 90 days before transporting it to a permitted TSDF. Approximately fifteen utilities -- including gas, electric, and phone companies with locations throughout the state -- are expected to participate initially. The final project agreement, EPA's 14th XL project, was signed on July 12, 1999.

SUPERIOR ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE

The project provides the following environmental benefits:

- Reduces the risk of accidental hazardous waste releases at remote locations (e.g. manholes and pipelines) by quickly moving the waste to a nearby collection facility.
- Allows consolidation of similar waste at central collection

facilities, which reduces the number of vehicle trips to often-distant treatment, storage and disposal facilities and avoids traffic disruptions.

< Requires each participating utility to reinvest one-third of its direct cost savings (e.g. staff time and paperwork) into one or more new, environmentally beneficial projects.

FLEXIBILITY

Under current regulations, New York State public utilities must transport waste generated at remote locations to a permitted treatment, storage and disposal facility. Under this XL project, the participating utilities will instead be able to transport the waste to central collection facilities where they may accumulate waste for up to 90 days. In addition, participating utilities will be permitted to obtain a single identification number and submit a single Biennial Report for the central collection facility and all remote locations that ship waste to that facility.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

The project was developed with extensive involvement by New York State public utilities. Information on the project was disseminated to over 500 local environmental groups and published in the *New York State Register* and *the New York State Environmental Reporter.* In addition, the project provides for public notice and comment prior to designation of each central collection facility.

APPROACHES TO BE TESTED

< Will immediate transport of hazardous waste to local facilities reduce accidental releases and traffic congestion?
< Are utility and agency costs significantly reduced by consolidating reporting requirements and eliminating administrative requirements?
< Can the reinvestment of a portion of the utilities' savings in environmental projects provide better environmental protection than current regulation?

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FOR ELECTRONIC INFORMATION

More information about Project XL is available on the Internet at http://www.epa.gov/ProjectXL, or via Project XL's Information Line at 202-260-5754.