

Final Report – Environmental Results Project- VT Underground Storage Tank Facilities

March 17, 2010



Executive Summary

In 2004, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Underground Storage Tank (UST) Program, received a State Innovations Grant for developing an Environmental Results Project (ERP) for the Retail Gasoline Sector. The goal of this project was to achieve measurable improvement in the compliance rate for this sector which is comprised of approximately 1100 facilities.

The ERPs typically involve the determination of baseline compliance rate, development of sector-specific compliance tools (workbooks and checklists), compliance training for the targeted sector, self-inspection and self-certification of facilities (electronic submittals via the Internet), and post-certification inspections to determine the compliance rate. Compliance inspections are selected randomly and the sample size is large enough to ensure statistical validity (in our case, 95% confidence with 5% degree of uncertainty).

Baseline compliance inspections were conducted in 2005, and the compliance rate was found to be 68%. Outreach and education was conducted in 2007, and the first round of self-certification was due by 12/31/07. The post-certification compliance inspections were conducted in 2008, and the compliance rate was found to be 84%, an improvement of 16%. A second round of self-certification was due by 12/31/08, with post-certification inspections conducted in 2009. The compliance rate for 2009 was 81%.

A number of issues affected the implementation of this project. Information technology (IT) resources at DEC were a constant issue. IT resources could not be designated to this project, so grant funding had to be diverted from hiring a program person to implement the ERP to hiring IT resources (temporary staff initially, then contracting for IT services).

Another issue affecting the project was the Energy Act of 2005 which required an increase in the number of annual UST inspections from approximately 100/year to approximately 380/year. The increased inspection frequency began in 2006, and undoubtedly contributed to the rise in the compliance rate as facility owner/operators gained increased knowledge of the UST Rules via increased inspections.

Finally, the UST Rules had to be amended to make the Self-Certification report mandatory. Since the Rules had not been amended since 1991, an extensive re-write was needed. This project took place over 2006 and into 2007, with the new rules being adopted effective 8/1/07.

We believe the ERP has greatly increased operator/owner awareness of the UST Rules. Looking ahead, DEC plans to continue the program assuming adequate resources.

This is the Final Report for the VT Department of Environmental Conservation “Retail Gasoline Sales Sector, Environmental Results Project (ERP)”. The report covers the time period October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2009.

A. Summary Information

Purpose and Goals:

This project uses the Environmental Results Program (ERP) model to achieve a measurable improvement in compliance with sections of several federally-delegated regulatory programs at facilities within the retail gasoline sales sector, as well as other facilities regulated by the Vermont Underground Storage Tank (UST) program. The project seeks to measure and improve compliance at the subject facilities with: the Underground Storage Tank rules; RCRA generator requirements; Stage II (and possibly Stage I) air rules; and the floor drain aspects of the Underground Injection Control (UIC) program. Although the project started with these goals, ultimately we could not reach the compliance goals for RCRA generator requirements and UIC.

This project was designed to improve environmental results by the intended outcomes of: reducing the threat of releases of petroleum to groundwater (a significant source of drinking water in Vermont) and soils through enhanced compliance with UST, RCRA, UIC, and sector-specific BMPs; reducing air emissions through enhanced Stage I & II vapor recovery compliance; and reducing hazardous waste generation through the use of the BMPs. The ERP was also designed to rely heavily on Information Technology (IT) to collect, manage, and analyze self-certification and return-to-compliance data.

Outputs and Outcomes:

The ERP model consists of an initial round of inspections of a statistically valid number of facilities to establish a baseline compliance rate, sector-based multimedia outreach and education, a mandatory multi-media self-certification on a sector-specific form, random inspections to determine post self-certifications compliance rate, and data analysis that will result in statistically valid compliance reports to document project performance. The UST Program outputs to meet the stated purpose and goals include the following:

- ✓ A workbook that includes Best Management Practices (BMPs) and compliance requirements. The workbook is a guide to compliance with the self-certification form mentioned below, and is available both in electronic format and paper;
- ✓ A checklist for use by the facility in assessing the status of compliance, with the suite of environmental regulations; the checklist is available both in electronic format for on-line filing and paper;
- ✓ A compliance self-certification form that the facility owners and operators are required to complete, sign and return. On the form, the

facility owners and operators must certify the current compliance status of the facility and acknowledge that the facility must comply with all applicable environmental laws; for on-line certifiers, owner/operators acknowledge that filing on-line is legally binding;

- ✓ A Return to Compliance form which is used to address compliance problems identified in the self-certification process that cannot be corrected before the deadline. The form establishes a return to compliance schedule and deadline for compliance. This form must be signed and returned when a facility cannot certify full compliance with all applicable regulatory requirements;
- ✓ Workshops to provide technical and compliance assistance to facility owners and operators, and to provide training on the requirements of the ERP process;
- ✓ Inspections by the VT DEC to confirm the accuracy of the certifications and compliance with the applicable environmental regulations; and
- ✓ Ongoing technical and compliance assistance by telephone, on-site assistance (as resources allow), and a project-specific web page with FAQs and additional resources.

Schedule of Major Project Tasks

Task/Milestone	Task Description	Start Date	End Date
Stakeholder Outreach	Outreach to internal and external stakeholders (including targeted facilities) about the project.	10/15/04	05/30/07
Revise and adopt UST Regulations	Rule-making process to include self-certification requirement.	10/15/04	8/1/07
Facility identification	Determine the exact characteristics of facilities to be targeted, and compile a list of facilities from reliable sources.	10/30/04	12/30/04
Statistical methodology	Development of a statistical methodology to drive performance measurement and analytical tasks.	1/1/05	3/31/06
Data input & management	Development and implementation of an approach to cost-effectively inputting and managing ERP data. Primary data consists of data from inspection reports and facility forms (including self-certification forms).	11/1/04	12/31/07
QAPP finalization & approval	Finalize QAPP based upon results of the measures identification, statistical methodology, and data management tasks. Primary data collection will not occur before relevant parts of the QAPP are finalized and approved by EPA.	3/1/05	10/31/07

Task/Milestone	Task Description	Start Date	End Date
QAPP Revision	Revise the QAPP as needed - revision to sampling approach/ statistical methodology to address potential data quality issues and completion of the Data Evaluation section	3/1/08	9/30/09
Baseline inspections	Inspections at facilities to establish a performance baseline. Facilities selected at random from the entire targeted population, based upon sample design from statistical methodology.	5/1/05	12/1/05
Workbook and Certification Form Finalization	Finalization of workbook, outreach and assistance materials, web resources, and certification forms.	3/1/05	4/1/07
Facility assistance/Outreach	Delivery of compliance/technical assistance to facilities, which is expected to take the form of workbooks, fact sheets and/or workshops.	2/1/07	5/11/07
Self-certification	Implementation of a mandatory facility self-certification approach. Self-certification refers to the submission of a legally binding record of a facility's compliance and beyond-compliance practices.	6/1/07	12/31/07 and 12/31/08
Self-Certification Deadline	Self-Certification and RTC forms due	6/1/07	12/31/07 and 12/31/08
Analysis of Self-Certification Data	Analysis of Self-Certification data with primary purpose of identifying opportunities for selective follow-up (next step).	10/1/07	8/30/09
Selective follow-up	Selective follow-up with self-certifying facilities, based upon analysis of self-certification data. Targeted follow-up may include phone calls, inspections and enforcement.	12/15/07	6/30/09
Post-certification inspections	Inspections at facilities to establish whether sector performance measures (and other measures) have changed since the baseline. Inspection data also used to cross-check self-certification data at inspected facilities. Facilities selected at random from the entire targeted population, based upon sample design from statistical methodology.	4/15/08	6/15/08 and 6/15/09

Task/Milestone	Task Description	Start Date	End Date
Data analysis	Analysis of baseline, self-certification, and post-certification data to understand change in facility performance and overall outcomes of interest. Assessment of project efficiency.	3/31/08	9/130/09
Preparation of Final Project Report	Draft and finalize final project report.	10/1/09	1/1/10
Reporting to EPA	Reporting shall include quarterly, annual and final reports.	12/30/04	1/1/10

B. Implementation Decisions

Certification Fee: Soon after being awarded the grant from EPA, we contacted the principal lobbyists for the petroleum industry in Vermont (the VT Petroleum Association and the VT Grocers Association) to inform them of our plans for implementing ERP and to ask for their input. Our initial plans were to require a fee for self-certification, in order to pay for a position to manage the project into the future. We were very pleased to hear the lobbyists say they were fundamentally in agreement w/ self-inspection and self-certification; however, they were very opposed to a fee associated with this program. In return for a pledge not to oppose the proposal, we agreed not to seek a fee.

Applicability: Because of the risk posed by all permitted USTs storing petroleum and other hazardous materials, we decided not to limit the program to retail gasoline facilities; we decided to require a self-inspection and self-certification annually from all owners of permitted tanks (which includes diesel tanks, tanks for backup generators, and tanks for process heat fuel storage).

Staff: Because we were initially able to augment UST Program staff with temporary employees, and because of the need for a computer programmer to support our project, we decided to re-classify the position paid for by the grant from UST inspector to IT programmer.

Self-Certification Date: The original concept was for the self-inspections to be done in the spring, and have the self-certifications due in June. In the first self-certification year (2007), we were unable to get all the program pieces in place for a June filing date, so we moved the date back to September. In June 07, at the request of industry, we moved the self-certification date to December 31, and have chosen to keep it there for subsequent years.

Compliance with Other Environmental Regulations: Baseline inspections conducted in 2005 included compliance information for Stage I and II vapor recovery, Hazardous Waste Management, and Underground Injection Control. However, because of the significant increase in the inspection load due to the Energy Act of 2005, we decided to

streamline our inspections and did not collect compliance information for these programs during inspections.

C. Project Components and Issues

1. Information Technology Resources

Immediately after receiving the grant from EPA we began discussing necessary Information Technology (IT) services with the Agency of Natural Resources IT Division. Specifically, we needed the development of an on-line self-certification application, improvements to our UST Database to store self-certification data, reporting tools to enable analysis of self-certification data, and the configuration of tablet pcs to improve the collection and management of inspection data. While all the necessary hardware and software was available for our project's purposes, the IT Division was not sufficiently staffed to accomplish our goals in the desired timeframes. Since we had a position identified in the grant to assist with the inspection program and permission to hire, we decided to re-describe the position as an IT Programmer. By September 2005 we had hired Michael Inners into this position.

Over the course of the next year and a half, Mr. Inners made progress on several fronts including: upgrading the existing database from Access to SQL; troubleshooting and debugging; developing an on-line self-certification application; and developing an electronic inspector checklist to be used on tablet pcs.

However, before all applications could be completed, Mr. Inners resigned. His departure posed a very significant problem. According to IT Division managers, IT Division would not be able to seamlessly transition these duties to other staff. The biggest issues initially identified were: the development of reports that allow for analysis of self-certification data; the up-loading of facility data to electronic inspection checklists (on tablet pcs), and the down-loading of completed checklists to the database. In addition, IT Division management realized that the initial phase of the online application was created using a programming language no longer considered viable (ColdFusion and MS/Access), and requested an upgrading of the on-line application built with a programming language that will be supported in the long-term (VS.net and SQL).

We immediately began recruiting for a replacement (limited service position) for Mr. Inners, but were disappointed by the applicant list. A second round of recruitment yielded two prospective applicants, but during interviews it was apparent that neither applicant would be able to perform the needed work in the desired timeline. Therefore, we decided to contract out for IT services rather than hire. A Request for Proposals was released in December 2007. This solicitation resulted in only one submittal, and the submittal did not seem to have the qualifications we were seeking. We re-issued the Request in February 2008; Industrial Economics of Cambridge MA submitted a very strong proposal, and we entered into contract with them on 6/20/08.

Due to the late start, Industrial Economics would not have the on-line application up and running in time for 2008 self-certifications. IT Division programmers were able to upgrade the 2007 self-certification application to allow for 2008 on-line self-certifications. The on-line application was up and running on September 1, 2008.

From 6/20/08 to 6/15/09, Industrial Economics was under contract for needed IT services. This included research of the current systems and applications, preparation of a work plan, development of the on-line application, development of a check in/checkout application for the electronic inspection checklist, and revision of the inspection checklist. All the applications were up and running by July 2009, with de-bugging of the on-line application continuing until the end of September.

2. Industry Outreach

Within days of notification by EPA that our grant proposal had been selected for funding, we reached out to industry. An initial email to the two principal lobbyists for underground tank owners, the VT Petroleum Association and the VT Grocers Association, resulted in a conference call in October 2004. In that call, the lobbyists stated that the industry was fundamentally in agreement with the concept of self-certification, but was worried that the program would come with a filing fee. They requested a meeting with the Commissioner of VT DEC and program staff to discuss the issue.

On November 5, 2004, UST program staff, lobbyists, representatives of major UST owners, and the DEC Commissioner Jeffrey Wennberg met to discuss the program. The Commissioner agreed to remove consideration of a self-certification fee in order to obtain support (or at least no opposition) for the establishment of a self-certification program.

We met repeatedly with industry over the next three years, including speaking at the VT Petroleum Association annual meeting in December (2005 - 2008), annual VT Fuel Dealers Association meetings (2006, 2007, and 2008), and two specially convened meetings to discuss the self-certification program progress and the draft rules. We also implemented a monthly email update to industry on the progress of this project through its development; the email continues to this date but has been reduced in 2008 to reporting milestones (filing date reminders, compliance results, etc).

To ensure communication with all the UST owners and operators (not just those active in the trade associations), we featured the up-coming self-certification program in our newsletter "UST Talk". We have been sending this newsletter out 3-4 times per year since the early 1990's. The self-certification program was featured in five newsletters leading up to the first self-certification deadline: Fall 2005, Fall 2006, Winter 2007, Summer 2007, and Fall 2007. In addition to this mailing, we sent out three reminder postcards in 2007 to all owners/operators in July, October, and December.

In March 2007, we launched an ERP web page accessible from our UST Program home page (<http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/wastediv/ust/home.htm>). This page accesses:

1. General information about ERP as an environmental compliance tool

2. Adobe versions of the self-certification workbook and checklist
3. On-line self-certification application
4. Frequently Asked Questions
5. Slideshow Presentation

As a final step in assisting owners and operators with the self-certification program, the UST Program conducted nine workshops between April 24, 2007 and May 10, 2007. The three-hour workshops were conducted in different towns around the state and provided information on ERP, reviewed the system component sections of the workbook and checklist, and demonstrated the on-line self-certification application.

As part of all facility inspections in 2007, inspectors talked to facility personnel about the self-certification program requirements, and distributed self-certification materials. Despite the outreach efforts, inspectors heard repeatedly from owners/operators who had no idea of the requirements. UST Program staff fielded an increasing amount of questions and provided assistance the closer the filing deadline came. Assistance efforts peaked at 4:20 PM on December 31st, when we had an owner walk-in for assistance to file just under the wire.

3. UST Rules Revisions

In 2005, we began working on revision of our UST Rules to include the self-certification requirement. The Rules in effect at that time had been promulgated in 1987 and amended in 1991, and a list of needed changes had been accumulating for some time. We decided to undertake a complete re-write of the Rules to address all these issues. Due to the complete revision, this task took far longer than expected, but was done in time to implement the first round of self-certifications. The UST Rules were finalized and went into effect August 1, 2007, and require self-inspection and self-certification (§8-509). The requirement in the rules was intentionally left vague, to maximize flexibility. We were pleased that Vermont's petroleum industry had sufficient faith in the state UST Program that they were comfortable with the flexibility that was included in the wording of the rule. The rule states, in part:

On a schedule which shall be determined by the Secretary, the permittee shall inspect each category one underground storage tank system for compliance with these rules. A list of the components to be inspected will be provided by the Secretary. ... Permittees shall report the results of inspections ... by completing the "Inspection Report" form provided by the Secretary, signing the form ..., and submitting the form to the Secretary by an established date.

In 2009 Vermont's UST rules were amended again, but no significant changes were made to this section except that the wording was modified to explicitly allow on-line submission of the inspection results.

4. ERP Contractor

In 2005, we issued a Request for Proposals for a contractor to assist in the development of the UST self-certification workbook and checklist, and the statistical tool. We entered into a contract with the Cadmus Group on April 4, 2005. We worked with the contractor throughout the remainder of 2005 and into 2006, taking delivery of the final versions of the workbook, checklist, statistical package, return-to-compliance form, and a statistical review of our baseline inspection data on March 31, 2006.

5. Grant Extensions

The VT ERP Grant has been extended three times. Each extension has been for one year. In the first quarter of 2006, we requested an extension to 9/30/07. The extension was needed because of the long process needed to revise the personnel description from a UST Program inspector to an IT Programmer, to conduct the personnel search and interviews, and to get the Programmer hired.

In February 2007, we requested a second extension to 9/30/08. At this time we had decided to move the self-certification due date from June 2007 to September 2007, and the grant deadline of 9/30/07 would not allow for collection and analysis of the self-certification data.

Finally, in April of 2008, we requested another one-year extension to 9/30/09. This extension was necessary due to the delay in getting the IT situation straightened out and getting the contractor hired. The IT contractor was not hired until 6/20/08, and the needed IT work would not be completed until well after the 2008 closure date. Extension until September 30, 2009 allowed for the completion of the needed IT work and enabled us to review and report on two year's worth of data.

6. Energy Act of 2005

Less than one year after receipt of the ERP Grant from EPA, the Energy Act of 2005 was passed. The Act contained many changes for state UST Programs, including a significant increase in the number of inspections states must conduct. For VT, it meant an increase from 100 inspections per year to 388 per year. To date, the UST Program has been able to accomplish all of the tasks mandated by the Energy Act as well as implement the self-certification program. However, the increased exposure of the regulated community to the UST Rules via an increased number of inspections impacts our ability to definitively say that improvements in the compliance rate are attributable solely to ERP.

D. ERP Implementation and Results

1. Baseline

The first step in our implementation of ERP was to randomly select the appropriate number of facilities for the desired 95% confidence level and a confidence interval of

5%. With assistance from the Cadmus Group, we determined 89 inspections would accomplish this. We decided to round the number up to an even 100, and conducted the inspections in Fall of 2005. Two of the facilities were found to be out-of-service, so our final baseline only included 98 facilities. The baseline compliance rate was 68%. In other words, 32% of the facilities were out-of-compliance with at least one UST program indicator.

2. Self-Certification

The first self-certifications were due 12/31/07. We received approximately 800 self-certifications by the deadline. We also received 120 return-to-compliance plans by the deadline (an on-time filing rate of approximately 80%). We targeted non-filers with phone calls and Notices of Alleged Violation, and were able to get many owners to submit self-certifications by April. We were left with only 28 facilities that did not submit self-certifications and who were not responsive to our requests (a participation rate of approximately 98%). These facilities were inspected over the next few months, and failure to submit a self-certification was added to any violations found.

The second round of self-certifications was due on 12/31/08. We received 851 self-certifications and 20 return-to-compliance plans by the deadline (an on-time filing rate of approximately 78%). Through phone calls and Notices of Alleged Violation we were able to get all but 8 owners to file self-certifications (a participation rate of approximately 99%).

3. Compliance Inspections

In April and May 2008, we conducted our first round of 100 post-certification compliance inspections. The facilities were randomly selected from the entire group of permitted facilities to ensure statistical validity. Of the 100 facilities inspected, only 16 were found to be out of compliance with one or more UST indicators. Multi-media inspections were not conducted (see Implementation Decisions, p. 6) and therefore there is no comparison to baseline indicators for Vapor Recovery (Stage I and II), Underground Injection Control, or Hazardous Waste.

In April, May and June of 2009, we conducted a second round of 100 compliance inspections. The facilities were randomly selected from the entire group of permitted facilities to ensure statistical validity. Of the 100 facilities inspected, nineteen were found to be out of compliance with one or more UST indicator. As was the case in 2008, multi-media inspections were not conducted.

4. Compliance Results

The compliance rate for the first round (08) for UST indicators of 84% was an increase of 16% from the baseline compliance rate. The compliance rate was very simply calculated by noting the number of Notices of Alleged Violations written to facilities in the randomly selected group of 100. The compliance rate for the second round (09) for UST indicators of 81% is a slight decrease, but still considerably higher than the baseline rate.

The compliance results for each measurement point (05, 07, and 08), using the results analyzer tool developed by Cadmus, is attached as Appendix VI.

The compliance rate for the other programs included in our ERP was not calculated. However, we can report that in 2008, 5 facilities contacted the Underground Injection Control program and registered their floor drains (another 6 facilities contacted the program and determined their drains were not subject to registration), and 153 facilities contacted the Hazardous Waste program and obtained permanent facility ID numbers. These results can be largely attributed to the self-certification program, as there were no outreach/education programs launched by either program during 2007.

Our ultimate goal for UST sector compliance is high; a 90% or greater compliance rate. For this project, our compliance goal was very modest; we were simply seeking a measurable increase in the compliance rate with the UST program indicators, and increased awareness of the other program requirements. We are therefore extremely pleased with the 13-16% increase in compliance with UST program indicators. We hope that the compliance rate stays consistently high in coming years.

We did not attempt to correlate the increase in compliance to a decrease in the number of releases, air emissions, or hazardous waste generation. This was because of the other factors that can contribute to these issues (age of tanks, amount of fuel sold, customer-related spills and releases), and the difficulty in relating specific data to individual facilities (e.g. when an owner/operator aggregates waste from multiple facilities into a single shipment).

We did not attempt to measure the accuracy of self-certifications due to lack of resources. UST inspectors routinely review self-certification submittals to determine if they are accurate prior to an inspection. However, that means approximately 60% of the certifications filed electronically are not reviewed (all paper submittals are reviewed by staff during data entry). The design of the on-line self-certification served (to a large extent) to minimize the submittal of erroneous data.

A serendipitous result of this project is the use of the self-certification information in our permit program. The self-certification submittals have become a useful tool for reviewing compliance and confirming equipment installed prior to a five year permit being reissued.

5. Issues

i. Energy Act 2005 – The number of inspections required by the Energy Act of 2005 has resulted in a difference in the VT facility population in 2007 compared to 2005 in terms of familiarity with the UST program requirements. The industry in 2005 had been exposed to almost 20 years of low inspection frequency (<100 inspections per year). By 12/31/07, we had met the Energy Act requirement to inspect all facilities that had not been inspected since 12/31/1998, and begun working on the annual inspection of one-third of our regulated facilities. This amounted to 934 inspections conducted after the baseline inspections were completed. This greatly increased exposure to compliance requirements has undoubtedly had an impact on the compliance rate; however, we have not been able to determine exactly how much of an effect it has had.

ii. . On-line filing – We were extremely pleased by the on-line filing rate for the first year. Approximately 85% filed on-line the first year; that number increased to over 90% for the second year.

iii. Getting the Word Out – We utilized email, newsletters, speaking to industry groups, and speaking to owners/operators during inspections to spread the word about this coming change in the UST compliance world. Despite these efforts, there were still owners/operators who had no idea of the requirement to self-inspect and self-certify. To try to address this issue, all facilities that did not submit self-certifications were inspected in 2008. Owners/operators were informed when scheduling the inspection that the failure to self-certify was the reason for the inspection.

iv. Future Plans – The ERP is proceeding essentially unchanged from 2007. We anticipate that analysis of the program in the future will lead to minor changes (workbook and checklist editing perhaps), but do not anticipate anything major. Factors which could influence future changes in the program include: whether ERP projects for USTs will reduce the number of inspections that must be conducted annually; and a sustained high level of compliance could result in reducing the frequency of self-certification.

v. Owner/Operator Reaction – Despite the significant increase in the amount of time UST owners/operators had to put into compliance operations due to the self-certification, we did not hear a lot of negative comments about the program. There were a certain amount of negative comments, but they seemed to be off-set by many positive comments about how the program educated owners/operators about their systems. In addition, we received the following endorsement of the program from Amy Norris, Compliance Manager for RL Vallee (one of the larger petroleum operations in the state):

As we began the Self-Certification process we were overwhelmed with the number of hours needed to complete this extensive program. Having said that, I must say that it has been a great value to us in increasing our understanding of the regulations, evaluating our equipment and installations, and fixing many small issues that in the long term could have become bigger problems.

6. Going Forward

As of this time, we are very satisfied with the results of the ERP. The first-year filing-rate and on-line certifications both exceeded our expectations, and the number of return-to-compliance plans was lower than we expected. In addition, our follow-up to non-reporters (through issuance of Notices of Alleged Violations and targeted inspections) reduced our number of non-certifiers from 28 to 8 from the first to second round. Our plans are to continue the program on into the future on an annual basis without major change in the program. Our commitment to continuing the program is demonstrated by

the fact that the self-certification is in our UST Rules. We have the full support from our Administration for this program, and support from industry as well.

There are a number of items that have been raised that may be considered for change in the future:

1. **Self-Certification Submittal Rate:** if the compliance rate improves to 90% or more and remains there over several cycles we may consider reducing the self-certification burden to less than every year. Similarly, if meeting the requirements of the Energy Act and running the ERP becomes more of a work load than our resources can bear, we may reduce the certification frequency. Changes to the Energy Act could also trigger changes in the certification frequency.
2. **Multi-Program Focus:** the Department may decide to add or remove programs to the self-certification. This may be in reaction to changes in law or rule, changes in the industry sector (for example, many gas stations are no longer offering vehicle service, which reduces the applicability of hazardous waste and underground injection control rules), or reduction or shifts in resources that would preclude the use of the data generated by the program.

7. Recommendations

Our strongest recommendation to other regulatory agencies implementing ERP is to be sure the IT systems and resources are capable of meeting and developing the data collection, storage, and analysis needs. The problem of inadequate IT resources is the main reason this project was extended so far beyond the original timeline.

We also strongly recommend that any agency thinking of implementing ERP reach out very early to the regulated industry and establish a strong working relationship. We feel that our early and frequent outreach to industry helped to identify and correct or modify implementation issues, and our willingness to work with industry and be flexible helped get the self-certification program written into our rules and established without opposition. Agencies looking to implement an ERP might want to consider industry sectors that both need an alternative regulatory approach and have a good working relationship with the agency.

8. Financial Report

VT DEC did not prepare a detailed financial report for this project due to lack of staff resources both within the UST Program and the DEC Business Office. Within the ERP Grant, the only problem arose with the resignation of the IT specialist hired for our project. This necessitated moving funds from the “personnel” line item to the “contractual” line item. This was a minor issue and did not change the bottom line.

- APPENDIX I. UST Newsletter
- APPENDIX II. Postcard
- APPENDIX III. Monthly Email
- APPENDIX IV. Workbook
- APPENDIX V. Forms Booklet
- APPENDIX VI. Compliance Results