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## Executive Summary



Three words summarize the results of the last three years: growing green together. The program has more participants, more environmental results, and has increased the value of participating in the program. As a program designed to learn and continually improve, participants, stakeholders and the Department have found that there is still much more to do to measure performance, to more fully utilize charters and increase participation to reach an even broader audience. The current recognition that "sustainability" is no longer a little-known concept, and has risen to become a fundamental part of growth strategies, poises Green Tier to contribute to the tidal wave of interest in sustainability. No place is better to build upon the lessons learned than right here in Wisconsin where concern for the environment is a part of who we are. Green Tier is a tool to help brand us and pull us together as a community of interest. The pages in this report are replete with examples of the union between environmental and economic performance.

Green Tier is about strengthening the capacity of participants and "growing" the economy through green recovery and sustained green performance. The growth in participants has been modest since the 2007 report but impressive in the breadth of participation. The work of over 30,000 employees is impacted by Green Tier in sectors ranging from Agriculture to High Technology manufacturing. Over 70 percent of the participants in the program did not have formal environmental management systems at the time they joined. Now those same organizations are carefully and systematically managing their environmental performance every day. As they do, they are finding that there is a direct impact on the bottom line --whether as a result of not pumping 4.5 million gallons of water, or as a result of saving 6.5 million kilowatt hours of electricity. Our homes and offices are going to be greener based on formal commitments from an impressive cadre of builders and developers such as The Boldt Company, Casaloma Development Corporation and Veridian Homes, LLC, leading the way to build green. There is real interest in growing the Green Tier program as DNR and participants alike look for strategies to also grow business markets and competitiveness, all the while watching and improving the environmental bottom line.

"Green" is a word that participants work very hard to define. Some are just getting started and taking some basic steps to minimize environmental impacts. Others are pushing the envelope with solutions that teach about the power of "0", with zero water discharge at Winsert, Inc. and zero plastic production waste landfilled at two Phillips Plastics Corporation facilities. The participants also have internalized that 'green' means making our natural environment more sustainable, such as American Transmission Company's work to protect endangered species, Serigraph, Inc.'s work to protect and restore natural habitats and many companies' encouragement of environmental performance by employees both at work and at home. To

many of the participants, 'green' means leading the way on key environmental issues as their goals address concerns like climate change and water quality. There is still a need for more and better information about the performance of all participants, relative to the rest of the state and other industries. There is still a need to use the information about performance to help guide conversations with participants and focus the application of the department's limited staff resources. However, there is evidence that the participants' commitments are broad and ongoing, forming the foundation for continual environmental improvement in Wisconsin.

"Together" is the part that has proven to be really, really fun. Dialogue between the DNR and participants is taking place on levels not previously expected and collaboration is taking place in ways that assures the total outcome will be greater than the sum of the individual parts. While still in the early stages, the Dairy Business Association Charter is developing strategies for whole farm environmental management, and the Mercury Charter is bringing municipalities together to get results ahead of DNR's compliance deadlines and beyond environmental requirements.

Reauthorization, individual participant relations and Green Tier Advantage have also been points that we have come together. Reauthorization of the law has been a rewarding journey as Advisors, Legislators, stakeholders and the Department come together to take the next bold step in performance-based environmental and economic performance management. The Department continues to improve our relationships with participants and communities. Work continues to make the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) a fundamental strength of the program. Our desire to grow that function is always tempered by the need to meet other competing demands. Finally, the Green Tier Advantage conference annually convenes participants, applicants, government, non-government organizations, and others, to share knowledge, experiences, strategies, and techniques about achieving superior environmental performance. It also shows us where and how the program can grow. Further enhancing our relationships will be a particular focus for the next two years.

The Department is grateful for the willingness of all participants to grow green together. We appreciate the confidence of the Legislature and the governor in providing us a legal foundation for the growth and the engagement of stakeholders who, while strapped for time and resources, find ever better ways to meet environmental challenges. Green Tier has and will continue to present challenges as we all learn how to build an effective, adaptive management model that compliments the bedrock commitment to environmental protection. The learning is something that we still eagerly embrace with the patience and commitment of our partners. We look forward to the accomplishments and achievements that are sure to come in the next two years of the program.

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## Conclusion

### **Program**

DNR continues to work with the legislature, the Green Tier Advisors, participants and interested stakeholders to find ways to improve the program. Reauthorization would add certainty, greater efficiency and new tools to produce superior environmental and economic performance. With existing participants, work continues to publicize their successes, explore effective ways to brand superior performers, share effective strategies to create a healthy, green bottom line and proactively work with participants to create competitive advantage in a global market place with global environmental problems. Over the course of the coming years, a concerted effort will be made to discover how the tools in Green Tier can be used to not only address key environmental problems, but also to determine how to best make contributions to a green economic recovery.

### **Participants**

Invariably the question arises, "How many are participating in the program and at what levels?" In the first five years of the program, the Department has taken deliberate steps to draw in participants interested in forming new, better working relationships. Participants are those willing to earnestly explore the creation of superior environmental and economic performance. To learn about the variety of capabilities that can be brought to bear on economic and environmental growth, the participants range from 3 to over 30,000 employees, cover all the geographic areas of the state, and the breadth of business, government, non-governmental organizations and individuals. More can and will be done to bring participation to scale, create

new metrics for better comparisons of results and share the effective environmental and economic strategies. DNR has learned that there is no magic number for the size of participants.

### **Results**

Participants are making and meeting commitments. That can be seen in the summarized information from the participants contained in this report. The results can be experienced in greater depth by visiting their individual websites. The comparative information has presented a greater challenge. With the range of participants being so great, there has not been a common base of information that allows the effective comparison of performance with those that are not participating in the program. Data limitations notwithstanding, new ways to approach the gathering of information and the development of comparative information will be undertaken. With the pilot program we were able to have common data, common participants and consistent participation over time. With Green Tier, the participants are routinely changing, data on many is quite limited and there isn't the same longitudinal consistency. While making the task more difficult, there are still approaches to be tried over the course of the upcoming years. Hopefully the work will help us focus on environmental issues, effectively share environmental results and help others learn to use efficient techniques for monitoring performance.