



2003 Annual Report

Wisconsin's Small Business Environmental Council

Who Are We?

- Small Business Environmental Council
- Began meeting in 1994
- One of three components of the Small Business Clean Air Assistance Program administered by Department of Commerce
- Authorized under s. 507 of the Clean Air Act Amendments and implemented under s. 560.11, Wisconsin Statutes
- Nine members appointed for three year terms by either the majority and minority leaders of State Assembly and Senate, the Governor, and the Secretary of Commerce and DNR
- Members represent small business owners and the public

How Are We Funded?

- Program receives no federal funding
- Supported by state air permit fees for expenses

What Are Our Responsibilities?

- Meet regularly to discuss environmental issues affecting small businesses in Wisconsin
- Review and comment on the effectiveness of information and assistance provided to small business by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR)
- Comment on whether information is understandable to laypersons
- Review new regulations to see if they meet the Regulatory Paperwork Reduction Act criteria
- Convey difficulties encountered by small businesses trying to comply with regulations

2002 HIGHLIGHTS:

Regulatory Input

The council continued its support of the Green Tier Legislation in 2003. Council Chair, Mike Simpson, testified at a Senate Environmental and Natural Resources Committee hearing in support of Green Tier as proposed in SB 61. The Green Tier program will be very important for small businesses as they look for ways to meet and exceed their environmental requirements.

A Small Business Regulatory Reform Bill, also known as SB 100, was drafted into legislation from recommendations provided by the 2002 Regulatory Reform Task Force. The council continued to support the recommendations educating fellow small businesses on the proposed legislation. The council believes that regulatory reform by fostering the success of small businesses in Wisconsin, while also enhancing environmental performance is critical to all of us.

Business Concerns

Small Businesses are effected by governmental policies. On a daily basis, these policies are discussed, without the input of small businesses sitting at the table. A council member continued to serve on the National Compliance Advisory Panel (NCAP), which provided a voice for Wisconsin small business concerns with federal policy developers.

Council members commented on a number of WDNR Air Permit Streamlining Initiatives. The council commends the WDNR for its efforts in making the regulatory process more simplified for small businesses, while maintaining environmental standards.

Smaller businesses never before regulated by state or federal agencies were impacted by the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. Steps have been taken to address the concerns of small businesses as regulations are created, promulgated and enforced.

The Wisconsin Small Business Environmental Council, a component of the state's Small Business Clean Air Assistance Program, provides a chance for small business owners to speak out. Appointed by the Governor, State Assembly and Senate, council members comment on the fairness and effectiveness of WDNR and EPA regulations pertaining to small businesses.

The Small Business Environmental Council provides a forum for rule makers to gain information on the impact rules have on smaller businesses. Many groups have come to value the opinions of the Council.

SMALL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

EVERY PROGRAM A PARTNERSHIP

Our Membership:

Council members want to assist other small businesses by acting as mentors. Based on their different experiences in dealing with environmental regulations, they can offer advice or refer a business to resources to help them find their way.

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Each Small Business Assistance Program is comprised of three parts:

- A technical assistance component to provide the detailed help that small businesses need.
- An ombudsman to advocate on behalf of small businesses within the regulatory environment.
- A Compliance Assistance Panel made up of small business owners and representatives to consult and advise on program content.

Other WI programs with which we build working partnerships include:

- Trade Associations
- UW Extension Solid and Hazardous Waste Education
- Small Business Development Centers
- Other state and local agencies

Members reach out to other business organizations to share information about environmental programs and services.

The council has at its disposal new tools to reach a wider audience that needs to hear about the types of regulatory assistance available to small businesses in Wisconsin. Council members can disseminate an Environmental Information Packet upon request, which includes fact sheets and contact information that is very useful to new businesses unsure of their regulatory obligations. A press release is under construction that will help council members provide information to local media outlets and reach new or existing businesses that require assistance in their area.

Find out what is going on with the WI Small Business Environmental Council by visiting www.wienvirohelp.com, contacting CleanAir@commerce.state.wi.us or calling 1-800-HELP BUSINESS (1-800-435-7287).