

The Business Case for Green Tier

Realizing Business Value in Regulatory Innovation

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In the past, Wisconsin companies have had little incentive to improve their environmental performance beyond minimum legal requirements. The Green Tier program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), uses a system of contracts and charters to shift the focus away from regulatory minimums and forge a link between superior environmental performance and economic gain.

Building on the experience of innovative regulatory programs, Green Tier encourages all companies, large or small, to think creatively about ways they can improve environmental performance while boosting productivity, cutting costs and growing their business. Designed to recognize and reward outstanding environmental performance, Green Tier offers responsible companies the chance to modify their existing environmental programs in a manner that makes good business and environmental sense.

Results: Under a Green-Tier Related Pilot Program, one company developed a proposal to re-burn coal ash which dramatically reduced the ash being sent to landfills, provided a new energy source, saved over 300 railroad cars of coal, and helped reduce overall costs in less than two years.

Are There Economic Benefits?

Green Tier provisions allow participating companies and the DNR to tailor innovative, cooperative programs specific to the companies' particular operations and needs. The second level of Green Tier, available to top environmental performers, provides companies and DNR the ability to negotiate unique contracts that can offer measurable economic benefits to the company and related community.

Permit & Decision Streamlining

Green Tier has the potential to reduce the turn-around time on permits and other DNR decisions, reducing internal environmental staff effort, legal counsel and consultant costs.

Forward Thinking

The program encourages businesses to find ways they can improve environmental performance while generating economic gain. This could include managing supply chains, anticipating international demands, and getting necessary regulatory approval to secure required capital.

Permit Exemptions

In certain circumstances Green Tier can allow permit exemptions broader than those allowable under traditional regulations. Under a related pilot program, DNR was able to exempt one major facility from construction permit requirements, provided certain air emissions were not exceeded.

Innovative Technical Solutions

Green Tier encourages companies to develop innovative environmental and production solutions that have long-term economic and environmental benefits.

Testing & Installation of New Technologies

Green Tier enables permit exemptions and easier approval for the testing and installation of new technologies, especially for those that conserve energy or reduce emissions.

More Efficient Monitoring, Record-keeping & Reporting

Facilities with strong compliance records and well-managed environmental programs can negotiate with DNR for more practical and effective monitoring and reporting procedures.

The actual business value offered by Green Tier, measured in simple economic terms, will vary according to each business and their imagination. Wisconsin's businesses have the capacity to make Green Tier a huge success.

What is the Intangible Value?

Companies participating in Green Tier have the potential to generate a wide range of measurable economic and environmental returns. Participants are also likely to realize intangible benefits such as:

Regulatory Recognition

The DNR will publicly recognize Green Tier participants.

Employee Pride

Facilities that participate in innovative programs like Green Tier often see an increased level of employee pride. Employees often develop a sense of ownership in environmental activities and the business in general.

Branding

Superior environmental performance through Green Tier can be used to help support a company's brand equity.

Improved Agency Relations

Green Tier participation can improve communication between companies and the DNR and provide a greater appreciation of mutual goals.