



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
LANSING



STEVEN E. CHESTER
DIRECTOR

April 24, 2007

The Honorable John D. Dingell
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Dingell:

As Director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), I am pleased to support the National Compliance Advisory Panel's initiative to promote multimedia environmental assistance to small businesses. I encourage federal legislation authorizing the states' Small Business Assistance Programs (SBAP) to assist small businesses not only with compliance with air quality requirements, but also with their water and waste management regulatory needs. Further, I strongly encourage the reallocation of federal funding to ensure adequate monies are available to support comprehensive Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs (SBEAPs).

In Michigan, we have achieved considerable success providing clean air assistance as a result of the creation of a small business clean air ombudsman, compliance advisory panel, and assistance program as mandated by Section 507 of the federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. Acknowledging that small businesses need help not only on air regulations, but also with waste management, water quality, storage tanks, and emergency planning, the MDEQ has been providing assistance on all environmental regulations since the inception of the Section 507 SBAP in 1995.


Throughout the years, both the business community and the general public have come to rely on the environmental assistance that is offered through the MDEQ's SBEAP. Its impact is highlighted in the following accomplishments:

- To date, the MDEQ's environmental assistance programs have served more than 10,000 businesses, 250 agribusinesses, 200 state parks and local recreation areas, and 30 universities and community colleges. These services include pollution prevention, compliance and financial assistance, educational training events, community assistance, and public recognition through voluntary environmental incentive programs.
- More than 574 businesses, municipalities, academic, recreational, and nonprofit organizations currently participate in the SBEAP's voluntary environmental partnership and stewardship programs.
- The MDEQ's Environmental Assistance Center, a toll-free referral service for environmental concerns, responded to 26,250 business and general public telephone inquiries in Fiscal Year 2006, and more than 350,000 since its inception in 1995.

- The SBEAP has developed and delivered more than 50 training events in Fiscal Year 2006, servicing more than 4,000 individuals from the business, municipal, nonprofit, and academic sectors. One of the reasons these events are so well attended is that the trainers are often front-line staff responsible for implementing the regulations. This gives affected regulated entities the opportunity to interact directly with the staff that has formerly been perceived as unattainable through layers of government.
- The SBEAP continually develops and edits "plain-English" publications designed to take the mystery out of compliance. With more than 250 guidance documents and publications in circulation, businesses have many resources available to use toward improving their compliance.

Understanding that these are difficult fiscal times for the state of Michigan and its citizens and businesses, we ask you to give the MDEQ's SBEAP your greatest consideration and support. Please contact Ms. Amy A. Butler, Division Chief, Environmental Science and Services Division, at 517-241-0490, if you would like more details on the MDEQ's SBEAP, or you may contact me.

Sincerely,



Steven E. Chester
Director
517-373-7917

cc: Mr. Barry Cargill, Chair, Michigan Compliance Advisory Panel
Mr. Dan Beattie, Office of the Governor – Michigan
Ms. Susan Holben, Clean Air Ombudsman, Michigan Economic Development Corporation
Mr. Stanley F. Pruss, Deputy Director, MDEQ
Mr. Jim Sygo, Deputy Director, MDEQ
Ms. JoAnn Merrick, Senior Executive Assistant to the Director, MDEQ
Ms. Amy A. Butler, MDEQ