

## Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs

In 1990, Section 507 of the Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA) required states to develop programs to help small businesses comply with air quality regulations. These state programs are required to have three components that work together to help small businesses improve their environmental performance:

- A Small Business Ombudsman (SBO)
- A Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP)
- A Compliance Advisory Panel (CAP)

### SBO

An advocate who understands the needs of small business, and ensures that the state agency considers the views and needs of small business.

### SBEAP

Provides detailed technical assistance, publications, and tools to help small businesses comply with environmental regulations.

### CAP

Advisory panel composed of small business owners and representatives appointed by state governors and legislatures to consult and advise on SBEAP program content.

### Value of the Programs

Complying with complex environmental regulations can be expensive and time consuming, especially for small businesses who have limited resources and lack dedicated environmental staff. SBEAPs provide a critical resource to help these companies comply with regulations and improve their environmental performance. SBEAPs develop “plain language” guides and tools, provide training, and even help small businesses complete required permit applications. This helps businesses to cost-effectively stay in compliance. Some SBEAPs focus solely on air regulations while others provide multi-media assistance in areas such as waste and water. SBOs understand the needs of small business and work to ensure that regulatory agencies consider small business concerns. As small business owners the CAPs serve an important advisory role to the SBEAP.

### Location of Programs

SBEAPs and SBOs can be found in a variety of places. The majority of these programs are located in state environmental agencies, while some are in state Commerce/Economic agencies, and others are part of a university program, or with a Small Business Development Center.

### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Small Business Ombudsman

The EPA SBO function was established under section 507 of the CAAA to represent small business interests in the Agency to ensure that the concerns of small business are considered during rulemaking. The EPA SBO supports the state 507 programs to build the most effective programs possible through information sharing, networking, and training. The SBO is located in the Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) and also functions as the Asbestos Ombudsman (ASBO). The EPA also provides technical guidance for the use of the states and territories in the implementation of their programs. The Federal SBEAP is coordinated by the Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards (OAQPS).

### Resources

The Small Business Environmental Home Page at [www.smallbiz-enviroweb.org](http://www.smallbiz-enviroweb.org) has information about the Clean Air Act, state programs and more. The EPA ASBO has more information at [www.epa.gov/sbo](http://www.epa.gov/sbo).



## National Steering Committee (NSC)

State SBO/SBEAP programs created a National Steering Committee (NSC) to encourage communication between the state programs and EPA. The NSC's work has expanded to other areas to promote information sharing, technical education, and program improvement. To help in this effort the NSC formed subcommittees.

### Technical – Air

**Mission:** To review technical air issues and rulemakings that impact small business and consequently, the Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs and to represent the interests of small businesses in EPA's rulemakings, policy decisions, and guidance development.

**Chairs:** Dan Nickey, Iowa Waste Reduction Center and Barb Johnson, Kansas State University

**Future Plans:** The subcommittee will continue to follow air rules as they become final and as amendments are made, as well as provide input to the Small Business Administration on its Regulatory Review and Reform effort. Tools for outreach and ongoing technical air updates will be provided to all SBEAPs.

### Technical – Water

**Mission:** To review technical water issues and rulemakings that impact small business and consequently, the Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs and to represent the interests of small businesses in EPA's rulemakings, policy decisions, and guidance development.

**Chairs:** Alison Beumer, Indiana Department of Environmental Management and Michelle Bost, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

**Future Plans:** The subcommittee will be working on the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the application of pesticides to waters of the U.S.

### Technical – Waste

**Mission:** To look at technical waste issues and rulemakings that impact small business and consequently, the Small Business Environmental Assistance Programs and to represent the interests of small businesses in EPA's rulemakings, policy decisions, and guidance development.

**Chair:** Judy Mirro, Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

**Future Plans:** The subcommittee will be working on the proposed solvent contaminated industrial wipe rule and waste identification/generator status issues.

### Awards

**Mission:** To identify awards that might be given in recognition for achievements within the state 507 programs, including the small businesses they serve, and trade associations representing small business to promote visibility for the services the programs provide.

**Chair:** Phyllis Copeland, South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control

**Future Plans:** The awards committee will seek opportunities to nominate our programs on local, state, and national levels.

### Measurement- Promotional

**Mission:** To work cooperatively to improve SBEAP measurement information, training, and resources, and respond to SBEAP measurement needs in a timely manner as well as to promote the activities of and exposure to the state SBEAPs. (In February 2011, the measurement subcommittee was merged with the promotional subcommittee to better achieve integrated goals for sharing program successes.)

**Chair:** Julie Churchill, Maine Department of Environmental Protection

**Future Plans:** Subcommittee efforts will include 1) identifying outcome measures for data gathering as a supplement to the Annual Reporting Form, 2) developing a tracking tool to assist with annual reporting, 3) working on national advertising, trade association outreach, funding opportunities, and state program promotional activities, and 4) working cooperatively with other subcommittees to incorporate measurement and promotional issues.

### Climate Change

**Mission:** To work together to better understand the issues related to small business compliance with greenhouse gas/climate change legislation, work to influence GHG policy that may directly affect small businesses, and to assist these businesses in understanding and complying with GHG regulations/policy through guidance materials and other resources.

**Chair:** Terry Polen, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection

**Future Plans:** The subcommittee will continue to monitor and report on climate change legislation, and will work to create programmatic documents that will assist the 507 programs in their mission to support the businesses of the nation.

