



**WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE AUDIT BUREAU
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL**

April 5, 2000

Senator Gary R. George and
Representative Carol Kelso, Co-chairpersons
Joint Legislative Audit Committee
State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Dear Senator George and Representative Kelso:

We have completed a review of the Environmental Cooperation Pilot Program, which was established by 1997 Wisconsin Act 27. The program, operated by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), is intended to provide increased flexibility for facilities in complying with environmental regulations, while maintaining existing levels of environmental protection. The Legislative Audit Bureau is directed to monitor and report annually on the program.

The program allows DNR to sign cooperative agreements with facility owners and operators. No cooperative agreements were established in the program's first two years. However, in March 1999, the Department and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) signed a formal agreement stating that facilities that enter into cooperative agreements will not be subject to different EPA requirements at a later date. DNR staff believe the agreement with the EPA will encourage more facilities to consider developing cooperative agreements. Seven facilities have submitted letters of intent to join the program, and DNR expects to sign two cooperative agreements by the summer of 2000.

Because of the limited activity in the program during its first two years, it is too early to assess its effectiveness. We will, however, continue to monitor it and issue a report in early 2001.

Sincerely,

Janice Mueller
State Auditor

JM/bm

[full report, PDF file \(22KB\)](#)