



Resolution Number 97-4
Approved March 22, 1997
Carefree, Arizona

Renewed
July 13, 2000
By mail vote

Renewed as amended
August 12, 2003
Salt Lake City, UT

Renewed as amended
October 5, 2004
Oklahoma City, OK

As certified by
R. Steven Brown
Executive Director

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

WHEREAS, for over thirty years federal, state, tribes, and local environmental agencies have worked to develop and implement effective regulatory programs to address the growing concerns that face the environmental integrity of our communities, states, tribal lands, and country; and

WHEREAS, the remaining challenges will be even more difficult to address and will require new tools and approaches to complement the regulatory approaches we have relied on; and

WHEREAS, we must address these environmental challenges with the understanding that our resources are not limitless and that most of the organizations we regulate have a stake not only in how we meet these objectives but also share our desire to meet these goals; and

WHEREAS, in response to a heightened awareness of the need to exercise environmental stewardship and respond to new and existing environmental regulations, organizations of all kinds are working to voluntarily develop and implement performance-based environmental management systems (EMSs) to assist them in meeting and exceeding their environmental, regulatory and social responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, these performance-based EMSs share a common purpose of focusing management resources in a proactive manner to identify an organization's potential for environmental impact, understand their regulatory and other environmental and social responsibilities, manage those responsibilities, evaluate and improve performance, and result in continual improvement; and

WHEREAS, there are various EMS models, programs and approaches, including those that are plan-do-check-act based, such as governmental recognition programs, International Standards Organization (ISO) 14001 and Responsible Care Management System[®] (RCMS), that organizations around the world can implement; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for states and the US Environmental Protection Agency to continue to: develop a greater understanding of performance-based EMSs; evaluate the potential of performance-based EMSs to contribute to environmental protection, continual improvement, and prevention of pollution to reduce risk;

and develop and implement programs that create incentives for the development and implementation of performance-based EMSs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Environmental Council of the States:

Affirms that appropriately designed and implemented performance-based EMSs offer significant potential to improve an entity's environmental performance and ability to implement pollution prevention and reduce risk;

Supports the voluntary implementation of EMSs that help organizations achieve their environmental and social obligations and environmental performance and compliance goals;

Supports governmental regulatory agencies developing an understanding of the necessary elements, benefits and costs of performance-based EMSs through the implementation of pilot programs, which include measurement components and continuous environmental improvement goals;

Recognizes the value of EMSs to support national, state, tribal and local environmental objectives;

Agrees that environmental regulatory agencies should continue to evaluate the performance of various EMSs, including ISO 14001 and RCMS, in order to develop an understanding of EMSs appropriate relationship to regulatory programs and the potential for an EMS to address this country's environmental problems in a holistic and cross media manner;

Supports finding ways to improve, modify and apply EMSs to meet the needs of the regulated community, especially those related to local governments, small businesses and sector-based initiatives; and

Requests the US Environmental Protection Agency continue and broaden its recognition of voluntarily implemented EMSs, continue to support state programs that encourage the development of EMSs, and strive to develop more significant and powerful incentives for voluntary EMSs through regulatory flexibility and programmatic innovations.