

details on assessing, developing, implementing, and sustaining a viable management program.

All aspects of a management program are covered, including public education and participation, planning, performance criteria, site evaluation, design, construction, operation and maintenance, residuals management, training and certification/licensing, inspections/monitoring, corrective actions, record keeping/reporting, and financial assistance. To address these elements of comprehensive management programs, the Management Handbook will include the following:

- Public awareness and education tools
- Case studies of management programs
- Options for inventories
- Funding examples
- Model codes and ordinances
- Examples of septage management

The primary audience for the Management Handbook are state, tribal and local regulators and community officials that are responsible for regulating onsite and clustered systems.

Onsite and clustered wastewater treatment systems currently serve about 25 percent of U.S. homes and approximately 33 percent of new development. The vast majority of these systems are conventional onsite wastewater treatment systems (septic systems). States report that these wastewater treatment systems have failed because of inappropriate siting or design or inadequate long-term maintenance and that septic tank systems constitute the third most common source of ground water contamination. Historically high failure rates in some areas indicate a need for better management of these systems to protect public health and water quality. When onsite and clustered wastewater treatment systems are properly managed, they may, in many cases, be the most practical and least expensive way to treat household wastewater.

In April, 1997, EPA prepared its "Response to Congress on the Use of Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems." The report concluded that decentralized wastewater treatment technologies offer a cost-effective, long term wastewater treatment solution for many communities. However, the report emphasized that decentralized technologies must be implemented in the context of a responsible management program to consistently achieve water quality and public health goals. The report identified the current lack of management as a barrier to successfully applying these otherwise promising technologies.

In response to the need for improved management, EPA prepared a concept paper in the spring of 1999, which received considerable input from various stakeholders, including other federal agencies, state health agencies, environmental groups, trade associations and public interest groups. Based on comments received, EPA developed the draft Management Guidelines which were published in October 2000, along with an annotated outline of this draft handbook. Comments were once again solicited, resulting in the final Management Guidelines and this draft Management Handbook.

Dated: March 18, 2003.

G. Tracy Mehan, III,

Assistant Administrator, Office of Water.

[FR Doc. 03-7505 Filed 3-27-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL-7474-4]

Voluntary National Guidelines for Management of Onsite and Clustered (Decentralized) Wastewater Treatment Systems

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is making available the final *Voluntary National Guidelines for Management of Onsite and Clustered (Decentralized) Wastewater Treatment Systems* (referred to here as the Management Guidelines). The purpose of the Management Guidelines is to improve the level of performance of decentralized wastewater treatment systems nationally through improved management programs. The Management Guidelines will help improve system performance by raising the quality of management programs, establishing minimum levels of activity, and institutionalizing the concept of management. Implementation of the Management Guidelines will also provide a greater range of options for cost-effectively meeting wastewater treatment needs and meeting water quality and public health goals. The primary audience for the Management Guidelines are state, tribal and local regulators and community officials that are responsible for regulating onsite and clustered systems.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Any questions regarding the content of the

Voluntary National Guidelines for Management of Onsite and Clustered (Decentralized) Wastewater Treatment Systems can be addressed to Joyce Hudson by e-mail at hudson.joyce@epa.gov or via U.S. mail to Joyce Hudson, U.S. EPA, Office of Wastewater Management (4204M), 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20460.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Decentralized wastewater treatment systems (commonly referred to as septic systems, private sewage systems, individual sewage systems, onsite sewage disposal systems or package plants) include onsite and clustered systems used to collect, treat, and disperse or reclaim wastewater from individual dwellings, businesses, or small communities and service areas. State agencies report that some of these systems have failed because of inappropriate siting or design or inadequate long-term maintenance. Historically high failure rates in some areas indicate a need for better management of these systems to protect public health and water quality. However, when onsite and clustered wastewater treatment systems are properly managed, they may, in many cases, be the most practical and least expensive way to treat household wastewater. In response to the need for improved management programs, EPA has developed the Management Guidelines to establish a benchmark for effective management. The purpose of the Management Guidelines is to raise the level of performance of onsite and clustered wastewater treatment systems through improved management programs. The Management Guidelines will be supplemented with a handbook for state, tribal, and local governments to use in upgrading management programs. The draft *Handbook for Management of Onsite and Clustered (Decentralized) Wastewater Treatment Systems* is being published elsewhere in today's **Federal Register** for public comment.

The Management Guidelines present a set of five model programs based on a comprehensive approach that relies on coordinating the responsibilities and actions among the state, tribal or local regulatory agency, the management entity or service provider and the system owner. The level of management needed increases as the sensitivity of the environment and/or the degree of technological complexity increases. A program's designation increases progressively from Model Program 1 through Model Program 5, reflecting the increased level of management activities

needed to achieve increasing water quality and public health goals.

Adoption of the Management Guidelines is voluntary, however, EPA encourages states and communities to consider them as a basis for improving their onsite and clustered wastewater management program.

The guidelines apply to both existing communities and to areas of new development that use onsite and clustered wastewater treatment systems of any size for residential and commercial wastewater treatment and dispersal.

Background. Onsite and clustered wastewater treatment systems currently serve about 25 percent of U.S. homes and approximately 33 percent of new development. States report that these wastewater treatment systems have failed because of inappropriate siting or design or inadequate long-term maintenance and that septic tank systems constitute the third most common source of ground water contamination.

In April, 1997, EPA prepared its *Response to Congress on the Use of Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems*. The report concluded that decentralized wastewater treatment technologies offer a cost-effective, long term wastewater solution for many communities. However, the report emphasized that decentralized technologies must be implemented in the context of a responsible management program to consistently achieve water quality and public health goals. The report identified the current lack of management as a barrier to successfully applying these otherwise promising technologies.

In response to the need for improved management, EPA prepared a concept paper in the spring of 1999, which received considerable input from various stakeholders, including other federal agencies, state health agencies, environmental groups, trade associations and public interest groups. The result was a notice of availability of the draft *Guidelines for Management of Onsite/Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems* which was published in the **Federal Register** on October 6, 2000 (65 FR 59840–59841) for public comment and included an annotated outline of an accompanying manual/handbook. During follow up outreach efforts conducted by EPA, stakeholders raised several key issues concerning the voluntary nature of the Guidelines, their flexibility, and possible implementation issues. EPA has addressed those issues and has received support from representatives of public and private organizations who

believe national guidelines are important.

You can get copies of the Management Guidelines by downloading the document at <http://www.epa.gov/owm/mtb/decent/>. Hard copies may be obtained from USEPA Publications Clearing House, PO Box 42419, Cincinnati, OH 45242. You may access this **Federal Register** notice electronically through the EPA Internet under the **Federal Register** listings at <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/>.

Dated: March 18, 2003.

G. Tracy Mehan, III,

Assistant Administrator, Office of Water.

[FR Doc. 03–7506 Filed 3–27–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL–7474–8]

Proposed Administrative Cost Recovery Agreement under CERCLA Section 122(h) for Recovery of Past Costs at the Sealand Restoration Superfund Site, Lisbon, St. Lawrence County, NY

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency.

ACTION: Notice; request for public comment.

SUMMARY: In accordance with section 122(i) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, as amended (“CERCLA”), 42 U.S.C. 9622(i), notice is hereby given of a proposed administrative settlement, entered into pursuant to section 122(h) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. 9622(h), for recovery of past response costs concerning the Sealand Restoration Superfund Site (“Site”) located in Lisbon, St. Lawrence County, New York. The settlement is between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) and the General Motors Corporation (“GMC”). The settlement requires GMC to pay \$430,000.00 to EPA, in reimbursement of past response costs incurred with respect to the Site. The settlement includes a covenant not to sue the settling party pursuant to section 107(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. 9607(a), for all costs that EPA or the U.S. Department of Justice on behalf of EPA paid at or in connection with the Site through September 30, 2002. For thirty (30) days following the date of publication of this notice, EPA will receive written comments relating to the settlement. EPA will consider all comments received and may modify or

withdraw its consent to the settlement if comments received disclose facts or considerations that indicate that the proposed settlement is inappropriate, improper, or inadequate. EPA’s response to any comments received will be available for public inspection at the EPA, Region 2, 290 Broadway, New York, New York 10007–1866.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before April 28, 2003.

ADDRESSES: The proposed settlement is available for public inspection at the United States Environmental Protection Agency, 290 Broadway, New York, New York 10007–1866. A copy of the proposed settlement may be obtained from James Doyle, Assistant Regional Counsel, Office of Regional Counsel, New York/Caribbean Superfund Branch, EPA, Region 2, 290 Broadway, 17th Floor, New York, New York 10007–1866. Comments should reference the Sealand Restoration Superfund Site located in Lisbon, St. Lawrence County, New York. Requests for a copy of the agreement should reference Docket No. CERCLA–02–2003–2007. Any comments or requests should be addressed to James Doyle at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: James Doyle, Assistant Regional Counsel, Office of Regional Counsel, New York/Caribbean Superfund Branch, EPA, Region 2, 290 Broadway, 17th Floor, New York, New York 10007–1866. Telephone: (212) 637–3165.

Dated: March 14, 2003.

William J. Muszynski,

Deputy Regional Administrator, United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region II.

[FR Doc. 03–7508 Filed 3–27–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL: 7474–7]

Proposed Covenant Not To Sue Under CERCLA Section 122(h) Contained in Administrative Order on Consent, Index No. CERCLA–02–2002–2025, Shenandoah Road Groundwater Contamination Superfund Site, East Fishkill, Dutchess County, NY

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency.

ACTION: Notice; request for public comment.

SUMMARY: In accordance with section 122(i) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, as amended (“CERCLA”), 42