U.S. Environmental Protection Agency/Environmental Compliance History Online (ECHO) Notify Service: National Association of Clean Air Agencies Comments



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The National Association of Clean Air Agencies ("NACAA") submitted November 30th comments to the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") in response to the federal agency's request for feedback on the Environmental Compliance History Online ("ECHO") Notify tool.

NACAA describes itself as the national, non-partisan, nonprofit association of 153 air pollution control agencies including 33 states, the District of Columbia, 115 metropolitan areas, and four territories.

EPA developed ECHO a number of years ago to provide integrated compliance and enforcement information for what it estimates are one million regulated facilities in the United States.

The ECHO features include enforcement and compliance data such as:

- Air emissions
- Surface water discharges
- Hazardous waste
- Drinking water systems

Included are EPA, state, local and tribal environmental agency compliance/enforcement records. An ECHO user can obtain information on facility permit data, inspection dates and findings, violations, enforcement actions and assessed penalties.

ECHO is typically accessed by:

- Citizen groups
- Non-governmental organizations
- Reporters
- Regulated entities
- Academic researchers
- EPA and state/local/tribal environmental agencies
- Other federal government agencies

The November 30th NACAA comments address what are described as the "ECHO Notify Service." It is described as a personalized notification service allowing ECHO system users to sign up to receive a weekly

notification of newly identified notices for the various environmental programs. EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance is stated to provide NACAA agencies the ability to communicate:

. . . with the public about how they are protected from pollution and how those who commit violations are held accountable.

NACAA statements on the service include:

- Despite a positive experience, some NACAA members reported significant problems needing to immediately "reinstall" it
- Complaints about settings being reset each time a user logs in
- Requests that the installation of a "Frequently Asked Questions" document or troubleshooting guide be offered
- Potential of incorrectly categorizing actions, notices, consensual settlement agreements, and administrative orders because EPA's use of technical terms of art may differ from state and local agencies
- Clearer explanation for the terms "addressed" and "resolved"
- The Data Dictionary should be more consistently shown on all the pages of the service

A copy of the comments can be downloaded here.