Hazardous Waste Program Authorization Issues: Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials Report

Walter Wright, Jr.
wwright@mwlaw.com
(501) 688.8839

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Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials ("ASTSWMO") issued a February 2026 report titled:

Hazardous Waste Program Authorization Issues Report ("Report").

ASTSWMO describes the organization as:

… representing the 50 States, 5 Territories and the District of Columbia whose mission is to enhance and promote effective State and Territorial programs and to affect relevant national policies for waste and materials management, environmentally sustainable practices, and environmental restoration.

The Report initially notes that Resource Conservation and Recovery Act ("RCRA") State Authorization program establishes the framework by which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") delegates primary responsibility for implementing the federal hazardous waste program to States and Territories. It is further initially noted:

- The process ensures national regulatory consistency while allowing states to address local environmental protection priorities.
- The authorization process is also resource-intensive, time-consuming, and subject to various inconsistencies that create challenges for both States and EPA.

Arkansas has operated (been delegated) the RCRA program since the 1980's.

The Report was prepared by the ASTSWMO Rulemaking & Authorization Task Force under the Hazardous Waste Subcommittee. Jarrod Zweifel of the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment – Division of Environmental Quality Office of Land is a Region 6 Representative of the Task Force.

The stated purpose of the Report is to document the challenges and identify potential improvements in this process.

Surveys were conducted in 2023 and 2024 of states across all ten EPA regions. They are stated to have collected both quantitative and qualitative data addressing:

- Staffing.
- Authorization timelines.
- Communication practices.

- Program documentation.
- Overall efficiency of the authorization process.

Nearly all states surveyed are stated to have responded.

The key findings addressed include:

- Staffing.
- Authorization Timelines.
- Process Inefficiencies.
- Program Descriptions.
- Communication Practices.

The Report notes as one of the "impacts" the cumulative effect of these inefficiencies is that most States are not current with federal hazardous waste rule adoption or authorization. Specifically, at the time of the surveys:

- Approximately 30% of states reported being current with federal rule adoption.
- 22% were fully authorized for all adopted rules.

Recommendations in the Report include:

- Streamline and Standardize Processes: Expand use of Lean authorization processes across all EPA regions, standardize authorization package content, and shorten review timelines.
- Program Description Reform: Develop nationally consistent, simplified approaches to PDs and update model documents to reflect program revision application content rather than initial authorization requirements.
- Enhance Communication: Promote best practices for early draft reviews, improve transparency around contractor use, and consider modern digital platforms for document exchange and tracking.
- Continue Training: The Task Force encourages EPA to continue regular training to help States develop and maintain expertise.

A copy of the Report can be found here.