

FROM THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

DEQ issued this news release 12/16/99:

Virginia signs pollution prevention agreement with metal finishing industry

RICHMOND, VA. - Virginia joined the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Hampton Roads Sanitation District Commission and representatives of the metal finishing industry in signing a unique agreement today that will lead to pollution reductions while providing greater flexibility in meeting environmental requirements.

Dennis H. Treacy, Director of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, signed the agreement on behalf of the Commonwealth. "This is a constructive step forward in Virginia's cooperative efforts to improve environmental protection," Treacy said. "When government agencies work as partners with business, industry and involved citizens, we have many more opportunities to prevent pollution - and this is an excellent example of an effective partnership."

"This agreement will produce a win-win situation where everyone benefits," said John Paul Woodley, Jr., Secretary of Natural Resources. "These types of opportunities and outcomes are not easy to identify and produce. I congratulate all the partners that made this effective new agreement a reality."

The agreement is part of a national program developed by EPA that encourages industries to make voluntary commitments to reduce the release of contaminants to the environment. The role of the state and EPA is to develop regulatory flexibility that enables a facility to take cost-effective steps in meeting pollution prevention goals. For example, in some cases, environmental permits may be modified to streamline the reduction of toxic releases.

With today's agreement, state and federal agencies will work with HRSD and participating metal finishers to significantly reduce metal contamination of wastewater. Additional facilities are welcome to join the program at any time, Treacy said.

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