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**EPA Helps Local Governments Use Innovative Tools to
Address Environmental Challenges**

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Environmental management systems (EMS) are a well established tool to help local governments prevent pollution, operate more efficiently and improve environmental performance within their communities. Since 1997, EPA has helped local entities establish EMS that include effective environmental policies and measurable goals for reducing impacts on the environment. Mayor Douglas Palmer of Trenton, N.J., who co-chairs the National Conference of Mayor Urban Watershed Council said, "Introducing EMS as a tool reduces costs and improves government efficiency in addition to preserving environmental quality, making it a 'must do' for mayors and their staff and programs."

The agency has been working with local governments and others to help understand the benefits of an EMS and assist those that choose to put one in place. EPA in cooperation with the Global Environment and Technology Foundation has worked with more than 30 local governments around the country to reduce operating costs, improve their compliance and significantly reduce environmental impacts in the community. In the first year of implementing an EMS, the city of San Diego's Solid Waste Division was able to reduce air emissions from heavy equipment more than \$800,000.

EPA is also leading a program to work with non-profit organizations, called EMS Local Resource Centers, to help increase the number of local governments that adopt EMS. These centers provide a range of services to local governments including education, training, workshops and guidance. There are 11 local resource centers around the country, including four new centers recently designated by EPA. These newly designated centers are located at the University of Missouri-Rolla, Kansas State University, the University of Colorado, and EcoVenture in Oakland, Calif. Each of these local resource centers is playing an important national leadership role by helping local governments operate in a more environmentally and economically sound manner and provides more efficient services for taxpayers in their communities. Information about EMS and the new centers is available at:

<http://www.peercenter.net> .