be made following the 30 day period for public comment and will result in a New Jersey State prohibition of any sewage discharges from vessels in Manasquan River.

Comments and views regarding this petition and EPA's tentative determination may be filed on or before April 13, 1998. Comments or requests for information or copies of the applicant's petition should be addressed to Walter E. Andrews, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region II, Water Programs Branch, 290 Broadway, 24th Floor, New York, New York, 10007–1866. Telephone: (212) 637-3880.

Dated: February 19, 1998.

William J. Muszynski,

Acting Regional Administrator.

[FR Doc. 98–6382 Filed 3–11–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL–5976–7]

New Jersey State Prohibition on Marine Discharges of Vessel Sewage; Receipt of Petition and Tentative Determination

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice.

Notice is hereby given that a petition was received from the State of New Jersey on September 3, 1997, requesting a determination by the Regional Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, pursuant to section 312(f) of Public Law 92–500, as amended by Public Law 95–217 and Public Law 100–4 (the Clean Water Act), that adequate facilities for the safe and sanitary removal and treatment of sewage from all vessels are reasonably available for the navigable waters of the Shark River, Monmouth County, State of New Jersey.

This petition was made by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) in cooperation with Monmouth County and the Shark River Roundtable. Upon receipt of an affirmative determination in response to this petition, NJDEP would completely prohibit the discharge of sewage, whether treated or not, from any vessel in the Shark River in accordance with section 312(f)(3) of the Clean Water Act and 40 CFR 140.4(a).

The Shark River, located in central New Jersey, has its headwaters in Tinton Falls and flows into its estuary of approximately 810 acres. The estuary is surrounded by the towns of Avon-by-the-Sea, the Borough of Belmar, Neptune City, Neptune Township and Wall Township. The river empties into the Atlantic Ocean via the Shark River Inlet. The Shark River drains a watershed area of 23 square miles. The proposed No-Discharge Zone would include all navigable waters in the Shark River beginning at the Shark River Inlet.

Information submitted by the State of New Jersey, the Monmouth County, and the Shark River Roundtable states that there are two existing pumpout facilities available and two portable toilet dump stations to service vessels which use the Shark River. Belmar Municipal Marine Basin, located at 900 Marine Avenue, Belmar, operates a stationary pumpout and a dump station for portable toilets. The pumpout and dump station are available at all hours and are operated by the marina staff from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m or by the boater at all other hours. Main One Marina, located at 1 Main Street, Avon, operates a stationary pumpout and a portable toilet dump station. The pumpout and dump station are available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and are operated by marina staff. Total Marine at Seaview, located at 120 Sea Spray Lane, Neptune, operates a stationary pumpout which serves boats docked at the marina only. The pumpout is available on demand. This facility was not included in the assessment of adequacy of pumpouts available to the boating population since 90% of the vessels are excluded from its use.

Four facilities are proposing to construct additional pumpout facilities (one each). Shark River Hills Marina, Shark River Hills Beach and Yacht Club, Shark River Yacht Club and Belmar Municipal Marina have applied for Clean Vessel Act grants to fund the installation of pumpout facilities. All existing and proposed pumpout facilities are located in areas where six feet mean low water depth is avalable. No vessels will be excluded from use of the pumpouts due to draft restrictions.

Vessel waste generated from the pump-out facilities in Wall Township and the Borough of Belmar is conveyed to the South Monmouth Regional Sewage Authority (NJPDES Permit No. NJ0024520). Vessel waste generated from the pump-out facilities in Avon, Neptune City and Neptune Township is conveyed to the Neptune Township Sewage Authority (NJPDES Permit No. NJ0024872). These plants operate under permits issued by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

According to the State's petition, the maximum daily vessel population for the Shark River is approximately 1183 vessels. This estimate is based on (1) vessels docked at marinas and yacht clubs (882 vessels), (2) vessels docked at non-marina facilities (129 vessels) and (3) transient vessels (172 vessels). The vessel population based on length is 872 vessels less than 26 feet in length, 263 vessels between 26 feet and 40 feet in length and 48 vessels greater than 40 feet in length. Based on number and size of boats, and using various methods to estimate the number of holding tanks, it is estimated that 1 to 2 pumpouts are needed for the Shark River.

The EPA hereby makes a tentative affirmative determination that adequate facilities for the safe and sanitary removal and treatment of sewage from all vessels are reasonably available for the Shark River in the County of Monmouth, New Jersey. A final determination on this matter will be made following the 30 day period for public comment and will result in a New Jersey State prohibition of any sewage discharges from vessels in the Shark River.

Comments and views regarding this petition and EPA's tentative determination may be filed on or before April 13, 1998. Comments or requests for information or copies of the applicant's petition should be addressed to Walter E. Andrews, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region II, Water Programs Branch, 290 Broadway, 24th Floor, New York, New York, 10007–1866. Telephone: (212) 637–3880.

Dated: February 19, 1998.

William J. Musynski,

Acting Regional Administrator.

[FR Doc. 98–6388 Filed 3–11–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[FRL–5976–6]

EPA Position Statement on Environmental Management Systems and ISO 14001 and a Request for Comments on the Nature of the Data To Be Collected From Environmental Management System/ISO 14001 Pilots

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency.

ACTION: Position statement; request for comment on information gathering.

SUMMARY: This document communicates the EPA's position regarding Environmental Management Systems (EMSs), including those based on the International Organization for

Standardization (ISO) 14001 standard. This document also describes the evaluative stage EPA is entering concerning EMSs. Further, it solicits comments on proposed categories of information to be collected from a variety of sources that will provide data for a public policy evaluation of EMSs.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Office of Reinvention—EMS, Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M St., SW, mail code 1803, Washington, D.C. 20460, Telephone: (202) 260–4261. E-mail: reinvention@epamail.epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

A diverse group of organizations, associations, private corporations and governments has been developing and implementing various EMS frameworks for the past thirty years. For example, the Chemical Manufacturers Association created its own framework called Responsible Care. In addition, the French, Irish, Dutch, and Spanish governments developed their own voluntary EMS standards.

The possibility that these diverse EMS frameworks could result in barriers to international trade led to a heightened interest in formulating an international voluntary standard for EMSs. To that end, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), consisting of representatives from industry, government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other entities, finalized the ISO 14001 EMS standard in September 1996. The intent of this standard is to produce a single framework for EMSs, which can accommodate varied applications all over the world. ISO 14001 is unique among the ISO 14000 standards because it can be objectively audited against for internal evaluation purposes or for purposes of self-declaration or third-party certification of the system.

EPA participation in the development of voluntary standards, including the ISO 14000 series of standards, is consistent with the goals reflected in section 12(d) of the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995 (NTTAA) (Pub. L. No. 104–113, s. 12(d), 15 U.S.C. 272 note). The NTTAA requires federal agencies to use voluntary consensus standards in certain activities as a means of carrying out policy objectives or other activities determined by the agencies, unless the use of these standards would be inconsistent with applicable law or otherwise impractical. In addition, agencies must participate in the development of voluntary standards when such participation is in the public interest and is compatible with an agency's mission, authority, priority, and budget resources. Agency participation in the development of EMS voluntary standards does not necessarily connote EPA's agreement with, or endorsement of, such voluntary standards.

On December 16, 1997, EPA Deputy Administrator Fred Hansen asked EPA's newly chartered Office of Reinvention ''to take lead responsibility for policy coordination of all EMS pilots, programs, and communications.'' (Full text of memo available at www.epa.gov/reinvent.) This notice initiates the Office of Reinvention's effort to ensure public input in that endeavor.

II. Statement

Implementation of an EMS has the potential to improve an organization's environmental performance and compliance with regulatory requirements. EPA supports and will help promote the development and use of EMSs, including those based on the ISO 14001 standard, that help an organization achieve its environmental obligations and broader environmental performance goals. In doing so, EPA will work closely with all key stakeholders, especially our partners in the States.

EPA encourages the use of EMSs that focus on improved environmental performance and compliance as well as source reduction (pollution prevention) and system performance. EPA supports efforts to develop quality data on the performance of any EMS to determine the extent to which the system can help bring about improvements in these areas. EPA also encourages organizations that develop EMSs to do so through an open and inclusive process with relevant stakeholders, and to maintain accountability for the performance outcomes of their EMSs through measurable objectives and targets. EPA encourages organizations to make information on the actual performance of their environmental management systems available to the public and governmental agencies. In addition, through initiatives such as Project XL and the Environmental Leadership Program, EPA is encouraging the testing of EMSs to achieve superior environmental performance. At this time, EPA is not basing any regulatory incentives solely on the use of EMSs, or certification to ISO 14001.

The Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) Council issued on June 12, 1997, a resolution (#97–05) signed by EPA Deputy Administrator Fred Hansen on behalf of the United States concerning ''future cooperation regarding environmental management systems and compliance.'' The CEC Council was formed pursuant to the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation, an environmental side agreement to the North American Free Trade Agreement, and is comprised of the environmental ministers for Canada, Mexico and the United States. The declarative and directive paragraphs of the Council's resolution #97–05 read as follows:

The Council * * * Declares That:
Governments must retain the primary role in establishing environmental standards and verifying and enforcing compliance with laws and regulations. Strong and effective governmental programs to enforce environmental laws and regulations are essential to ensure the protection of public health and the environment. Voluntary compliance programs and initiatives developed by governments can supplement strong and effective enforcement of environmental laws and regulations, can encourage mutual trust between regulated entities and government, and can facilitate the achievement of common environmental protection goals; Private voluntary efforts, such as adoption of Environmental Management Systems (EMSs) such as those based on the International Organization on Standardization's Specification Standard 14001 (ISO 14001), may also foster improved environmental compliance and sound environmental management and performance. ISO 14001 is not, however, a performance standard. Adoption of an EMS pursuant to ISO 14001 does not constitute or guarantee compliance with legal requirements and will not in any way prevent the governments from taking enforcement actions where appropriate;

Hereby Directs:
The Working Group to explore (1) the relationship between the ISO 14000 series and other voluntary EMSs to government programs to enforce, verify and promote compliance with environmental laws and regulations, and (2) opportunities to exchange information and develop cooperative positions regarding the role and effect of EMSs on compliance and other environmental performance. The Working Group shall, no later than the 1998 Council Session, report its results to the Council and provide recommendations for future cooperative action in this area. The review and recommendations shall recognize and respect each Party's domestic requirements and sovereignty.

III. Evaluative Phase

EPA is working in partnership with a number of states to explore the utility of EMSs, especially those based substantially on ISO 14001, in public policy innovation. The goal of this partnership is to gather credible and compatible information of known quality adequate to address key public policy issues. The primary mechanism

to generate this information will be pilot projects. Valid, compatible data from other sources will also be used whenever possible. To make efficient use of resources, and to ensure more robust research, EPA and states will work together on the creation of a common data base. The data base will be open and usable, while recognizing the need to insure the appropriate level of confidentiality for participants.

A group of federal and state officials involved in EMS pilot projects have been working together to set up a common national database of information gathered through the pilot projects. As part of that process, EPA and states are developing a series of data protocols which provide instructions and survey instruments to guide the actual collection of data for the data base. That document will be available at http://www.epa.gov/reinvent.

This document will serve to solicit comments on the categories of information to be collected. From the following general categories of information (and possibly others), EPA and participating states will develop the above mentioned protocols.

The following categories are designed to provide a general idea as to the types of information that EPA believes should be collected to evaluate the effectiveness of EMSs from the perspective of regulators. EPA further believes that collection of data in all categories will allow the fullest understanding and evaluation of the benefits of an EMS. The data categories which appear in this document were, to the extent possible, developed around the kinds of data we believe will or could be generated by an ISO 14001 EMS.

1. Environmental Performance

The impact a facility has on the environment is of paramount importance to regulators' assessment of EMSs. Thus, it is critical to measure any change in a facility's environmental performance that might be attributable to implementation of an EMs. Information would be collected as to the types, amounts, and properties of pollutants that are released to air, surface water, groundwater, or the land. Information on these pollutants would need to be normalized to a facility's production levels. Information relating to recycling, reuse, and energy requirements could also be included. This inquiry could include both regulated and non-regulated pollutants.

2. Compliance

Implementation of an EMS has the potential to improve an organization's environmental compliance with regulatory requirements. The goal of collecting compliance information is to be able to measure the relationship between an EMs and compliance with local, state and federal environmental regulations. The types of data to be collected would include: information on whether the facility has a recent history of regulatory violations; the number, and seriousness of the violations; how quickly violations were discovered and corrected; and measurements of any changes in regulatory compliance status.

3. Pollution Prevention

Pollution prevention is a significant goal for both federal and state regulators. Therefore, better understanding the relationship between an organization's overall performance and the role of pollution prevention in the organization's EMs is important to regulators. In the federal context, pollution prevention is defined as ''* * * any practice which—(l) reduces the amount of any hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant entering any waste stream, or otherwise released into the environment (including fugitive emissions) prior to recycling, treatment, or disposal; and (ii) reduces the hazards to public health and the environment associated with the release of such substances, pollutants, or contaminants.'' [1] This definition will likely serve as a basis for helping an organization identify measures that it might have taken towards pollution prevention. Data collected would include a description of the type of pollution prevention and source reduction techniques used, including good operating practices, inventory control, spill and leak prevention, raw material modification/substitution, process modification, and product reformulation or redesign.

4. Environmental Conditions

In order to understand the impact of an EMs on the environment, it is necessary to know something about the status of the ambient environment surrounding the facility prior to implementation of an EMS. An analysis of this nature will not only help regulators evaluate EMs, it should also help facility mangers prioritize their environmental aspects and shape the policies and objectives of their EMSs. Environmental conditions data will assist all parties in determining the sustainability of certain human activities from an environmental, economic and social perspective. It is difficult, of course, to collect accurate and comparable information about environmental conditions. The time and expense needed for a facility to collect and report such data could be prohibitive. Also, the selection of an appropriate geographic focus—local, regional, or global—will be challenging. One way to minimize this burden would be to utilize available governmental or other surveys (e.g., the 1990 U.S. Census, hydrogeologic reports). Nevertheless, to the degree that these obstacles can be overcome, the analysis conducted by federal and state regulators will benefit.

5. Costs/Benefits to Impelementing Facilities

There has been much speculation and assertion about the relative costs and benefits associated with the implementation of an EMS. Data collected in this category should help provide answers to questions concerning possible net financial benefits that might accompany improved compliance and increased environmental performance, or that might result from being able to achieve compliance in less costly ways. The data may also shed light on the costs associated with higher levels of environmental performance. It is important to recognize some of the limitations inherent in traditional approaches to cost/benefit analysis. To address these limitations, organizations could be encouraged to identify intangible costs and benefits associated with the implementation of an EMS, even if they are difficult to quantify. Also, a list of usually ''hidden'' costs and benefits could be used to help organizations identify and understand costs and benefits that are traditionally overlooked.

6. Stakeholder Participation and Confidence

Community participation has become an increasingly important component of federal and state efforts to increase environmental performance and protect human health. Both federal and state regulators are interested in understanding the involvement of local communities and other stakeholders in the EMS process. Data could be collected to assess the amount and degree of stakeholder participation in both the development and implementation of an organization's EMS, or the effect that such participation has on the public credibility of the facility's EMS implementation.

More information concerning the pilot projects as well as other federal, state and international initiatives relating to

[1] Pollution Prevention Act of 1990 Section 6603, 42 U.S.C. 13102 (1990).

EMSs and ISO 14000 can be found in the ISO 14000 Resource Directory (copies can be obtained through EPA's Pollution Prevention Information Clearinghouse at 202–260–1023, e-mail: ppic@epamail.epa.gov).

Dated: March 6, 1998.

Fred Hansen,

Deputy Administrator.

[FR Doc. 98–6389 Filed 3–11–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–M

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[OPP–00526; FRL–5777–9]

Pesticides and A National Strategy for Health Care Providers; Open Meetings

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: A coalition of Federal agencies has initiated a national effort to improve the education and training of health professionals in the prevention and management of health problems associated with pesticide related illness and injury. This initiative is sponsored by EPA, in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Labor. The first national workshop for this effort will be held on April 23-24, 1998, in Arlington, VA. This notice announces the location and times for the meetings. The meetings are open to the public.

DATES: The meetings will be held on Thursday, April 23, 1998, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday, April 24, 1998, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meetings will be held at: Sheraton National Hotel, Columbia Pike and Washington Boulevard, Arlington, VA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: By mail: Kevin Keaney or Ameesha Mehta, Field Operations Division (7506C), Office of Pesticide Programs, Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M St., SW., Washington, DC 20460. Telephone number: (703) 305–7666, Fax number: (703) 308–2962, E-mail: mehta.ameesha@epamail.epa.gov.

List of Subjects

Environmental protection.

Dated: March 6, 1998.

Anne E. Lindsay,

Director, Field and External Affairs Division, Office of Pesticide Programs.

[FR Doc. 98–6384 Filed 3–11–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560–50–F

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

Sunshine Act Meeting

FEDERAL REGISTER NUMBER: 5827.

PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED DATE AND TIME:

Tuesday, March 10, 1998, 10:00 a.m.
Meeting closed to the public.
This meeting was canceled.

DATE & TIME: Tuesday, March 17, 1998 at 10:00 a.m.

PLACE: 999 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

STATUS: This meeting will be closed to the public.

ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED:

Compliance matters pursuant to 2 U.S.C. § 437g.
Audits conducted pursuant to 2 U.S.C. § 437g, § 438(b), and Title 26, U.S.C.
Matters concerning participation in civil actions or proceedings or arbitration.
Internal personnel rules and procedures or matters affecting a particular employee.

PERSON TO CONTACT FOR INFORMATION: Mr. Ron Harris, Press Officer, Telephone: (202) 219–4155.

Marjorie W. Emmons,

Secretary of the Commission.

[FR Doc. 98–6477 Filed 3–9–98; 5:01 pm]

BILLING CODE 6715–01–M

FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

Formations of, Acquisitions by, and Mergers of Bank Holding Companies

The companies listed in this notice have applied to the Board for approval, pursuant to the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956 (12 U.S.C. 1841 *et seq.*) (BHC Act), Regulation Y (12 CFR Part 225), and all other applicable statutes and regulations to become a bank holding company and/or to acquire the assets or the ownership of, control of, or the power to vote shares of a bank or bank holding company and all of the banks and nonbanking companies owned by the bank holding company, including the companies listed below.

The applications listed below, as well as other related filings required by the Board, are available for immediate inspection at the Federal Reserve Bank indicated. The application also will be available for inspection at the offices of the Board of Governors. Interested persons may express their views in writing on the standards enumerated in the BHC Act (12 U.S.C. 1842(c)). If the proposal also involves the acquisition of a nonbanking company, the review also includes whether the acquisition of the nonbanking company complies with the standards in section 4 of the BHC Act. Unless otherwise noted, nonbanking activities will be conducted throughout the United States.

Unless otherwise noted, comments regarding each of these applications must be received at the Reserve Bank indicated or the offices of the Board of Governors not later than April 6, 1998.

A. Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond (A. Linwood Gill III, Assistant Vice President) 701 East Byrd Street, Richmond, Virginia 23261–4528:

1. BOC Financial Corp., Landis, North Carolina; to become a bank holding company by acquiring 100 percent of the voting shares of Bank of the Carolinas, the proposed successor by charter conversion to Landis Savings Bank, SSB, Landis, North Carolina.

B. Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago (Philip Jackson, Applications Officer) 230 South LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois 60690–1413:

1. First Neighborhood Bancshares, Inc., Employee Stock Ownership Plan, Toledo, Illinois, to become a bank holding company by acquiring 31.19 percent of the voting shares of First Neighborhood Bancshares, Inc., Toledo, Illinois, and Greenup National Corporation, Greenup, Illinois, and thereby indirectly acquire First State Bank of Newman, Newman, Illinois, The First National Bank in Toledo, Toledo, Illinois, and The Greenup National Bank, Greenup, Illinois.

C. Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis (Randall C. Sumner, Vice President) 411 Locust Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63102–2034:

1. S & C Holdings, Inc., Memphis, Tennessee; to become a bank holding company by acquiring 100 percent of the voting shares of Independent Bank (in organization), Memphis, Tennessee.

Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, March 9, 1998.

Jennifer J. Johnson,

Deputy Secretary of the Board.

[FR Doc. 98–6379 Filed 3–11–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6210–01–F

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary

Statement of Organization, Functions and Delegation of Authority

Part A (Office of the Secretary), Chapter AE (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (OASPE)), of the Statement of Organization, Functions and Delegation of Authority for the Department of Health and Human Services (most