

### 3. By Hand Delivery or Courier.

Deliver your comments to the location provided in Unit I.A.1, Attention Docket ID No. OEI-2003-0028. Such deliveries are only accepted during the Docket's normal hours of operation as identified in Unit I.A.1.

4. *By Facsimile.* Fax your comments to: (202) 566-1753, Attention Docket ID. No. OEI-2003-0028.

### C. What Should I Consider as I Prepare My Comments for EPA?

You may find the following suggestions helpful for preparing your comments:

1. Explain your views as clearly as possible.
2. Describe any assumptions that you used.
3. Provide any technical information and/or data you used that support your views.
4. If you estimate potential burden or costs, explain how you arrived at your estimate.
5. Provide specific examples to illustrate your concerns.
6. Offer alternatives.
7. Make sure to submit your comments by the comment period deadline identified.
8. To ensure proper receipt by EPA, identify the appropriate docket identification number in the subject line on the first page of your response. It would also be helpful if you provided the name, date, and **Federal Register** citation related to your comments.

## II. Background: Environmental Data Standards Council

Data sharing has become an increasingly important aspect of sound environmental management. States, Tribes, and EPA together face the critical challenge of sharing information among themselves and with their respective stakeholders and public. Fundamental to the seamless exchange of data are data standards. Data standards help improve the ability of partners (internal and external) to exchange data efficiently and accurately, and also assist secondary users of data to understand, interpret, and use data appropriately. Recognition of the need for EPA, States and Tribes to develop and agree upon data standards for environmental information sharing has lead to the creation of the EDSC. Data standards are documented agreements on formats and definitions of data elements. The EDSC agrees to develop data standards only when there is a strong environmental management business reason that would benefit from establishing a consistency in information exchanged.

These draft standards were delivered to the EDSC and approved for publication in the **Federal Register** for a 45-day public comment period. After the comment period announced in this Notice is complete, the EDSC and its Action Teams will review comments received and make appropriate modifications. The EDSC will then consider approval of these data standards as appropriate. EDSC approval does not bind an individual agency to using a standard. It will be up to the individual or programs to determine if, when, and how it might use a standard developed under the auspices of the EDSC. It is the intent of EPA to adopt and implement the consistent use of EDSC-approved standards in its information systems and programs.

## III. Background of Draft Data Standards

### A. Draft Data Standard Permit Related Information

The EDSC is proposing to adopt a revision to the original Permitting Data Standard that was approved in April 2002. The original exchange standard for permit related information identified those data elements that are generally believed to be universally applicable to the identification and tracking of permits. While standard terms, definitions and formats for these types of data were needed, it was subsequently recognized that other information that is also common to multiple permitting programs exists and should be included in the same standard rather than duplicate similar information in separate data standards. As a result, the revised draft permitting data standard incorporates the original permitting data standard and extends the original scope to include information germane to multiple permitting programs.

The draft Permitting Information Data Standard consists of data elements from the original Permit Data Standard organized by the categories or data blocks: Permit Identification, Permitted Feature, and Permit Administration. The revised draft standard also includes data elements under the data blocks: Facility/Feature Characteristic, Control Methodology, Permit Condition, Reporting Condition, and Monitoring Condition. These additional data blocks provide data elements that can be used to describe the functional aspects of a facility or feature, as well as the constraints imposed by a permit including any monitoring or reporting requirements. The Action Team determined that additional permit

related information will likely require program-specific permit standards.

### B. Draft Federal Facility Identification Data Standard

The EDSC is proposing a Data Standard for the identification of facilities that are owned or operated, or were owned or operated, by the Federal Government. This draft Federal Facility Identification Data Standard builds on the Facility Identification Data Standard by focusing on identification issues for a specific type of facility.

Several EPA offices have specific programs that focus on issues related to Federal facilities. Other EPA programs use naming conventions to identify Federal facilities separately from other types of facilities. The reporting forms for certain EPA programs include data elements that ask facilities to indicate whether they are owned or operated by the Federal government.

Federal facilities are a diverse class, having functions that typically are different from other privately owned and operated facilities, thus potentially posing unique types of environmental concerns. Federal facilities conduct activities ranging from launching space shuttles to managing national parks. Tracking ownership or operation of a site over time is also important because certain former Federal sites can have legacy issues, such as spent munitions at former Department of Defense sites.

The Draft Federal Facility Identification Data Standard includes the three categories of data elements, or data blocks: Federal Facility Identification Information; Federal Facility Ownership and/or Operation Information; and Federal Facility Responsible Party Information. The Federal Facility Ownership and/or Operation Information category provides a means of indicating the present ownership or operation of a facility that once was a Federal facility. An example is a local airport that formerly was an Air Force base. The Federal Facility Responsible Party Information category provides standardized naming conventions for the Federal agencies that own or operate a particular Federal facility and for the classification of the ownership/operation of a Federal facility.

An ancillary, but supportive goal, of the Draft Federal Facility Identification Data Standard is to serve as a guide for identifying facilities owned or operated by non-Federal governments, such as States, tribes, counties or municipalities. States and tribes may choose to adopt the permissible values and follow similar naming conventions