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PROJECT SUMMARY

The Combined Air Emissions Reporting (CAER) project seeks to streamline the way industry reports air emissions to meet EPA, state, local, and tribal program requirements.

The CAER System (CAERS) is an electronic reporting tool that allows facilities to report to more than one program via a single data submission.

PROJECT LEADS

Marc Houyoux
U.S. EPA Office of Air Quality
Planning and Standards
houyoux.marc@epa.gov

Todd Parfitt
Wyoming Department of Environmental
Quality
todd.parfitt@wyo.gov

KEY CONTACTS

Julia Gamas
U.S. EPA Office of Air Quality
Planning and Standards
gamas.julia@epa.gov

Tammy Manning
North Carolina Department of
Environmental Quality
tammy.manning@ncdenr.gov

Stacy Knapp
Maine Department of Environmental
Protection
stacy.r.knapp@maine.gov

COMBINED AIR EMISSIONS REPORTING (CAER)

Streamlining air emissions reporting

Challenge

Various federal, state, local, and tribal programs require industry to report air pollutant emissions to separate systems at different times of the year. These systems include the National Emissions Inventory (NEI), the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI), the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program (GHGRP), the Compliance and Emissions Data Reporting Interface (CEDRI), and partner-specific systems. This leads to duplication of effort for both industry and government. While each program collects different data, some data (specifically, input data) is the same and could be reported just once for use across multiple programs.

The goal of the CAER project is to streamline the way industry reports air emissions to meet EPA and state/local/tribal (SLT) program requirements. The Combined Air Emissions Reporting System (CAERS) is an electronic reporting tool that will eventually allow facilities to report shared data to several programs with a single data submission. Programs with shared data include SLT reporting programs, NEI, TRI, CEDRI, and GHGRP.

Benefits

Combined emissions reporting will reduce redundancy in reporting air emissions and associated facility data, as well as review time for EPA and SLT programs on data quality assurance and data reconciliation among programs. In 2021, facilities will be able to use CAERS to report inventory year 2020 data to support their SLT, NEI, and TRI reporting.

- **Regulated Community:** CAER will reduce the reporting burden for facilities by preventing duplicative efforts across programs and improving both the reporting experience and efficiencies.
- **Public:** CAER will improve data availability, timeliness, transparency, consistency, and quality for users.
- **Regulators:** EPA, states, tribes, and local governments will spend less time reviewing, compiling, and reconciling data, and the most timely and high-quality data will be available to decisions makers.

Accomplishments

CAER partnered with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and 12 of its regulated facilities to develop and pilot the “Common Emissions Form,” now known as the CAER System (CAERS). The Minimum Viable Product of CAERS was released in April 2020 and was used for GA DNR’s 2019 NEI reporting cycle.

CAERS Version 2 deployed March 8th for the NEI 2020 reporting cycle, and is being used for facility reporters in Georgia, and by new SLTs: Washington, D.C. Department of Energy and Environment, Rhode Island Department Of Environmental Management, and the local authorities of Pima, Arizona, and Lincoln-Lancaster, NE. Data reported there are also available for industry use in reporting air emissions to TRI.

CAERS is also currently onboarding new SLTs: some will use CAERS for reporting but will retrieve their database once reporting is complete, others will request workflows between CAERS and their custom reporting systems. Future work includes building out this new functionality with SLTs, as well as designing and building out shared data workflows with CEDRI and GHGRP.

What’s Next?

- Build additional CAERS functionality to meet new NEI program requirements and to refine the data that can be made available to TRI.
- Work with the Compliance and Emissions Data Reporting Interface and the Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program.
- Onboard additional state, local, and tribal partners, including Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, to work with EPA toward adoption of CAERS. Many environmental programs have their own reporting systems, and for those interested, CAERS will focus on how best to integrate their systems.
- Develop several shared services to support CAERS. These services will also be available as stand-alone products for use by state, local, and tribal partners not using CAERS.