

H. CARL McCALL  
STATE COMPTROLLER



A.E. SMITH STATE OFFICE BUILDING  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12236

STATE OF NEW YORK  
**OFFICE OF THE STATE COMPTROLLER**

June 24, 1999

Mr. John P. Cahill  
Commissioner  
Department of Environmental Conservation  
50 Wolf Road  
Albany, NY 12233-1550

Re: Report 99-Y-29

Dear Mr. Cahill:

To assist in your oversight of the Department of Environmental Conservation's (Department) Year 2000 compliance progress, we reviewed selected steps being taken by the Department, as of May 5, 1999, to make the Air Monitoring System (System) Year 2000 compliant. The System was designated a "high priority" system by New York State's Office for Technology (OFT), which is responsible for overseeing the State's Year 2000 readiness. The System is used for collecting and reporting air quality data including air quality alerts. The System also reports air quality data to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to measure compliance with EPA standards.

The steps we selected for review pertained to Year 2000 project planning and management, Year 2000 system testing, identification and correction of system data exchanges, and the establishment of contingency plans for continuing important business and service functions in the event of a Year 2000-related failure.

The objective of our review was to assess whether the Department appears to be taking the necessary steps to address Year 2000 problems related to the System. To complete our review we interviewed Department personnel and reviewed Department documents. In addition, we obtained and analyzed the Department's response to a Year 2000 assessment questionnaire that we designed (see the attached Table). Unlike an audit, a review does not include testing or verification of information and records provided by the Department and does not include a review of internal controls. Therefore, we cannot conclude whether the System will be Year 2000 compliant in a timely manner.

The results of our review show that the Department is taking many of the steps necessary to address Year 2000 problems related to the System. For example:

- Efforts to correct the System are covered by a written Year 2000 project plan, and Department management monitors the efforts.
- All data exchanges with the System have been identified and appropriate correction of data exchanges have been made.
- The Department has taken initial steps to develop a contingency plan. We encourage the Department to continue its contingency planning process.

However, we are concerned that the Department does not have a documented test plan for the System. Forward date testing cannot occur until the application is migrated to a Year 2000 compliant environment, which is scheduled for August 1999. At that time, users will prepare test plans to test both batch and on-line processes with current and future dates. We are concerned that with the migration date so close to the new millennium date, it may not afford the Department sufficient time to address unforeseen events.

Major contributors to this review were Brian Reilly, James Brunt, Deb Spaulding, Jorge Vázquez, and Jerry Steigman.

Your comments to this review are welcome. We wish to express our appreciation to the management and staff of the Department of Environmental Conservation for the courtesies and cooperation extended to our auditors during this review, and hope that it is helpful to your Year 2000 monitoring and oversight responsibilities.

Very truly yours,

Frank J. Houston  
Audit Director

cc: Susanne Peckham  
Henry L. Hamilton  
Gary Davis

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**  
**YEAR 2000 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**AIR MONITORING SYSTEM (SYSTEM)**

**TABLE**

A colored "traffic light" legend is included in the table below to assist management in focusing an appropriate level of attention on the issues identified in the Status and Comments sections of the Review Findings.

**Legend:**

	Status/Comments contain matters which may be of immediate concern to management.		Status/Comments contain matters which management may wish to consider.		Status/Comments do not contain issues which require immediate management consideration.
--	--	--	--	--	---

**Review Findings:**

	<b>YEAR 2000 STEPS</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
	<b>A. PROJECT PLANNING &amp; MANAGEMENT</b>		
	A1. Is there a written Year 2000 Project Plan (Plan) and does it include/identify steps needed to correct the system in question?	Yes	The Department developed a Plan in July 1998. The Plan outlines steps for all phases of the project.
	A2. Does the Plan (or any other available record) define what is meant by "compliance" when describing systems at the agency which are Year 2000 ready?	Yes	The Department's Plan does not define compliance. However, officials stated that they use OFT's definition.
	A3. Is there a written schedule covering the time frame for achieving compliance for the system in question?	Yes	There is a written schedule for remediating the System.
	A4. Is progress toward completion of the schedule for the system in question being monitored?	Yes	Progress was reported monthly to executive staff and quarterly to OFT.

**TABLE (Cont'd.)**

	<b>YEAR 2000 STEPS</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
	A5. Is the system in question meeting the schedule (no significant slippage being reported)?	Yes	The System is on schedule and no significant slippage occurred. As part of the State's Data Center Consolidation effort, the System is scheduled to be migrated to a Year 2000 compliant platform in August 1999. However, we are concerned that with the migration date so close to the millennium date, it may not afford the Department sufficient time to address unforeseen events.
	<b>B. TEST PLANS</b>		
	B1. Is there a documented test plan and does it include/identify steps needed to ensure that the system in question will process as expected after it has been corrected to comply with Year 2000?	No	Program changes have been unit tested by application programmers and users. The remediated system has been in production since April 15, 1999. However, forward date testing cannot occur until the application is migrated to a Year 2000 compliant environment which is scheduled for August 1999. At that time, users will prepare test plans to test both batch and on-line processes with current and future dates.
	<b>C. DATA EXCHANGES</b>		
	C1. Have all data exchange partners/interfaces for the system in question been identified and included on a written inventory record?	Yes	The Department has identified data exchange partners and has documented its Year 2000 solution strategies.
	C2. Have data exchange interfaces been considered in the overall Plan and the test plan covering the system in question?	Yes	The Plan considers data exchange interfaces. Department officials stated that data exchanges will be included in their test plan.
	<b>D. CONTINGENCY PLANS</b>		
	D1. Is there a written business contingency plan in place for the system in question and does the plan specify steps for completing vital business functions if the system in question is noncompliant or inoperable for Year 2000 purposes?	Pending	Management is concerned with the migration of its critical systems to the new data center and is currently working on a contingency plan.