



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUSAN B. SCHLESINGER,
Assistant City Manager for
Community Development

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OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

October 12, 1995

To: Robert Healy, City Manager

From: Susan Schlesinger, Asst. City Manager, CDD

SS

Re: Council Order #28, dated 9/18/95
Proposed changes in environmental regulations

The proposed changes in environmental regulations noted in the July 28th Boston Globe article pertain to industries permitted by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for air emissions, wastewater discharges, and the transport of hazardous waste. Currently, these industries are required to obtain permits from DEP on a regular basis. These permits specify pollutant limits and the technical means by which the discharger must meet these limits. The proposed changes would eliminate the permitting process, and replace it with annual written agreements between DEP and each company specifying the thresholds below which the company will operate; the discharger will be allowed the flexibility to meet these thresholds by whatever technological or process-related means they deem most practical. The company will also be required to certify its compliance with the conditions of the agreement. DEP will conduct environmental audits to ensure compliance. These proposed changes will not alter existing standards or thresholds for pollutant levels.

The changes outlined above will apply only to the majority of industries which have a track record of complying with regulations. Companies which have had compliance problems in the past, and industries with an "annoyance factor" (such as smell and noise) will not be eligible, at least initially, to take advantage of the proposed changes.

DEP is currently developing this new program. A brochure providing additional information on the program is expected to be published within the next few weeks. In January, DEP will be soliciting input from the affected industries to gauge their interest in the program. Next Spring, the proposed changes will be subject to a public comment period before they are expected to become final on July 1st, 1996.

The impact of these proposed changes on businesses in Cambridge is not clear at this time. The changes are generally thought to be beneficial to businesses, because of greater flexibility they allow in meeting pollution thresholds, and because of the simplified permitting procedures. Until more specific information on the program becomes available from DEP, it is unclear how many businesses in Cambridge will be affected by these changes.

The changes discussed above will not affect other permitting or review programs, such as MEPA review or the Wetlands Protection Act, though these programs may be subject to separate streamlining efforts in the future.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

October 30, 1995

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 45, regarding a report on proposed changes in environmental regulations, received from Assistant City Manager for Community Development Susan Schlesinger.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
attachment

Consent Agenda #4

S-
340

RElative to Awaiting Report
Item Number Forty-five, regarding
a report on proposed changes in
environmental regulations.

*for original order
see 1995 City Manager
Requests # 412*

In City Council October 30, 1995

Placed on file