Reinventing the National Emission Inventory (NEI)

The EPA is improving the process for developing the National Emission Inventory (NEI), and the changes mean state, local and tribal governments will have greater access to their data. EPA will also provide feedback to submitters on data quality in days instead of months.

The Emissions Inventory System (EIS) forms the core of the new process. It increases efficiency by automating some of the manual steps used to create and publish the NEI. EPA's goal is to issue a comprehensive, reliable NEI in 18 months instead of the 36 months it takes now.

EPA developed EIS to respond to user requests for greater transparency and efficiency. We worked with state, local, and tribal governments to make sure the new system is easier to use and reflects users' needs. EPA plans to accept emission inventory data through EIS by mid 2009.

Key Features of the EIS

- **More complete tribal data.** The EIS can help incorporate more tribal data in the NEI because it can account for the boundaries of tribal lands within and across counties. In the past the database could only accommodate county boundaries. Tribes will be able to provide detailed information about the geographic boundaries that their emission inventories cover, and states can indicate areas of tribal jurisdiction. EPA can use this information to create a more complete picture of national emissions.

- **Faster, more comprehensive QA.** Robust quality assurance (QA) features in the EIS will allow submitters to get feedback from EPA in days instead of months. The QA for draft data will be the same as the QA for final data, so problems can be identified and fixed earlier. Also, if a portion of a submitter's final emission inventory fails the QA check, only that portion will be rejected; the rest of the data will be accepted and loaded into EIS.

- **Greater transparency.** The EIS will improve transparency of the NEI by making information available about how the data is compiled, who supplied the data, and how emissions figures were calculated. That type of information was difficult to obtain under the old system. Further, direct access to the EIS database will be provided through a secure Web site, the EIS Gateway. Agencies will be able to view their submissions in as little as one business day.

- **Improved suite of Web tools.** The EIS will provide Web tools for searching and viewing the data. Submitters will have better access to reporting instructions, processing procedures and validation information on the Web.

- **Tailored data reporting.** Data will be reported using the Consolidated Emissions Reporting Schema (CERS). This transition away from the NEI Input Format (NIF) allows EPA and submitters to use data elements, data structure, and reporting instructions tailored to each data category.