

# WEEKLY TEXTILE RENTAL

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## EPA Wowed by LaundryESP® Results



Our belief in the success of LaundryESP® was strongly affirmed last week by officials of the Environmental Protection Agency, who praised the industry's voluntary program during a progress report presented by TRSA's Tony Wagner and Bob Schaffer.

The EPA officials in attendance included representatives from the agency's Engineering and Analysis Division in the Office of Water. Importantly, this division is responsible for the wastewater regulatory program. Those EPA staff that were present have a major role in determining which industries should have categorical standards. In the late 1990s, the threat of categorical standards for our industry was a major factor in the decision to develop

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and implement **LaundryESP**. At the time, we argued that categorical standards weren't necessary and that the industry could achieve the same or a greater level of protection with a voluntary program. EPA determined that a voluntary initiative would be acceptable and withdrew the proposed standards.

TRSA's presentation Tuesday was the second time the association has gone before the EPA to update the agency on the status of **LaundryESP**. But more importantly, this latest meeting gave TRSA an opportunity to offer compelling evidence that **LaundryESP** is producing significant environmental benefits. Therefore, the industry clearly doesn't need categorical standards. When all was said and done, the EPA officials were extremely impressed with our results. They praised the industry for the strides we've made in conserving resources and reducing pollutants.



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Once again, we made our case that **LaundryESP** is meeting its goals and achieving environmental protection gains equal to or greater than that which the EPA could expect from the establishment of categorical standards. Continued progress through **LaundryESP** is paramount to retaining the ability to have a voluntary program, instead of industrywide standards.

Recognition must go to the participating companies that have fulfilled their commitment to **LaundryESP** and have shown tremendous dedication to environmental conservation. During the presentation, a variety of data were presented to EPA that are too detailed to spell out here. For a more thorough analysis of **LaundryESP** results, look for an article in January's *Textile Rental*.

As an example of the results we presented to EPA, the industry exceeded its original goal of 25% for water reduction. During a 10-year period (1997–2006), the data show that the industry reduced water use by 28%, while at the same time increasing production by 41%.

This means that 12 billion lbs. of textiles were processed in 2006 vs. 9 billion in 1997. The water usage per pound of product processed was on average 1.7 gallons in 2006 vs. 2.3 in 1997. This reduction in the use of water translates to a savings of 26 billion gallons over 10 years, which is equivalent to the amount of water that 700,000 people would use annually.

In terms of total energy use between 1997 and 2006, there was a decrease of 14% in energy consumption, or a savings of 16 trillion Btu, or the equivalent of the total amount of electricity used annually by 450,000 U.S. homes. Additionally, an unexpected benefit of **LaundryESP** is a reduction in the industry's carbon footprint. Over the same period the industry reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 15%, or the equivalent to the annual amount of CO<sub>2</sub> trapped by 45 million trees.

Even though the industry has made great environmental progress through **LaundryESP**, we believe that the program must adapt to new environmental priorities that weren't at the forefront in the 1990s. In particular, the immediate focus of the program is on the reduction of nonylphenol ethoxylate, or NPE. Recently TRSA/UTSA partnered with EPA to virtually eliminate the use of NPE by 2015.

**LaundryESP** illustrates that substantial environmental gains can be made through a voluntary program without the need for additional regulations. The textile services industry has shown its dedication to the environment by following through with its commitment to the improvements laid out in the program. Voluntary programs may not make sense for every industry, but in this case, it was clearly the way to go.

