
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

EPA'S RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW OF REGULATIONS: WILL IT REDUCE MANUFACTURING BURDENS?

By Sofie Miller*

Introduction

Through a series of Executive Orders, President Obama has encouraged federal regulatory agencies to review existing regulations “that may be outmoded, ineffective, insufficient, or excessively burdensome, and to modify, streamline, expand, or repeal them in accordance with what has been learned.” This paper examines the initial results of that review to understand whether actions pursued under this initiative are likely to be successful at reducing regulatory burden. Since reports suggest that the manufacturing sector bears greater regulatory burdens than other sectors,¹ and that regulations issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) impose particularly high costs on this sector,² the focus here is on the expected effects on the manufacturing sector of EPA's identified reforms.

The paper first reviews the President's directives to agencies, and EPA's retrospective review action plan. It then examines the effect of EPA regulations on the manufacturing sector through several different lenses. Finally, it evaluates the regulatory actions EPA identified through its retrospective analysis to determine whether they can be expected to reduce regulatory burdens on the manufacturing sector.

I. PRESIDENT OBAMA'S INITIATIVES

Building on the efforts of previous presidents, President Obama issued three Executive Orders (EOs) during his first term that direct agencies to conduct retrospective analysis of existing regulations.

On January 18, 2011, President Obama signed Executive Order 13563, *Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review*, which reaffirmed the regulatory principles and structures outlined in President Clinton's Executive Order 12866. In addition to the regulatory philosophy laid out in EO 12866, EO 13563 instructs agencies to

consider how best to promote retrospective analysis of rules that may be outmoded, ineffective, insufficient,

**Sofie Miller is a Policy Analyst at The George Washington University Regulatory Studies Center. She would like to thank Art Fraas, Susan Dudley, and Randy Lutter for their rigorous comments and suggestions on this working paper. The help of Art Fraas in particular was crucial to the development of this idea and the many drafts that led to this paper. Additionally, she would like to thank Patrick McLaughlin for developing the RegData database and for answering her questions about it in such a timely manner, and Sam Batkins for making his research available.*

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or excessively burdensome, and to modify, streamline, expand, or repeal them in accordance with what has been learned. Such retrospective analyses, including supporting data, should be released online whenever possible.

EO 13563 additionally instructs executive branch agencies to develop and submit to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) retrospective review plans “under which the agency will periodically review its existing significant regulations to determine whether any such regulations should be modified, streamlined, expanded, or repealed so as to make the agency's regulatory program more effective or less burdensome in achieving the regulatory objectives.”

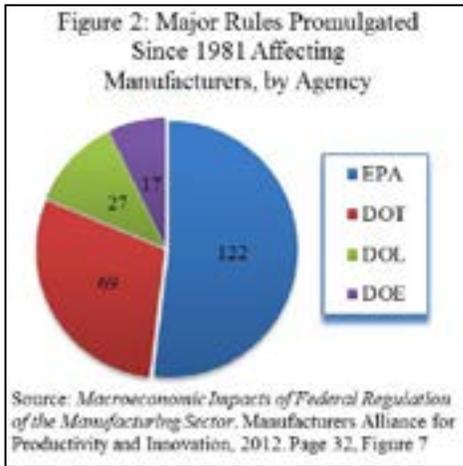
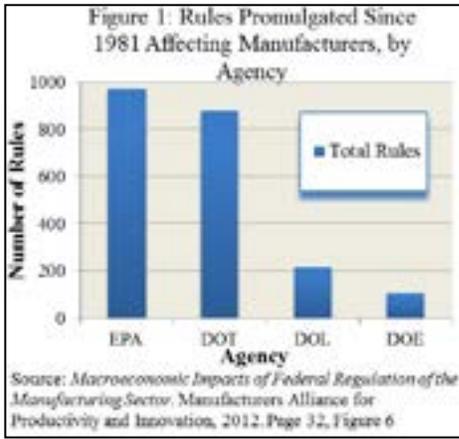
On July 14, 2011, President Obama took another step toward retrospective review when he issued Executive Order 13579, encouraging independent regulatory agencies to develop and make public plans for retrospective review of their regulations.³

Following these two Executive Orders, OIRA Administrator Cass Sunstein issued guidance to the heads of executive branch agencies and independent regulatory commissions with instructions for the implementation of the Executive Order's requirements:

Executive Order 13563 recognizes the importance of maintaining a consistent culture of retrospective review and analysis throughout the executive branch. Before a rule has been tested, it is difficult to be certain of its consequences, including its costs and benefits.

The guidance instructs agencies to use the principles established in EO 13563 §1–5 to orient their thinking during the process of retrospective analysis and specifies elements their review plans should include, and timelines for sharing them with the public. Both President Obama's Executive Order and Sunstein's guidance on its implementation call for agencies to identify rules that are “excessively burdensome” when evaluating the effects of existing rules.⁴

On May 10, 2012, President Obama issued Executive Order 13610, *Identifying and Reducing Regulatory Burdens*, “in order to modernize our regulatory system and to reduce unjustified regulatory burdens and costs.” The Executive Order makes clear that regulations play an important role in the protection of public health, safety, and welfare, but also that they have the potential to impose “significant burdens and costs” on the public. The EO emphasizes the importance of public participation in the retrospective review process, sets a schedule for agencies' retrospective review status reports, and sets the President's priorities for the identification of rules for review:



DOT, DOL, and DOE.

A “major” rule is a rule which the Administrator of OIRA has determined will have an annual effect of \$100 million or more, will cause a major increase in costs or prices for consumers, or have significant adverse effect on competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or trade.¹⁰ EPA leads the other agencies both in total rules affecting manufacturers and in major rules affecting manufacturers.

OMB’s data, as identified in the MAPI report, also point

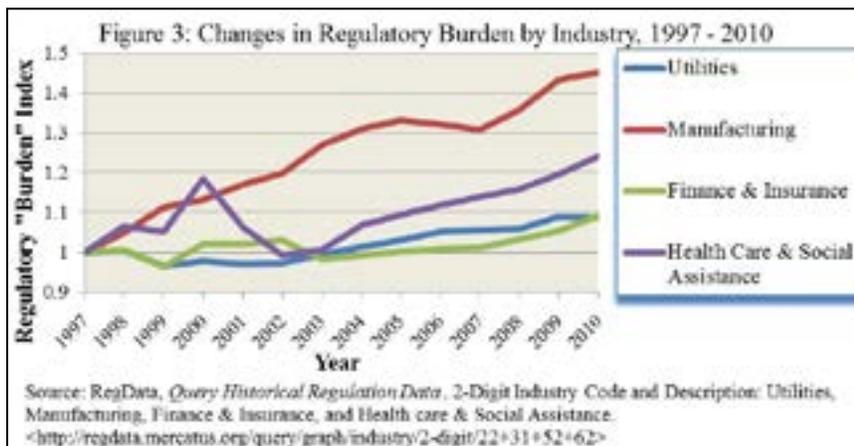
to the cumulative impact on manufacturers of these major rules. Figure 2 illustrates the major rules promulgated since 1981 from multiple agencies that affect manufacturers. According to MAPI’s aggregation of OMB data, EPA leads with 122 major rules affecting manufacturers, followed by 69 major rules from DOT.

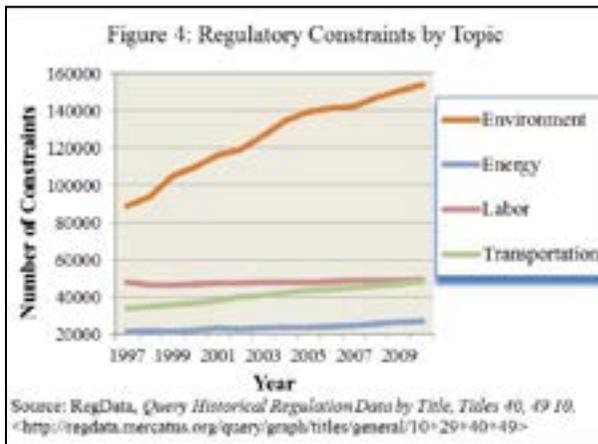
According to the MAPI aggregation of OMB data, the cost of major EPA rules affecting manufacturers is higher than the cost of major rules from all other agencies. Including major rules from 1993 to 2011, the costs of EPA major rules affecting manufacturers totaled \$117 billion annually, more than twice as much as the cost of DOT, HHS, DHS, DOE and DOL major rules combined (\$50 billion). According to the MAPI report, major regulations could reduce manufacturing output by up to 6.0 percent over the next decade, with the largest burden coming from EPA rules. It estimates GDP losses from this output reduction ranging from \$240 billion to \$630 billion in 2012 alone.

B. Regulatory Burden by Sector

Our analysis of a different dataset corroborates this concern that the manufacturing sector is particularly burdened by regulation generally, and regulations issued by EPA in particular. Using the RegData database¹¹ developed by the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, we compared regulatory constraints imposed on the manufacturing sector with constraints on three other sectors (utilities, health care and social assistance, and finance and insurance). RegData measures regulatory “constraints” by compiling the frequency of command words such as “must” and “shall not” in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), the text where final regulations are recorded. According to its developers, RegData “allow[s] for industry-specific quantification of federal regulation, permitting within-industry and between-industry analyses of the causes and effects of federal regulations.”¹²

Figure 3 graphs information compiled from the RegData database to track the change in regulatory constraints for four sectors starting in 1997, with a starting point of 1 for all industries measured. This measure of regulations suggests that the manufacturing sector is subject to a higher rate of growth in regulatory constraints than utilities, health care, or

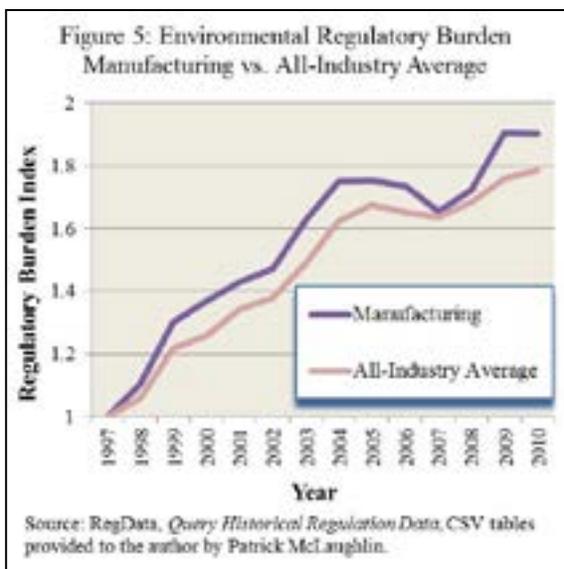




the finance and insurance sector.

Further breaking down the commands by section of the CFR allows us to examine the frequency of constraints generated by environmental regulations relative to other regulations. Figure 4 shows increases in constraints in Title 40: *Protection of the Environment* versus three other Code of Federal Regulations titles spanning energy, labor, and transportation. This comparison suggests that the increases in regulatory constraints from environmental regulation by far outpace increases in regulatory constraints from energy, labor, and transportation regulations, further highlighting the importance of EPA's retrospective review efforts.

Figure 5 shows the growth in Title 40 regulatory constraints applicable to manufacturers compared to the average growth in Title 40 regulatory constraints that apply to all industries (including to the manufacturing sector). According to this dataset, manufacturers have consistently shouldered a higher burden from environmental regulation than most other industries. The disparity of this burden is especially apparent after the year 2008, when Title 40 regulatory constraints applied to manufacturers leapt ahead of Title 40 regulatory constraints applied to all other industries. These increases in regulatory constraints and the burdens



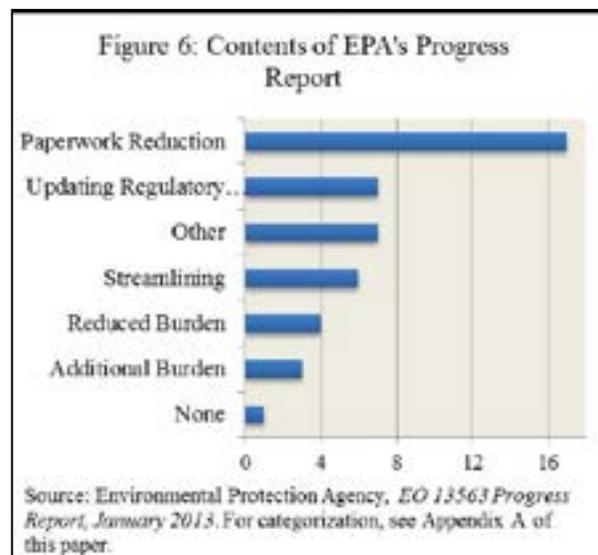
that accompany them invite a close look at the progress and efficacy of EPA's retrospective review efforts to reduce regulatory burdens.

IV. EFFECTS OF EPA'S RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION

In January, 2013, EPA released an EO 13563 Progress Report listing 45 different regulatory actions both planned and underway to review existing rules. We were able to classify these regulatory actions into separate categories, based on the primary purpose of the regulatory action as described in the progress report or in the Federal Register for completed actions. It should be stressed that for the majority of these regulatory actions, the only information available for the purposes of classification is the information provided in EPA's Progress Report. Because these are short descriptions that do not always contain all relevant information, we relied on descriptions in the proposed/final rule text where available to allow for the most accurate classification possible based on the available information.

We classified each action into one of the following categories:

- Paperwork reductions:** Actions classified as "Paperwork Reductions" are those that reduce reporting and recordkeeping obligations, or initiate a transition from paper to electronic reporting.
- Streamlining:** "Streamlining" actions are those that develop uniform standards or improve coordination.
- Updating Regulatory Requirements:** "Updating Regulatory Requirements" includes actions that modify existing standards to better reflect technology or best practices.
- Reduced Burden:** "Reduced Burden" includes regulatory actions that EPA states will reduce some costs to regulated entities by reducing existing regulatory requirements.
- Additional Burden:** "Additional Burden" refers to actions



that have cost increases for the regulated entity.

•**Other:** This classification includes regulatory actions that primarily increase transparency, reduce testing burdens, integrate planning, or commission studies.

•**None:** Refers to one action from EPA's Progress Report, which EPA does not expect to have an impact on the regulated community.

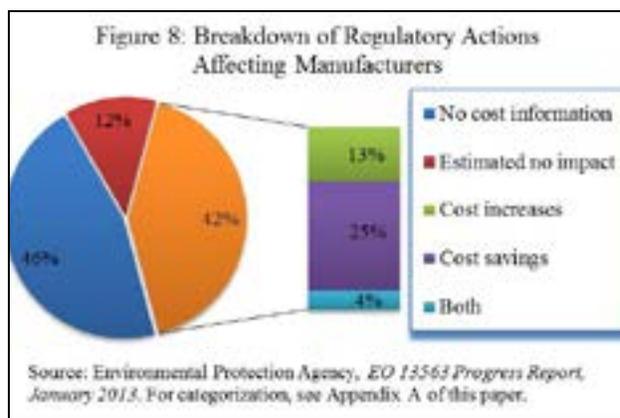
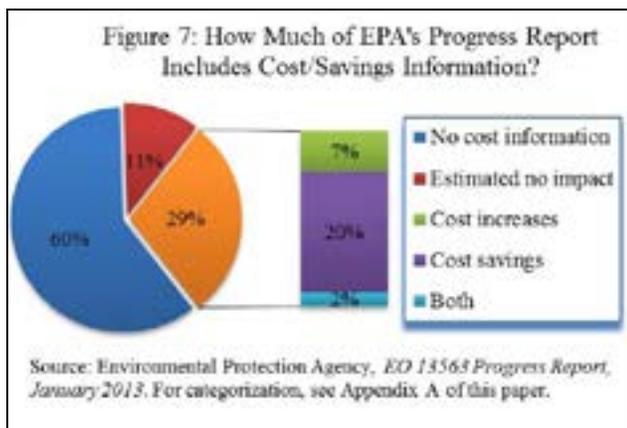
Some of these classifications may be subject to change, as the final regulatory action may be very different than it was described in the EPA's Progress Report. For example, the first regulatory action listed in EPA's progress report (EPA's Tier 3 proposed rule, RIN 2060-AQ86) is described as an action "where recordkeeping and reporting obligations can be modified to reduce burden," and based on this description could be classified primarily as a Paperwork Reduction. However, after the text of EPA's Tier 3 proposal became available, it was clear that the rule would incur substantial new costs without providing offsetting paperwork reduction benefits. Therefore, based on the text of the proposed rule, we categorized the Tier 3 rule as an Additional Burden.

Appendix A of this paper contains each of the regulatory actions in EPA's January 2013 Progress Report, along with how each action was classified using the above categories.

The most prevalent regulatory actions EPA listed in this report fall into the category of Paperwork Reductions, which comprise 38 percent of all actions. As can be seen in Figure 6, Updating Regulatory Requirements and Other occur with the next highest frequency, at 15 percent, and Streamlining follows at 13 percent.

None of the 7 listed Updating Regulatory Requirements actions have an accompanying savings or cost estimate, and only one-third of the 17 Paperwork Reductions have any savings or cost estimate, making the effect of these actions difficult to estimate. Even for actions initiating Reduced Burdens—the primary goal of this retrospective review—EPA provided savings estimates for only half.

In fact, EPA provides no estimate of savings for the majority of its listed actions, making it difficult to gauge expected burden reduction. As shown in Figure 7, EPA did not include any savings or cost estimate for 60 percent of the



regulatory actions listed in its progress report.¹³ Less than one-third of the regulatory actions that EPA lists have any cost or savings information, and of those, 31 percent include cost increases.¹⁴ Additionally, EPA anticipates 11 percent of the actions in its progress report will have no impact on regulatory burdens.

V. WILL EPA'S EFFORTS REDUCE REGULATORY BURDENS ON MANUFACTURERS?

Of the regulatory actions listed in EPA's progress report, just over half target rules that burden manufacturers. Of these, EPA provides no cost or savings information for nearly half. Of the 42 percent of actions for which EPA quantifies costs or savings, 40 percent are estimated to *increase* costs to manufacturers.¹⁵ In fact, all of EPA's regulatory review actions which increase costs will fall to manufacturers.

As impact estimates are only available for 42 percent of the regulatory actions affecting manufacturers in EPA's progress report, this may understate the burden on the manufacturing sector. Because EPA did not provide cost or savings information for the remaining 46 percent, it is unclear whether any of those regulatory actions will reduce or increase the burden on manufacturers. The majority of regulatory review actions that will affect manufacturers are paperwork reductions which, while meaningful, do not substantially reduce regulatory burdens.

EPA has estimated that the total five-year savings from *all* review actions either underway or already completed is \$1.5 billion—1.3 percent of EPA's annual regulatory burden on the manufacturing sector. Even if all of these reforms were targeted at manufacturers, the effect is not substantial enough for EPA to claim credit for seriously reducing regulatory burdens on heavily-burdened sectors, such as manufacturing.

Conclusion

An examination of EPA's retrospective review plan and progress report does not reveal the unprecedented cost savings and burden reductions for which many observers had hoped. Only one-fifth of the regulatory actions in EPA's retrospective review progress report are expected to reduce costs. EPA provides no information on the effects of the majority of its retrospective review actions. It expects 11 percent of them

will have no effect, and a number of regulatory actions will actually increase burdens on regulated entities.

Of the rules affecting manufacturers, one-quarter will reduce costs. EPA does not indicate whether half of the regulatory actions affecting manufacturers will increase costs, reduce costs, or have any impact at all, making it difficult to gauge whether EPA is successfully reducing excessive burdens on the regulated public. Additionally, all of the regulatory review actions which increase costs will fall to manufacturers, adding to the already significant regulatory burdens which exist in that sector.

Endnotes

1 United States Office of Management and Budget. Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. *Progress in Regulatory Reform: 2004 Report to Congress on the Costs and Benefits of Federal Regulations and Unfunded Mandates on State, Local, and Tribal Entities*. [Washington, DC]: Office of Management and Budget, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, 2004.

2 *Macroeconomic Impacts of Federal Regulation of the Manufacturing Sector*. Manufacturers Alliance for Productivity and Innovation, 2012. Print.

3 Executive Orders governing regulatory oversight have generally not covered “independent regulatory agencies” (such as the Federal Communications Commission, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the Consumer Product Safety Commission).

4 Office of Management and Budget. Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. *MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, AND OF INDEPENDENT REGULATORY AGENCIES*. By Cass Sunstein.

5 Government Accountability Office. *Regulatory Reform Agencies’ Efforts to Eliminate and Revise Rules Yield Mixed Results : Report to the Chairman, Committee on Governmental Affairs, U.S. Senate*. By L. Nye Stevens. Washington, D.C.: Office, 1997. Print.

6 Crain, W. Mark, and Thomas D. Hopkins, 2001. *The Impact of Regulatory Costs on Small Firms*. U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy, www.sba.gov/advo/research/rs207_tot.pdf; United States. Office of Management and Budget. Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. *Progress in Regulatory Reform: 2004 Report to Congress on the Costs and Benefits of Federal Regulations and Unfunded Mandates on State, Local, and Tribal Entities*. [Washington, DC]: Office of Management and Budget, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, 2004.

7 *Macroeconomic Impacts of Federal Regulation of the Manufacturing Sector*. Manufacturers Alliance for Productivity and Innovation, 2012. Print.

8 Ibid. 3

9 *Regulatory Reform of the U.S. Manufacturing Sector*. [Washington, DC]: Office of Management and Budget, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, 2005. Print.

10 5 U.S.C. §804(1), *Congressional Review Act: Definitions*.

11 Al-Ubaydli, Omar and McLaughlin, Patrick A., RegData: A Numerical Database on Industry-Specific Regulations for All U.S. Industries and Federal Regulations, 1997-2010 (July 3, 2012). George Mason University Mercatus Center Working Paper No. 12-20. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2099814>

12 McLaughlin, Patrick, and Omar Al-Ubaydli. “RegulationData.org.” *Home*. The Mercatus Center, 2012.

13 The regulatory actions which included a savings or cost estimate are those which, in the progress report or in the regulatory docket, EPA specified quantitative measures for either savings or costs incurred by the action. Some of these actions did not have any quantitative measures included in EPA’s progress report, but quantitative measures could be found in the regulatory text, accompanying RIA, or in EPA’s previous progress reports. To see how these regulatory actions were categorized, refer to Appendix A of this paper.

14 This includes one rule which developed uniform standards for equipment leaks (RIN 2060-AR00) that incurred both savings and costs to regulated entities.¹⁵ See *supra* note 14.

16 These are the author’s classifications based on the information provided in EPA’s report, *EO 13563 Progress Report, January 2013*. Where regulatory actions were published elsewhere (e.g. Federal Register, Unified Agenda), those sources were also used for the classifications in this appendix. The regulatory actions which include a savings or cost estimate are those which, in the progress report or in the regulatory docket, EPA specified quantitative measures for either savings or costs incurred by the action. Some of these actions did not have any quantitative measures included in EPA’s progress report, but quantitative measures could be found in the regulatory text, accompanying RIA, or in EPA’s previous progress reports. In the Cost/Savings column, red text indicates a cost increase, and green text indicates a cost savings. One rule, which developed uniform standards for equipment leaks (RIN 2060-AR00), incurred both savings and costs to regulated entities, and features both red and green text.

Appendix A: Classification of Rules in EPA's January 2013 Progress Report¹⁶

EPA Retrospective Review Progress Report, January 2013						
RIN	Description	Sector	Type	Reasoning	Cost or Savings Info	Cost/Savings
2060-AQ86	Tier 3 vehicle & fuel standards	Manufacturing	Additional burden	See "Cost/Savings"	Yes	\$3.4 billion in additional costs yearly, with no monetized savings from paperwork reduction
2060-AP66	Using optical gas imaging to streamline leak detection	Manufacturing	Streamlining	Allows multiple pieces of equipment to be monitored simultaneously	No	NA
2060-AR00	Development of uniform standards for equipment leaks	Manufacturing	Streamlining	Develops and consolidates uniform standards for controlling equipment leaks	Yes	Savings of \$6,780 - \$31,400/year, also thousands in annualized costs and capital costs
NA	Voluntary water quality improvement	Agriculture	Other	Develops voluntary standards for agriculture	No	NA
NA	Prioritization of chemicals for workplace risk assessment	Manufacturing	Reduced Burden	Reduced testing burdens	No	NA
2070-AJ75	Online reporting of health & safety data (eTSCA Reporting)	Manufacturing	Paperwork reduction	Electronic reporting	Yes	Savings of \$66,834/year
NA	Improve NPL transparency, give localities more input	State & Local Government	Other	Increased transparency	No	NA
2040-AF25	NPDES permit process evaluation	State & Local Government	Updating regulatory requirements	Revise or repeal outdated or ineffective requirements for wastewater facilities	No	NA
NA	Evaluating new approaches to maintaining clean water	State & Local Government	Other	Efficacy	—	No impact
NA	Integrated planning for municipal wastewater management	State & Local Government	Other	Integrated planning approach	No	NA

EPA Retrospective Review Progress Report, January 2013

RIN	Description	Sector	Type	Reasoning	Cost or Savings Info	Cost/Savings
2060-AQ54	Harmonizing CAFÉ compliance requirements between DOT and EPA	Manufacturing	Additional burden	Additional burden for the regulated entities (manufacturers) with benefits accruing elsewhere	Yes	Costs of between \$134 billion and \$140 billion
2060-AQ41	Coordinating multiple air pollutant technologies	Manufacturing	Additional burden	Additional burden through streamlining technologies	Yes	Nationwide capital costs of \$5.9 million plus additional nationwide \$2.1 million/year. Loss in economic welfare of \$1 million for producers
2060-AO60	Eliminate some NSPS reviews that would not result in environmental benefit	Manufacturing	Reduced burden	Reduced testing burdens	No	NA
NA	Simplifying and clarifying CAA Title V permitting programs	Manufacturing	Reduced burden	Reduced permitting costs	Yes	Cost savings of \$200 - \$300 per permit
NA	Technology assessments in new rulemakings to encourage innovation	Manufacturing	None	“This action is not designed to reduce costs or information burdens”	—	No impact
NA	Improving regulatory cost estimates ex-ante by reviewing ex-post cost information	None	Other	Study	—	No impact
2060-AQ97	Elimination of redundant gas station regulations	Retail	Reduced burden	Eliminates requirements for gas stations to use redundant technology	Yes	Cost savings of \$91 million total over the long-term
2060-AP06	Updates to the NSPS for Grain Elevators	Agriculture	Updating regulatory requirements	Definitional change to ensure consistent application of standards	No	NA

EPA Retrospective Review Progress Report, January 2013

RIN	Description	Sector	Type	Reasoning	Cost or Savings Info	Cost/Savings
2050-AG20	Replace system for hazardous waste shipment with electronic system	Manufacturing	Paperwork reduction	Electronic reporting	Yes	Paperwork burden reduction of \$77 million - \$209 million/year
NA	Electronic site ID form	Manufacturing	Paperwork reduction	Electronic reporting	No	NA
NA	Review of consumer confidence reports for drinking water regulations	State & Local Government	Other	Transparency	Yes	Cost savings of \$1 million/year in postage and paper costs
NA	Reduce state government reporting burden for water quality	State & Local Government	Paperwork reduction	Identify approaches for reducing burden of water quality reporting requirements	No	NA
NA	Export notification for chemicals and pesticides	Manufacturing	Paperwork reduction	Changing standards for the reporting of chemical and pesticide exports	---	No Impact
NA	Seek public feedback on the water quality trading policy	Manufacturing	Other	Seek feedback on adoption of market-based approaches for Water Quality Trading	---	No Impact
2040-AF16	Review water quality standard to improve efficacy	State & Local Government	Updating regulatory requirements	Review of water quality standard to improve effectiveness	No	NA
NA	Improvements to the SIP development process	State & Local Government	Paperwork reduction	Reduce number of hard copies, minimize other paperwork requirements	Yes	Cost savings of \$165,000 - \$180,000 per year for affected states
2040-AF15	Review and revision of Lead and Copper Rule	State & Local Government	Updating regulatory requirements	Simplify and clarify drinking water system requirements	No	NA
2050-AF08	Revise threshold planning quantities for extremely hazardous substances	Manufacturing	Paperwork reduction	New threshold would allow facilities to have more hazardous materials on-site before reporting requirements are triggered	No	NA

EPA Retrospective Review Progress Report, January 2013

RIN	Description	Sector	Type	Reasoning	Cost or Savings Info	Cost/Savings
NA	Review of pesticide registration process	Manufacturing	Paperwork reduction	Bundling chemicals for registration reviews reduces net paperwork	No	NA
2070-AJ20	EPA regulations on required trainings for pesticide applicators	Agriculture	Streamlining	“Savings may result from streamlining activities which could reduce the burden on the regulated community by promoting better coordination”	No	NA
NA	Review of guidance on PCB uses and cleanup	Construction	Updating regulatory requirements	EPA will review existing requirements to update and harmonize	No	Docket ID: EPA-HQ-RCRA-2011-0847
NA	Review of regulations concerning pharmaceutical containers	Retail	Paperwork reduction	New threshold for generator status would result in reduced paperwork	No	NA
2050-AG39	Review of pharmaceutical waste data for rulemaking	Retail	Updating regulatory requirements	Review of data to inform rule-making updating waste management	No	NA
2050-AG72	Hazardous waste requirements for retail products	Retail	Updating regulatory requirements	“EPA intends to analyze relevant information to identify what the issues of concern are for retailers, what materials may be affected, what the scope of the problem is, and what options may exist for addressing the issues.”	No	NA
2040-AF29	Revise National Primary Drinking Water Regulations	NA	Streamlining	Multiple contaminants will be grouped into one regulation to streamline measurement and control	No	NA

EPA Retrospective Review Progress Report, January 2013

RIN	Description	Sector	Type	Reasoning	Cost or Savings Info	Cost/Savings
NA	Coordinate RFA §610 reviews with retrospective reviews	EPA	Stream-lining	Section 610 reviews will be coordinated with other reviews to save agency resources	No	NA
NA	Electronic reporting for hazardous waste exports	Manufacturing	Paperwork reduction	Electronic reporting	Yes	\$33,000 in cost savings to reporting entities in reduced courier fees and QA/QC costs.
NA	Convert financial assurance paper reporting to electronic	Manufacturing	Paperwork reduction	Standardized electronic reporting across programs	No	Paperwork burden hours estimated, but cost/savings information is currently unidentified
NA	Hazardous waste e-Manifest	Manufacturing	Paperwork reduction	Electronic reporting for tracking hazardous waste shipments	Yes	Implementation of e-Manifest could result in annual cost savings exceeding \$75 million
NA	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) e-reporting	Manufacturing	Paperwork reduction	Electronic reporting	Yes	Permittees are estimated to save \$1.1 million annually, and EPA \$0.7 million annually.
NA	Pilot integrated portal	Manufacturing	Stream-lining	Creation of an integrated portal to streamline reporting from regulated entities	No	NA
NA	Changes to pre-construction permitting	Manufacturing	Paperwork reduction	110,000 hours of paperwork burden expected to be reduced	No	Paperwork burden hours estimated, but cost/savings information is currently unidentified
NA	CAA stationary source electronic reporting	Manufacturing	Paperwork reduction	Electronic reporting	No	NA
NA	CAA Title V clarification	Manufacturing	Paperwork reduction	Expected to reduce paperwork burden by 120,000 - 180,000 hours	No	NA
NA	e-Reporting for the public water system supervision program	State & Local Government	Paperwork reduction	Electronic reporting	No	NA