EPA Secures Over 700 Environmental Jobs for Welfare Recipients

[EPA press release - January 27, 1976]

Environmental Protection agency Administrator Russell E. Train today announced that EPA has helped 719 individuals on welfare in seven States to prepare for and assume environmentally-related jobs.

Under an agreement signed October 3, 1973, the Department of Labor granted EPA $1 million to provide job training and placement assistance to 700 adults receiving Federal welfare assistance for dependent children. The contract gave EPA 14 months to accomplish the goal of placing 700 individuals, with a later extension to March 1976 to allow completion of several late-starting projects.

"EPA's Education and Manpower Staff," Train said, "conceived and executed this special pilot project to prove that welfare recipients could perform successfully in certain State and local environmental jobs offering advancement opportunities. The program has been a great success. Not only have 719 individuals been placed in jobs, but 1,533 new environmental jobs have been developed in the process."

The EPA funding was divided among the following States, according to environmental needs and number of recipients: South Carolina, Texas, Maryland, Colorado, Louisiana, Connecticut and Montana. The sponsoring agency within each State used this money to hire a three-person Program administration staff and a training staff for the recipients. Personal counseling was provided to the welfare trainees by experienced employees of ongoing State job assistance programs.

"I am particularly proud of this project for three reasons," Train said. "It has given meaningful employment to hundreds of our economically disadvantaged fellow citizens; it has provided urgently-needed environmental manpower at State and local levels; and it has broken barriers by placing women in jobs that have been historically and predominantly male. The vast majority of the individuals placed have been female, and many of them are now operating wastewater treatment plants, maintaining and repairing water meters, collecting refuse, and working as pesticide control technicians."