

Programs to facilitate exchange of risk assessment information among states: The State Hazard Evaluation Lending Program (StateHELP)

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ABSTRACT

State and local risk assessors are often faced with pressing public health issues, with limited access to the funding, special expertise, or time resources necessary to conduct a complex risk assessment or evaluate submitted risk assessments. Toxicology Excellence for Risk Assessment (TERA)'s StateHELP Program (State Hazard Evaluation Lending Program) offers U.S. state and local government agencies a limited amount of free technical support to assist with human health risk assessments. To demonstrate the need for such technical assistance programs, a sampling of the variety of challenging risk issues received and addressed by the StateHELP program is presented. Projects described include

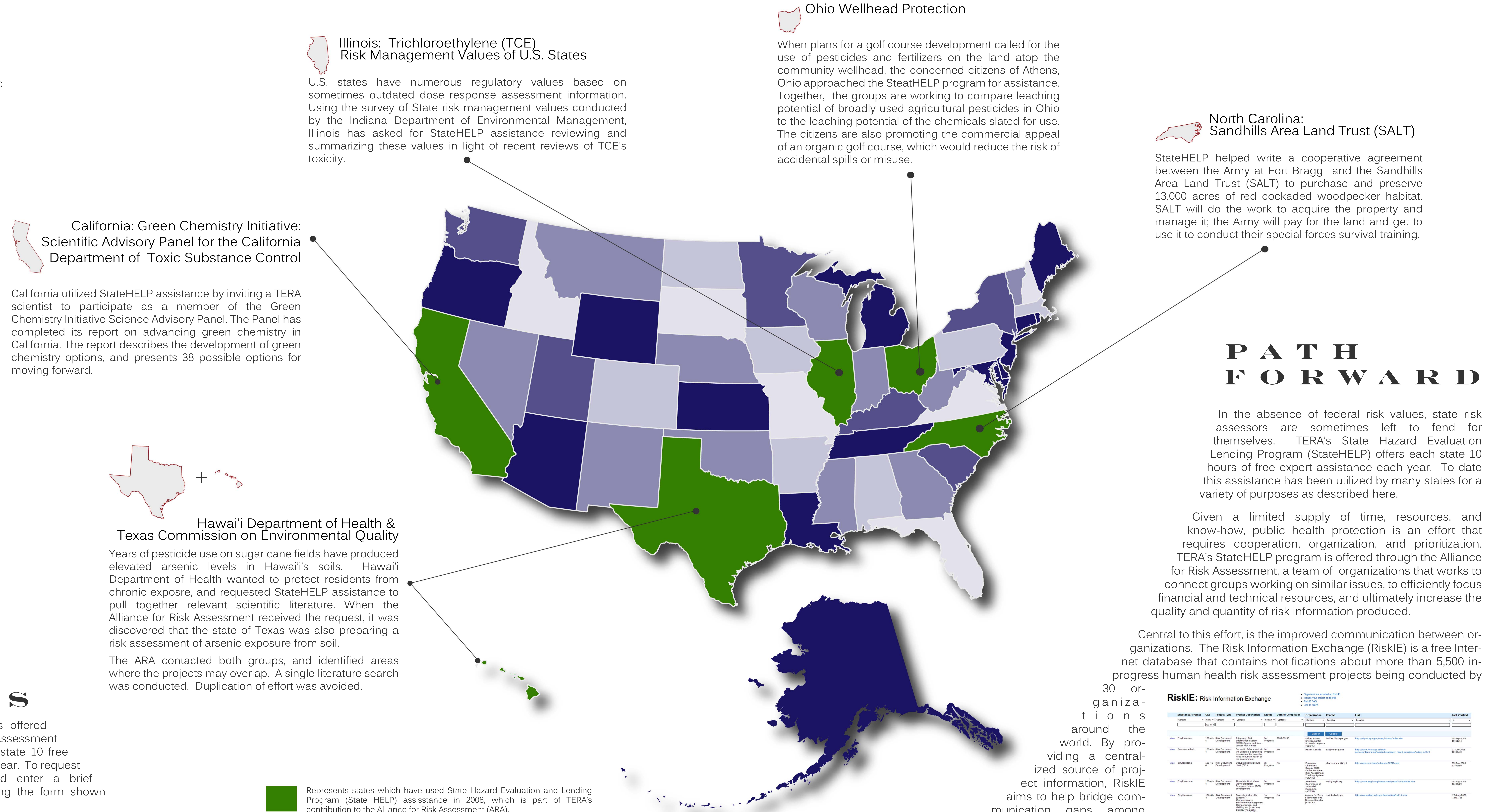
- 1) California: Providing risk assessment input for the California Green Chemistry Initiative,
- 2) Ohio: Identifying potential risks posed by the application of biocides applied to a golf course located atop a local water supply,
- 3) Hawai'i & Texas: compiling literature regarding dietary exposure to arsenic in soil for public health agencies,
- 4) North Carolina: developing a cooperative agreement with the Army at Fort Bragg to purchase and preserve 13,000 acres of red cockaded woodpecker habitat
- 5) Illinois: Comparing the National Academy of Science's evaluation of the trichloroethylene (TCE) toxicity data to risk values used by state governments.

The need for State and local assistance is compounded by limited venues for formal communication among agencies, often resulting in overlapping assessments and unnecessary costs. StateHELP provides for enhanced transfer of risk assessment methods technology through links with multi-state risk groups. In addition, a recent tool - the Risk Information Exchange (RiskIE) available for free at www.allianceforrisk.org/RiskIE.htm, has been developed to further enhance such interstate information transfer. RiskIE is a resource of the Alliance for Risk Assessment (ARA) and provides another tool to discover opportunities for collaboration by identifying parallel assessment efforts by different agencies or groups.

HOW IT WORKS

TERA's StateHELP program is offered through the Alliance for Risk Assessment (ARA). StateHELP offers each state 10 free hours of expert assistance per year. To request help, a risk assessor should enter a brief description of the project using the form shown here.

Once received, the project is reviewed by the ARA Steering Committee. The Steering Committee, comprised of federal and state government, private sector, tribal, environmental, and academic representatives, alerts the group to any similar work being conducted in their respective sectors. Upon approval, the project's progress is publicly announced and tracked on the Risk Information Exchange (RiskIE) to keep other groups abreast of activity.



Represents states which have used State Hazard Evaluation and Lending Program (State HELP) assistance in 2008, which is part of TERA's contribution to the Alliance for Risk Assessment (ARA).