

## **AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF ISO 14001 REGISTRATION ON EMISSIONS PERFORMANCE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

A number of studies have explored the antecedents of ISO 14001 registration. But what are its outcomes? Researchers have been prevented from answering this question previously because of lags between the reporting of toxic release data and its publication. This paper will address this most critical question. The paper begins by laying out some theoretical antecedents for improved environmental performance under ISO 14001. Then these arguments are put to a test using a sample of 237 American firms in the electronics industry. Firms were not chosen on the basis of whether or not they had registered under ISO 14001, ensuring that issues of sample selection will not jeopardize the analysis. We know if and when the firms achieved ISO 14001 registration, along with a broad range of other information for the years 1994 forward. Using just-released 1998 Toxic Release Inventory data, and data for previous years, we have enough information from before and after the finalization of ISO 14001 standards to ascertain the conditions under which registration can be expected to influence toxic release performance. The study was funded under a grant from the Industrial Ecology program, jointly supported by the National Science Foundation and Lucent Technologies.