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## State should implement a program to clean up toxic dry-cleaning sites

When it comes to governing the use of a toxic chemical in dry cleaning, New York state has the strictest rules.

Ironically, though, the state has no remediation program for identifying and cleaning up contaminated sites. The state should follow the example of other states and implement a program, while at the same time continuing to pursue more green-friendly technologies.

A special report in the Dec. 20 *Democrat and Chronicle* by staff writer Steve Orr showed that in Monroe County, there are 13 current and former dry-cleaning sites contaminated with perchloroethylene (often referred to as perc), but there could be many more. Four other sites are under investigation.

Most of the concern with perc has to do with vapors rising from contaminated groundwater. Ventilation systems often are installed in nearby homes or businesses for protection.

Some states have successful remediation programs, paid for from taxes or fees on dry cleaners. However, instead of implementing yet another tax on over-burdened businesses, state lawmakers should look for ways to use existing pollution clean-up funds.

Fortunately, the state also is investigating green technologies, focused on encouraging the industry to convert to "wet cleaning," a technology that uses less energy, water and toxic chemicals than dry cleaning.

The New York State Pollution Prevention Institute at Rochester Institute of Technology is partnering with the University at Buffalo and state Department of Environmental Conservation on a project, which will include working with at least two dry cleaners to convert their operations to wet cleaning.

A two-prong approach to perc contamination is a good one — identifying and cleaning up sites while helping the industry become greener.