

# **Business & Environmental Roundtable Joint Meeting Meeting Summary**

**Thursday, September 28, 2006**

## **Attendees**

Business: Glenn Almquist, Thomas Aube, Kevin Braga, Robert Cerio, John Chambers, Thomas Clupny, Gary Ezovski, Matthew Hackman, Bill Hayden, Richard Hittinger, Bill Howard, Ken Kubic, Karina Lutz, Evan Matthews, Daniel Moon, Philip Papoojian, Gene Park, LeBaron Preston, Arthur Yatsko

Environmental: Jane Austin, Matthew Auten, Paul Beaudette, Joseph Callanan, Jim Celenza, Sheila Dormody, Greg Gerritt, Liberty Goodwin, Brett Jedele, Caroline Karp, Gary Kaufman, Juan Mariscal, Barry Schiller, John Trevor, Harold Ward

Brown Grad Students: William Kern, Jessica Hunter, Hazen Kazaks, Laura Mulcahey, Pam Quigley, Celia Riechel, Rachel Rogers

**DEM Staff:** David Chopy, Richard Enander, Alicia Good, Terry Gray, Janet Keller, Angelo Liberti, Terry Maguire, Bev Migliore, Mickie Musselman (meeting notes), Elizabeth Stone, Michael Sullivan

**1. Greetings and Introduction** – Director Sullivan welcomed participants and led introductions.

## **2. Presentations/Discussions:**

**Pollution Prevention** - Jim Celenza of RICOSH and Gene Park of URI

Celenza and Park told what pollution prevention is, how the program developed and changed over time as the nature of industries in the state have changed. They said the program has lost funding support over time and needs to be reinvigorated to improve environmental management and reduce risks to human health.

## **Discussion:**

Caroline Karp said she brought 8 graduate students from Brown University because she is having them concentrate on mercury this semester, to investigate issues such as technology changes and recycling methods. They could be used to gather data.

Terry Gray said mercury is DEM's priority pollutant. There are no manufacturers using mercury in RI now and RI is regulating products that contain mercury sold in RI. DEM doesn't want to recycle mercury because it doesn't want more mercury coming in and there is no way to stabilize and dispose of it. He offered to have Bev Migliore, the DEM mercury point person, work with the students.

As technologies are developing, the use of mercury can be decreased. DEM is working with dentists to reduce the use of dental amalgam with mercury. Some dentists use mercury-free composites, but in some repairs mercury is necessary. Fluorescent lights are better for energy consumption, but contain mercury. Fluorescent lights without mercury are beginning to become available.

**3. Meeting Minutes** - The meeting minutes for the February 2, 2006 Business Roundtable and the July 20, 2006 Environmental Roundtable meetings were separately accepted as written.

## **4. Dirty Diesel Campaign**

Frank Stevenson of DEM Air Resources, described DEM's Clean Diesel Initiative. The Anti-idling Act that passed in the last legislative session codifies DEM's project to decrease diesel emissions. DEM must produce regulations by July 2007 and complete a report by December 2007 with an inventory of sources of diesel emissions in RI and strategies to reduce them.

DEM is working with environmental groups, RIPTA, school districts, the Providence and Worcester Railroad and RI ports, as well as the Northeast Diesel Collaborative and NESCAUM. DEM has the DMV listing of all registered diesel vehicles, and an inventory of the state fleet, but it is harder to enumerate non-road vehicles. Transient vehicles (registered out-of-state) are also difficult to count. On-road testing of trucks on Route I-95 captures some of these vehicles and NESCAUM is looking at interstate vehicles.

The anti-idling and retrofitting program at schools is voluntary, and gets at one significant source of exposure. School buses may emit less diesel emissions overall than other categories of vehicles, but affect more people, especially children, than other do sources. DEM is prioritizing sources to get at those with the most impact. The Clean Diesel Initiative is exclusively for mobile sources and will not extend to stationary sources such as heating and other local combustion sources.

## **5. Updates:**

**Budget:** Sullivan said programs such as the Clean Diesel Initiative are targeted because the budget demands that. DEM has 501 FTEs and the budget allows for 490. Approximately half of DEM's budget comes from EPA and as the federal budget is cut the cuts are passed along to the states. Sullivan said DEM needs more funding to be able to do what it is charged with doing. A lot of what DEM does supports the tourism industry, which is approaching a \$5 billion per year. A proportional share of that amount is far more than the Department receives and DEM may ask legislators for a share. Sullivan said he has asked chiefs to identify programs that have lesser environmental impact or value.

At the RI Bays, Rivers and Watersheds Summit on September 21 Governor Carcieri said he will ask for an \$85 million bond to be with the 2008 ballot referenda for clean water, to be spent mainly on infrastructure. Referenda questions 7 and 8 on this November's ballot ask for \$4 million for Fort Adams restoration and \$3 million for active recreation facilities.

Terry Maguire is working on the FY 2008 budget and has been asked to submit a budget with a 15% cut.

### **Discussion:**

Matt Auten asked how the community at large could help with the budget and said it would help make a case for more funding if they knew what DEM has had to cut or will have to cut.

Barry Schiller said the country is not less productive and is not poorer, the budget cuts are the result of political decisions and constituents could help the agency get more funding.

In response to the question of how long it will take to get results from the effort to prioritize agency activities, Sullivan said he cannot answer that as the results have to go through another level of analysis and review.

ISDS and wetlands regulations revisions will be final soon and DEM will be asking for support revisions to allow for general permits and larger penalties to act as a deterrence.

### **Environmental Legislation:**

Liz Stone said the environmental laws and resolutions that passed in the 2006 session are listed on a handout.

Sullivan said Liz Stone will be moving to Waste Management to work on Brownfields issues and Bob Ballou will be the legislative liaison.

Sullivan said the cesspool phase-out legislation failed to pass again and asked for support to get it passed in the next legislative session.

### **Environmental Equity Stakeholder Group**

Terry Gray said DEM received over 50 responses to its request for volunteers for an environmental equity stakeholder group. He has approval to hire a facilitator and is working with the facilitator to reduce the group of volunteers to a manageable size. Those not asked to be panel members are welcome to observe the proceedings.

### **Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP)**

Gray said the plan draft has been under review since January. Critical issues are future landfill capacity and how the state can improve recycling, especially commercial recycling, which needs a funding stream.

John Trevor said the State Planning Council has started to review the plan and feels it is far from being ready to adopt.

### **Other – Announcements:**

Karp asked if the Department ever convened high level groups to discuss issues such as the SWMP.

Sullivan said he convenes whomever he thinks can contribute to solutions, but there may be legal issues with some topics. Getting groups who understand issues and are willing to go to the General Assembly can help with some solutions.

Juan Mariscal said he is fairly new to the Technical Committee but has seen good discussions there.

Gary Ezovsky said the Greenhouse Gas Stakeholder Group has reached to other groups to help them with particular issues.

### **Dam Safety Regulations**

Dave Chopy said the dam safety law that passed this year requires emergency action plans for all high and significant hazard dams and authorizes DEM to make repairs to a high or significant hazard dam when the owner has not done so, and a dam poses a clear and present danger to public safety.

In 2005 municipalities were authorized to create dam management districts to raise funding for repairs. At least one community is considering a dam management district.

### **Discussion:**

Greg Gerritt said the dam at the headwaters of the Moshassuck River is leaking and the Friends of the Moshassuck as well as the Town of Lincoln are in favor of removing the dam. He asked if this program includes removal of dams.

Sullivan said he is in favor of removing dams that do not serve a useful role or are an impediment to fisheries, but removal of dams is not covered in this program. The Governor has a new program for hydropower as one alternative energy source, so dams are being assessed.

Karina Lutz said People's Power and Light sells renewable energy credits (RECs) for those who wish to offset carbon emissions and asked if the assessment of dams includes sediment release. The sale of RECs can fund restoration.

The hazard classification looks at water release, not sediments, but the dam database has sediment characteristics and the evaluation will include sediment release. In mill restoration projects, some assessments are done of the effects of dam removal.

### **Announcements:**

Jane Austin said Save The Bay has a grant from the RI Foundation to study the effects of climate change on the bay and has a new Climate Change initiative with a web page and a brochure that she distributed. Save The

Bay's website is [www.savebay.org](http://www.savebay.org). SaveThe Bay received a grant from EPA for a case study on lessons learned through its headquarters project about construction at the interface of land and water.

Juan Mariscal distributed a new booklet, Water for Rhode Island, on water issues that is the result of a collaborative effort by the Water Resources Board, government agencies and environmental organizations. The booklet may be seen on the Water Resources Board website at [www.wrb.state.ri.us](http://www.wrb.state.ri.us). There will be a water security workshop in early 2007.

Gerritt distributed a flyer and encouraged members to recycle winter coats by donating them on Buy Nothing Day, the day after Thanksgiving, November 24, which will be the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this event.

Comments:

- There is a new law in Rhode Island that bans hunting over the internet.
- The money spent on the windmill in Portsmouth would have been better spent on dams that can take lives.

Harold Ward said there is too little time for discussion of issues – too many issues on the agenda.

Karp said forums like this can produce issues for students to use for theses. She also said too much time given to reports and too little time for discussion and suggested putting reports online.

Sullivan said some of the successes this year are:

- DEM has spent the money from the \$70 million bond issue of 2004, and has an agreement on the largest land acquisition in RI, a 1700 acre parcel in the Wood-Pawcatuck area.
- Consent Agreements have been finalized with NBC on nitrogen reduction at Field's Point and Bucklin Point, the two largest WWTFs in RI. However, 60% of the nutrients that enter Narragansett Bay come from Massachusetts so that as we reduce RI's contribution, the Massachusetts share rises. We must work with Massachusetts to reduce nitrogen in their effluents.
- Rhode Island now has the most comprehensive boating discharge law in the country.
- Rhode Island received the largest grant in the US for estuary restoration. The \$150,000 is being used in Operation Clean Sweep to clean up large marine debris and over 80 tons of debris has been collected so far.
- There were more beach closures this year but fewer overall days of closure.

#### **Future Meeting Topics – suggestions**

- Cumulative impacts of docks
- Privatizing ISDS permits
- Alternative electrical generation – promoting green power, energy, LEED standards
- Fisheries restoration
- Site remediation regulations, list of contaminants – standardize
- Risk assessment methods
- How to reuse contaminated properties, need for better standards – EPA sees Brownfields as stopping at the waterline
- Moving assessments permits out of DEM
- Chemical safe schools
- DEM exterior lead paint removal certification program
- Public transit as an environmental issue

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