



# Business Roundtable

June 22, 2000 Update

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## Permit Streamlining Update

The Department of Environmental Management is committed to review its environmental program to evaluate more effective and efficient ways to conduct its business. The wetlands program was the first program to be evaluated. The Wetlands Task Force was composed of members of the regulated and environmental communities, impacted state and federal agencies and associations that work on wetlands issues. The group met monthly from January to May and identified areas of concern that were further studied by members of working groups. They were tasked to resolve these issues through the recommendation of administrative, policy and regulatory changes.

Final reports have been prepared by the working groups and a final draft report is being prepared. The Task Force will meet in July to review this document and to recommend actions that should be implemented by DEM.

A draft ISDS report has been prepared and is undergoing staff review. A Task Force to study that program will begin in July. Material is being collected to prepare draft reports for the air, waste and water programs. DEM is looking for people to work with the agency in these areas. Please contact Tom Getz at 222-4700 X 2417 or [tgetz@dem.state.ri.us](mailto:tgetz@dem.state.ri.us) if you are interested in working on these issues.

## Rhode Island Compliance Incentive Act Update

The subcommittee has completed proposed revisions to make the Act more useful to companies that have achieved or maintained a level of high environmental performance. It was felt that such companies should be rewarded for

their diligence while providing companies that have not reached this level with an incentive to do so.

The main revision includes the elimination of the audit requirement. This is replaced by the requirement, under *due diligence*, that all companies use an environmental management system as part of their normal business practice. The three-day notification requirement was eliminated since compliance audits would not be required by companies implementing an environmental management system.

The subcommittee will be meeting again during the summer to develop a strategy for legislative consideration in 2001.

## DEM Workplan Status - Third Quarter FY2000

### Office of Waste Management

- Almost all tasks are on schedule. Several additional tasks have been added to the workplan that, at the time the workplan was developed, were not specifically identified, were not anticipated, or additional resources were needed.

### Office of Technical and Customer Assistance

- There has been a one quarter slip in the schedule for producing the Pollution Prevention and Small Business Assistance guidebook. The training program for DEM personnel in pollution prevention and small business assistance is being coordinated with NEWMOA. Three half-day seminars are planned, to be tailored to each media group's specific needs.

- A new objective has been added, to develop and support a self-sustaining, multi-disciplinary Center for Cleaner Production and Environmental Health at the University of Rhode Island. We have negotiated an MOU with Korea to support the Center (signed May 2000) and have applied for \$150,000 in EPA funding, and have submitted two articles for publication.

### Office of Air Resources

- The hearing for medical waste incinerator regulations (due in January) was held in April due to a longer than expected internal review.
- EPA has funded a project to do extensive air toxics monitoring in Providence, rather than the Equity, Air Toxics, and Risk Communications project in Providence.

- The Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory was completed by Brown University and can be found on Brown's website at [http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Environmental\\_Studies/GHG](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Environmental_Studies/GHG). The next task is to develop strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on Rhode Island. The stakeholders group will consider strategies that will build on the existing air quality statutes and regulations as well as voluntary energy conservation and renewable energy measures.

### Office of Water

- In general, the office is on schedule with most workplan commitments. There were revisions to the RIPDES permit re-issuance, but the backlog has been reduced from 68% of major permits in January to 32% at present. TMDLs for this year are on track.

## DEM Staffing

A concern was raised at the March 2000 Business Roundtable meeting about the impact of vacancies within the various offices. Since that time, the Department of Environmental Management has made significant progress in getting positions filled. Hiring personnel in the state system is a three-stage process. The positions are posted, people are interviewed and the Department of Administration must approve the candidates recommended.

Since the last meeting DEM has initiated 24 personnel actions to fill vacant positions. Four positions have been filled, four positions have become vacant and 20 other actions are in the hiring process. The chart below summarizes these actions by offices, within the Bureau of Environmental Protection. The Office of Legal Services was added to the table since there were questions raised on this unit.

DEM Bureau of Environmental Protection FTE Status						
Personnel Action	Waste Management	Compliance & Inspection	Water Resources	Air Resources	Legal Services	TOTAL
Positions Posted	4	3	2	2	1	11
Interview Stage	1	0	4	0	1	6
Approval Stage	1	0	1	0	1	3
Positions Filled since 3/23/00	2	1	1	0	0	4
Adjustments	0	-2	0	0	-2	-4
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20</b>