



July 25, 2002

Greenhouse Gas Update



The DEM and State Energy Office stakeholder group that has been studying Greenhouse Gas issues for the last nine months recently completed the first phase of its

work. The group has identified 52 ways Rhode Island can substantially reduce its contribution to greenhouse gases in *The Rhode Island Greenhouse Gas Action Plan*.

This group was convened in response to growing international consensus that carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are warming the planet at a rapid rate. Reducing greenhouse gases can help reduce global warming -- a major concern for Rhode Islanders because of its potential adverse impacts through flooding in coastal areas, saltwater contamination of drinking water, extreme weather events, and damage to local crops.

The *Action Plan* of program and policy options for the State builds on a regional agreement of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Provincial Premiers (NEG/ECPP). The NEG/ECPP agreement aims to reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2010, to at least 10 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, and to 85 percent below 1990 levels over the long term.

Many of the options would achieve net cost savings by saving energy and, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions at little or no cost to society. They could also help reduce air pollution emissions such as nitrous oxides and sulfur dioxide, increase recycling, and stabilize energy supplies and costs. Many options expand and extend existing Rhode Island programs and policies, while others call for new initiatives.

Three working groups, (A) Buildings and Facilities, (B) Land Use and Transportation, and (C) Energy Supply and Solid Waste sent lists of consensus options to the stakeholder group. Below are examples of priority state initiatives selected by stakeholders:

The stakeholders approved the final Action Plan for Phase 1 at the Greenhouse Gas meeting on July 18. The group also approved a short list of options for further development during Phase 2 (September 2002 to February 2003). Some of the options include:

- Renewable Portfolio Standards – Encourages the production and sale of energy from renewable sources.
- Feebate – Provides lower fees for fuel-efficient vehicles.
- Pay as You Throw – Residences pay solid waste fees based on the amount of material thrown out.
- Resource Management Contracting – A pollution prevention program that provides businesses with incentives to reduce solid waste.
- Energy efficiency strategies for commercial/industrial facilities.
- Energy Efficiency Tax Rebate.

In addition to in-state initiatives, the stakeholders also endorse regional and national initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. One example is proposed national fuel efficiency standards for cars and light trucks, known as CAFÉ, which could eventually double the average miles per gallon of cars and light trucks to about 50 by 2020. This initiative alone would result in more than 250,000 tons of carbon saved by 2020 and significantly improve Rhode Island's air quality by reducing tail pipe emissions that cause ground level ozone.

Hazardous Waste Generators Fee Task Force



The first meeting of the Hazardous Waste Generators Fees Task Force was held on June 26. The group was tasked with

developing a proposal that would meet four objectives:

- The proposal must generate \$890,000 in revenue.
- Assessment must be simple and easy to implement, since there are no new resources to administer the fee.
- The proposal should incorporate incentives to reduce waste.
- The fees need to be collected in the 2003 state fiscal year (July 1, 2002 – June 30, 2003).

The initial meeting identified using transporters as a mechanism for identifying who generates the waste streams. The group also discussed what kinds of wastes could be subjected to fees, i.e., wastes generated in state, wastes generated out of state, wastes sent to treatment facilities, waste oil, manifested waste, remediation waste and universal waste. A decision on the waste categories affected would be delayed until DEM could provide additional information on the amount of waste that was generated in the categories.

A smaller work group will develop a draft proposal based on the information discussed at the June meeting. This proposal will be discussed at the August 8th meeting.

Contact [Tom Getz](#) for additional information on this Task Force or visit the website located at: <http://www.state.ri.us/dem/index.htm>, then click on Programs, then Ombudsman, then Permit Streamlining.

Air Toxics Regulation Update



DEM's Office of Air Resources will propose amendments to its Air Toxics Regulation (Air Pollution Control Regulation No. 22) in August. The amendments would:

- Modify the list of air toxics in the regulation to include all of the federal Hazardous Air Pollutants, as well as several other toxics.
- Update the health-based Acceptable Ambient Levels (AAL) to reflect current knowledge about the toxic effects of air pollutants.
- Update the air quality modeling procedures.

The regulations will also propose to tighten the requirements for perchloroethylene dry cleaners and to move those requirements from Regulation No. 22 to a new regulation, Regulation No. 23. This new regulation would require all newly installed dry cleaning machines to be state-of-the-art equipment and would schedule the retrofit or replacement of existing higher polluting equipment. The regulation also includes additional requirements for dry cleaners located in the same building as a residence or another business. Emergency release prevention and response requirements are also addressed in the proposal.

The regulatory package will also include amendments to Regulation No. 9, "Air Pollution Control Permits," to make that regulation consistent with the proposed changes. This revision will also exempt perchloroethylene dry cleaners from minor source permitting requirements, provided these facilities certify that they are installing equipment that meets the specifications of Regulation No. 23.

A notice of the public comment period and public hearing, as well as the proposed

regulations and fact sheets will soon be posted on the RI DEM web page. A public hearing on the proposed changes will be held in September. For more information, contact Barbara Morin at bmorin@dem.state.ri.us or 222-4700, extension 7012.

Natural Resource Industry Start up Grants



The Department has received funding from the USDA Forest Service to distribute grants to forest landowners interested in

starting small businesses based on producing specialty crops that are grown and harvested in forests. Eligible landowners must own at least 5 acres of forestland. Examples of these businesses include:

- Edible products (gourmet mushrooms, maple syrup),
- Decorative wood products (material for carving, wood turning, or specialty furniture),
- Medicinal products (ginseng, witchhazel)
- Floral greens (wreaths, backdrop for floral displays), and
- Recreational use of forestland (hunting and/or fishing leases, horseback riding, mountain biking).

Although generating income from traditional forest management can be difficult in Rhode Island, there are a variety of alternatives, as mentioned above, that provide business opportunities. These grants will facilitate the startup of resource-based businesses that fit in with community character and generate revenue to help landowners pay property expenses, reducing the likelihood the land will have to be sold.

The Department, in association with the Rural Lands Coalition, has been actively promoting this concept over the past two years, having

developed fact sheets, created a web site, and conducted demonstration workshops. Surveys of forest landowners indicated lack of start up capital was the major factor preventing them from initiating natural resource-based enterprises. This industry has great potential in Rhode Island, since the high population density provides a ready local market for homemade (or forest grown) products. The grants, which will range from \$500 to \$1000 per project, will pay part of the cost for supplies and materials needed to initiate forest-based businesses.

The Department is working with a subcommittee of the Rural Lands Coalition to develop grant criteria and guidelines and expects to solicit applications in late August or early September. The grants will be awarded on a competitive basis. The Committee will review applications and award funding to those projects that are most likely to succeed and fulfill the goals and objectives of the project, which is to create a viable industry, like Christmas trees. It should be noted that thirty years ago, most Christmas trees were imported into Rhode Island. Christmas trees are now a six million-dollar business and an important part of the state's agricultural industry.

For further information on this proposal, contact Greg Cassidy at gcassidy@dem.state.ri.us or 222-3434 extension 4403.

DEM Portal Update



DEM is installing the status of septic system (ISDS) applications on the Rhode Island Portal. It is anticipated that this material will be available to the public by the end of July. When this site becomes available, designers, installers and homeowners will be able to go on-line to determine the status and history of DEM's

application review. This should be a useful customer service and will allow DEM staff to spend time processing applications and not responding to questions about the status of the application.

The portal can be accessed through the DEM website or by clicking onto RI.gov on your browser.

Mercury Reduction Update



Rhode Island Legislation concerning environmental mercury was passed in 2001. In order to implement the provisions of this legislation, DEM has been busy with several projects designed to reduce and/or eliminate mercury in our state. The sale of mercury fever thermometers was banned as of January 1, 2002. DEM, in conjunction with the Rhode Island Department of Health, Clean Water Action, The Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation, The Boy Scouts and CVS / Pharmacy successfully held three mercury collections this spring. All participants received a Free \$5 CVS ExtraBucks Coupon for trading in their mercury fever thermometers, residential thermostats, and other mercury laden residentially owned devices. Over 600 mercury-containing items were collected.

DEM is also moving forward on implementing rules and regulations that the legislation required. The first Rhode Island Mercury Advisory Working Group meeting was convened on June 7, 2002. This meeting was attended by legislators, regulators, industry and manufacturers representatives, non-governmental organizations and others interested in the continued elimination of mercury-added products in Rhode Island. Discussions included topics such as a timeline for draft regulations, the impact of mercury in dental and automobile wastes, and state procurement

practices for purchasing low mercury or mercury-free products. The next meeting of this group will be held on July 26, 2002 at 10 a.m.

DEM staff have also been involved in several educational outreach projects involving mercury. In the spring, DEM hosted two workshops on toxics in schools and one workshop specifically on mercury-free schools. These workshops were designed to inform all school personnel involved with the use, procurement, and disposal of a variety of products containing toxic materials about the dangers of using such items, and reasonable alternatives for these products.

Finally, DEM and the Department of Health have collaborated to produce several informational brochures related to the mercury content of local fish and advisories for at-risk populations (pregnant and nursing mothers and children).

Additional information on mercury-related topics can be found at the DEM website located at: <http://www.state.ri.us/dem>, then click on Topics. For additional information on mercury, contact Beverly Migliore at bmiglior@dem.state.ri.us or 222-6822 extension 7503.

DEM Regulatory Agenda

DEM has developed its [regulatory agenda](#) and has posted this information on the DEM website. This agenda presents anticipated rulemaking activities of DEM's Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Bureaus for the July through December 2002 time period. If you are interested in reviewing this information, visit the site located at <http://www.state.ri.us/dem/> and then click on publications. The regulatory agenda is located in the middle of the page under regulations.