



DEM Environmental Roundtable Newsletter

August 15, 2002

Greenhouse Gas Update

Contributed by Janet Keller

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.

Mercury Reduction Update

Contributed by Bev Migliore



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 required by the legislation. 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.

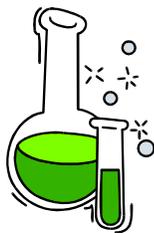
DEM staff have also been involved in several educational outreach projects involving mercury. In the spring, DEM hosted two workshops on toxics in schools and one workshop specifically on mercury-free schools. These workshops were designed to inform all school personnel involved with the use, procurement, 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 bmigliol1@dem.state.ri.us or 222-6822 extension 7503.

Air Toxics Regulation Update

Contributed by Barbara Morin



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](#) has been 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

Contributed by Greg Cassidy

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

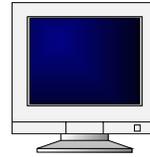
provide business opportunities. These grants will facilitate the startup of resource-based businesses that fit in with community character and generate revenue to help landowners pay property expenses, reducing the likelihood the land will have to be sold.

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. Only 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 has installed the status of septic system (ISDS) applications on the Rhode Island Portal. With this new free service, designers, installers and homeowners can go on-line to determine the status and history of DEM's application review. This is expected to be a popular 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 by clicking on [ISDS Status Check](#) on the homepage or by clicking onto [RI.gov](#) on your browser.

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.

Ballast Water and Non-native Species Report

Contributed by Richard Ribb

The Narragansett Bay Estuary Program produced a white paper containing information on ballast water operations and the resulting introduction of non-native species. This report was written in response to legislation passed in 2001. Local interest in ballast water issues has been heightened by the possibility of development of a major container ship terminal in Narragansett Bay.

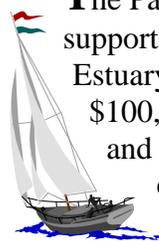
This briefing paper reports on the relationship between ballast water management and introduced species and how non-native species are introduced through ballast water releases. This report also documents:

- The status of invasive species in Narragansett Bay based on a recent NEP-sponsored rapid assessment survey and other data
- Bay shipping data
- Current international, national and state legislative efforts to manage ballast water
- An overview of ballast water management technologies, and recommendations for the state regarding ballast water management

For a copy of the white paper or for more information, contact Richard Ribb at rribb@gso.uri.edu or 222-2961 extension 7271.

Rhode Island Receives a \$100,000 Federal Planning Grant

Contributed by Richard Ribb

The Partnership for Narragansett Bay, supported by the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, has received a \$100,000 grant from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development agency to complete studies and analyses for the development for an integrated Bay planning framework. These funds are supplemented by an additional \$34,000 in state bond funds.

The Bay Summit 2000 recommended that a new, more effective and integrated Bay planning framework is needed. The grant funds will support four tasks:

- A study of previous regional and local planning initiatives to determine characteristics of successful efforts;
- Collection and synthesis of ecological data produced since the last State of the Bay report in the early 90s;
- A characterization study of economic activity in the Bay and watershed linked to the National Oceans Economics Project; and
- Development of a public vision and set of core principles for bay planning efforts.

All of these elements will support revisions to the Narragansett Bay CCMP and will result in a bi-state agreement that policy-makers can adopt to guide planning efforts throughout the bay watershed. In a related action, the R.I. Legislature recently passed a resolution creating a commission to ensure that a strategic plan for the bay is produced.

For additional information, contact Richard Ribb at rribb@gso.uri.edu or 222-2961 extension 7271.

Proposed General Permit for Non-Contact Cooling Water

Contributed by Joe Haberek



The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management is developing a general permit for facilities that discharge non-contact cooling water. General permits are issued when similar environmental conditions, regulatory requirements and pollution control technologies are employed. This permit will allow facilities to maintain compliance with state and federal requirements and will extend environmental and regulatory controls to a large number of facilities and reduce the permit backlog. Non-contact cooling water is water used exclusively for cooling and does not come into direct contact with any raw material, intermediate product (other than heat) or finished product.

The general permit will be applicable to facilities that discharge non-contact cooling water to Rhode Island surface waters. The permit has limitations and does not apply to facilities that:

- Discharge greater than 1.0 million gallons per day;
- Add water treatment chemicals to their non-contact cooling water;
- Have a potential to cause a water quality violation or may adversely impact a listed, endangered, or threatened species; and
- Discharges into the terminal reservoir of a public water supply.

To minimize the impact that these non-contact cooling waters can have on the environment, the general permit has been drafted to include permit limits for temperature, pH, and flow.

The DEM is planning to hold a public hearing on these permits and will publish notice in late August. Questions regarding the development of the non-contact cooling water general permit may be directed to Joseph

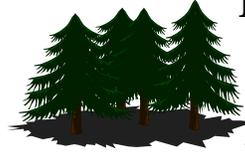
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Roundtable Website <http://www.state.ri.us/dem/programs/ombuds/eround/index.htm>

Haberek, P.E. at jhaberek@dem.state.ri.us or 401-222-4700, extension 7715.

Regional Forestry Conference

Contributed by Chris Modisette



The Southern New England Forest Consortium, in conjunction with DEM Division of Forest Environment and other organizations, will be holding a regional conference about the forests of southern New England. This all day conference will be held on September 25th at the University of Connecticut's Storrs Campus. This conference will discuss the 1998 inventory of forests in the region.

The forests of southern New England are continually changing. Over 90% of the region was forested before the Europeans colonized the area. Agricultural practices reduced this forest area to only 25% of the land area in the 18th and early 19th century. As the farmers moved west or settled in the cities, the forest began to spread back. Today, forests account for 60% of southern New England.

Today, forests are facing new challenges. Continuing loss of farmland to alternative, more intensive land uses is the most critical problem across the region. "Sprawl" is reducing large land tracts into smaller isolated parcels. Rhode Island is losing nearly 2,000 acres a year. Healthy forestlands are being reduced to small woodlots and suburban backyards. There is concern that forests are being divided into tracts too small to be managed effectively.

To register for the conference or to receive additional information, contact Brett Butler at bbutler@fs.fed.us or (610) 557-4045 or Chris Modisette at sneforest@efortress.com or (401) 568-1610.