

**Draft Environmental Roundtable Meeting Notes
February 16, 2006**

Meeting Attendees: Jane Austin, Harvey Buford, Melissa Cannon, Jim Celenza, Molly Clark, Kathleen Crawley, Gina DeMarco, Sheila Dormody, Cynthia Giles, Liberty Goodwin, Caroline Karp, Patrick Kraft, Juan Mariscal, Eugenia Marks, Nomvar Mohjadan, Don Pryor, Rob Sumner-Mack, Alfred Santoro, John Trevor, Jennifer Tuttle, Harold Ward, Chris Wilhite

DEM Staff: Terri Bisson, Russ Chateaufneuf, Ron Gagnon, Alicia Good, Ernie Panciera, Terry Gray, Terry Maguire, Bev Migliore, Mickie Musselman (meeting notes), Kurt Schatz, Catherine Sparks, Michael Sullivan,

1. Greetings and Introductions - Sheila Dormody led introductions.

2. Meeting Minutes - The September 22 meeting notes were approved.

3. Presentations/Discussions

2006 Legislative Priorities

DEM Priorities

Director Sullivan said all but one of DEM's bills have been submitted to the Senate, and they are expected to be introduced into the House in the next few days. The bills concern: cesspool phase-out (S2505), dam safety (S2510), preserving capacity at the Central Landfill (S2504), brownfields (S2503), Tree Stumps(S2507), allowing for mail-in fines for certain environmental violations (2402), preserving farmland (2501) and amendments to the refuse disposal act (not submitted). Two additional environmental bills not submitted by DEM concern road salt management and water management districts. See DEM Handout.

ECRI Priorities

Sheila Dormody said ECRI supports DEM's priorities and has additional issues that they are advocating. These concern: support for Narragansett Bay management, the clean water bond (to be on the November ballot), and a statewide water management strategy, anti-idling, diesel pollution reduction, and support for public transit. ECRI also supports legislation and initiatives regarding electronic waste producer responsibility, litter reduction, a ban on smoking on state beaches, clean energy and global warming initiatives, adequate funding for environmental agencies, environmental representation on boards and commissions, lawn pesticide regulations, and auto mercury switches. See ECRI Handout.

- Jennifer Tuttle asked if DEM will be interested in the RIRRC fee schedule.
- Director Sullivan said Dem will definitely weigh in on that issue.
- John Trevor: mentioned that a bill has also been filed regarding diversion rates
- Director Sullivan: capacity preservation is critical to the economic and environmental well-being of the state. The problem is implementing the separation and processing of recyclables.

DEM Budget

Terry Maguire outlined the Departments proposed 2007 budget. He noted that in preparing the budget, the Governor faced an approximate \$220 million deficit. The Governor's budget contains targeted reductions 419.4 FTE's statewide, with many of them coming as the result of proposed changes in benefit and longevity policies. The DEM share of the 419.4 is 13.8 FTE's. The proposal also includes two shut-down days for all state offices that is projected to save \$6.7 million. Payments for several projects in the Capital plan will be extended to the next two fiscal years to make up part of the shortfall. The budget also includes an Article for a \$25 million bond to be placed on the November ballot for Narragansett Bay and Watershed Restoration.

The DEM budget hearing is to be held on Tuesday February 28 at 2pm in Room 35 at the State House. Terry Maguire is willing to speak and/or meeting with Environmental Roundtable members to discuss the budget in more detail prior to the budget hearing. See Budget Handout for more detail.

Road Salt

Harvey Buford said there is concern in Hopkinton about a road salt pile over the aquifer and the application rate of salt to the roads. He said there are several wells that have been contaminated and in one case a new house could not get a certificate of occupancy because of a contaminated well and the owner has put in a reverse osmosis filter. He said that Connecticut uses less total road salt than Rhode Island and has four times the road miles. His main points and questions were:

- Concerns about road salt should be addressed at the state level, not town by town.
- Concerns should be overall groundwater contamination, not just wells near highways.
- Has there been an environmental impact statement on the use of road salt?
- Does DOT have a Best Management Practice plan?

Nomvar Mohjadan of DOT, said that DOT has a policy for application rates, but the application rate has to change with each storm as conditions vary each time and in different parts of the state. He said application guidelines are good but that some of the machines are old and rusted enough that the application rate is not what it should be. DOT has 450 drivers and many contractors who plow roads and apply the salt/sand mixture and that even if their equipment is in good condition, contractors do not have an incentive to apply salt at minimum levels because they get the sand and salt for DOT for free. DOT will acquire 32 new trucks before next winter and this new equipment will help with calibration of the salt/sand mixture. He said there are monitors who check each truck as it returns from plowing and sanding to determine mileage and applications rates.

Mohjadan said he has to deal with public expectations also. He said that with every storm he gets many calls from people about the road conditions and very few about holding back on salt application because of environmental concerns. He said that there are seven salt piles of the 24 DOT maintains that are not covered and they are working toward getting every pile covered and diverting runoff to detention basins.

Mohjadan said DOT has determined that there are fewer than 20 salt-contaminated wells. DOT recommends that new wells be located in the rear of structures because the wells that are salt-contaminated are located between the road and structures that the wells serve.

- Caroline Karp asked since there are at least 5 months in Rhode Island when road salt can be applied to roads, has a mass balance been done to determine the volume per road mile? Also, suggest that DOT look at what Connecticut is doing to see if they are applying far less salt to roads than RI and how they make it work.

- Mohjadan said DOT has been collecting data on actual application rates for only one year and needs more than one year's data to work with.
- Director Sullivan said he has been speaking with DOT Director Capaldi this issue and expects discussions to continue for some time.

Updates

Solid Waste Management Plan

Harold Ward said the SWM Plan is supposed to be updated every five years, but the last revision was done in 1996. A Task Force met for two years to guide development of this plan and did not have a chance for a final review before it was sent to Statewide Planning for finalization. There are two main issues that concern the Task Force: encouraging cities and towns to develop Pay As You Throw programs and a municipal cap on waste disposed of at the Central Landfill. Regarding the first issue the plan says that DEM and RIRRC shall promote development of PAYT programs, but then says DEM may submit legislation on this issue. The second issue needs more aggressive action on the volume of waste that must be diverted from the waste stream through increased tipping fees for waste that is more than a specific percentage recyclable materials. He said the Task Force also recommends that leaf and yard waste be banned from the landfill by the end of the 2006 fiscal year.

Ward said the SWM Plan says DEM shall develop a new approach to municipal recycling and that in FY 2007 RIRRC should consider a three-tiered tipping fee schedule that sets the highest fee for commercial solid waste that violates DEM's regulations.

- Director Sullivan said that the DY06 budget had a budget article that would have given DEM \$1 per ton of the tipping fee for enforcement of the commercial sold waste rules, but RIRRC initiated legal action to forestall implementation of that article.

Terri Bisson will provide members with a link to the Plan.

Big River well development

- Eugenia Marks asked how the Water Resources RFP for development of a well or wells in the Big River area affects DEM's budget. The RFP asks for delivery of 5 million gallons per day. How will the withdrawal rate be monitored and who will do the monitoring? Will gages be installed in streams?
- Juan Mariscal said the WRB will install gages in the Big River area for streams that will be affected by the wells.
- Kathy Crawley said that there will probably be 4 or 5 wells and the WRB will monitor see that they do not interfere with stream flow.
- Director Sullivan said the well-based system will require treatment and would be integrated with statewide water management systems and be respectful of other uses in the Big River area and that the system should be designed to operate for 30 years.
- Marks said the Audubon Society of RI continues to support DEM and the WRB in their management efforts with Mishnock Pond and Big River.

4. Other/Announcements

- Karp said that the newsletter article about the air testing around the airport does not say anything about the cancer rates and their possible connection to air pollution. She asked that DEM report and the Department of Health report on elevated cancer rates around the airport be put together.

- Liberty Goodwin said that besides decreasing use of pesticides the Toxics Information Project is supporting the Governor's Council on the Disabled and the group has a new brochure, Less Toxic Landscaping Resources.
- Terri Bisson mentioned that the Statewide Planning Program will hold public hearings and workshops on the Land Use Plan. Specific dates will be provided to members.

5. Future Meeting Schedule

June 22 & September 28

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