

Draft Environmental Roundtable Meeting Notes May 7, 2003

Attendance list

S. Alm, S. Barker, P. Beaudette, H. Buford, A. Bridgman, K. Camp, K. Canada, R. Chew, G. DiCenso, S. Dormody, C. D'Ovidio, E. Ferris, J. Dubis, L. Goodwin, Z. Gray, J. Hakanson, T. Hamblett, C. Karp, G. Lefebvre, E. Marks, C. Obert, P. Sams, J. Sherman, E. Stevens, C. Stewart,

DEM

B Ballou, A. Good, T. Getz, T. Gray, J. Keller, A. Liberty, B. Migliore, S. Tyrrell, F. Vincent

II. Old Business

1. Review February 2003 Meeting Notes

There were no comments on the February meeting notes. Participants were requested to send changes to Tom Getz.

2. Legislative Update

- ◆ The Freedom to Fish bill was discussed. Bob Ballou indicated that DEM was not supportive of the bill in its current form. The law should recognize that closures could be used to manage the resource based on the full public review of scientific data. Caroline Karp mentioned the bill did not address archeological or cultural factors.
- ◆ Topher Hamblett indicated he did not think that the Bay Trust bill would be passed this year. He was supportive of the bill from a philosophical standpoint, but there were issues over SOP? (Bob/ Elizabeth, do you know what this means?).
- ◆ Habitat Restoration Funding bill set aside \$250,000 per year and is moving forward in the committees.
- ◆ Mercury legislation is being proposed to push back the implementation dates of the existing law by one year.
- ◆ Feebate bill did not have the support of the auto industry and the Department of Administration (DMV). Caroline Karp observed these groups were not a part of the Greenhouse Gas stakeholder process. Perhaps there should be additional discussion of the topic with an expanded group of stakeholders.
- ◆ A bill to increase the energy efficiency of ten common appliances will be heard in the Environmental and Natural Resources Committee.

III. New Business

1. Updates

a. Comprehensive Solid Waste Plan Development Update

Terry Gray provided the group with a brief update of the Comprehensive Solid Waste plan. The group has been meeting since February and the Economics Sub-Committee has issued a draft Interim Report. This report analyzes four sectors of the system and indicated there is little economic incentives for the system to change. The report indicates:

- ♦ The RI Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC) does not have an incentive to preserve landfill space because measures that diminish collection of material that would be disposed in the landfill will result in a decrease of revenues.
- ♦ Individuals in municipalities that fund solid waste management programs with property taxes perceive programs like Pay as You Throw as an additional tax.
- ♦ The economic incentives for commercial generators are usually too small to encourage reduction/recycling. This industry often defers decisions to haulers who have little or no waste reduction incentives.
- ♦ Municipalities, at current recycling levels, have an economic disincentive to increase recycling rates, since the cost of collection and transportation of recyclable material is higher than \$32/T waste disposal fee charged by the RI Resource Recovery Corporation.

The interim recommendations of this subcommittee include the following:

- ♦ Municipalities that undertake Pay As You Throw user fee programs should have their startup costs reimbursed by RIRRC. In addition, the RIRRC should subsidize the increased costs of management that may result from increased recycling rates.
- ♦ Municipal caps should be adjusted to account for projections of source reduction in the revised Comprehensive Plan. In addition, reductions in the municipal cap should be made consistent with the projections for municipal recycling in the revised Comprehensive Plan.
- ♦ The current commercial recycling regulations should be enforced. These regulations require generators to have a plan for recycling and to report annually on this plan's implementation. Regulations also prohibit landfilling of waste containing more than 20% recyclables, and this should be enforced at the RIRRC's tipping facility.
- ♦ All RIRRC revenues should be applied to responsible solid waste management – specifically to fund startup costs for PAYT, recycling subsidies for municipalities and for enforcement of recycling regulations, among other programs directed at preserving landfill capacity.

b. Renewable Energy Content Standard legislation

The Renewable Portfolio Standard legislation requires utilities provide the grid, with a small but growing amount of energy produced by renewable sources. This is the third year the bill has been heard and has been discussed at length in the Greenhouse Gas stakeholder group. This strategy is one of the most effective strategies to reduce these gasses. DEM was supportive of the 20% renewable requirement by the year 2020. Some members of the PUC and the Business Roundtable were only interested in a 15% requirement by 2020. It was mentioned that Narragansett Electric was not supportive of this concept, but National Grid, the parent company, has been supportive of the concept in England.

One meeting participant mentioned that the Governor was supportive of the Cape Cod Wind project. It was estimated this project will save the region about \$16 million per year.

2. Litter Discussion

Fred Vincent opened the discussion stating that DEM did not have the resources to fund or to staff litter initiatives. He indicated that DEM would be interested in participating in

partnerships with other organizations to work on the issue. He said DEM's active involvement in the Youth Litter Corp ended when funding was eliminated from this program about two years ago. He mentioned that the thirty-three communities who received funding did not fight to prevent these cuts. Fred also mentioned that the municipalities in the Blackstone Valley were not supportive of the Keep America Beautiful initiative. DEM's only involvement with community clean-ups was the \$13,500 that was distributed to fifty-four recipients during earth day activities.

Caroline Karp questioned if the litter program could be funded under OSPAR. Terry Gray said this account is related to cleaning up petroleum spills in the BAY, so this is not a likely source of funding. He did say that the OSPAR account is being used to fund dredge activities and there will be very little funding available. Another person asked the status of the money collected from the beverage industry. Fred indicated that this funding was being channeled into the general fund.

Eugenia Marks thought it might be a good idea to start a study group that would review litter issues. This group could also determine the status of funding that has been collected from fees that were designated for environmental purposes. Fred indicated DEM might host the first meeting of the group. A number of meeting participants indicated their willingness to work on the issue with DEM. One meeting participant mentioned that the US should adopt the German model where packaging belongs to the generator. Terry Gray indicated that product stewardship is actively being discussed at the national level.

One person suggested that the recycling bins could be contributing to the litter problem and should be redesigned. Another person commented that the same kinds of material are being picked up at regularly scheduled clean-ups and maybe it is time to rethink the bottle bill.

3. Pawtuxet River Sediment Clean-up Discussion

Steve Tyrell provided the group with an update of this issue. He said Clariant Corporation's parking lot was flooded in December. The Town of Coventry cleared a drainage ditch and broke through a berm that caused sediment to be washed into the Pawtuxet River and had impacts on a wetland. This action also caused stormwater to drain through the Audubon Society property. OC&I is now working with the Town to resolve the problem.

Concerns were raised that hay bales needed to be used to prevent sediment from entering the river. DEM was requested to act on this problem. Steve indicated he is working with the parties to resolve the problem, and enforcement is an option, if things are not resolved.

4. Big River Management Area Update

Paul Sams of the Rhode Island Water Supply Board provided an update of the Big River Management Area. He mentioned that the activity within the Management area was the result of a state Supreme Court decision. In that decision, the Cardi Corporation was allowed to extract gravel from the property and to move the gravel through the property. Mr. Sams mentioned the town of West Greenwich did not want the trucks to travel over Harkney Hill Road because it is a small windy road. This was perceived as a health and safety issue and

the Board decided to allow the Corporation to traverse the property. Cardi is responsible for maintaining the road and to have the area restored to its original condition when gravel removal is stopped in about twenty years. Mr. Sams also indicated that the project would provide good paying jobs for about 70-80 people. Mr. Sams mentioned that DEM is processing a wetlands permit and if approved, Cardi will be responsible for meeting all the permit conditions.

5. Pesticide Applicator Training Program

Steve Alm from URI provided the group with a brief presentation of the pesticide applicator-training program. His course reviews the state licensing and certification requirements for pesticide applicators and focuses on training, environmental fate of pesticides, biological controls, sanitation and safety issues. He mentioned the Pesticide Relief Fund generally had \$100,00 to distribute. His training program cost \$66,000 and fees brought in about \$46,000. His program runs about a \$20,000 deficit that had historically been picked up by DEM. He told the group that DEM did not fund the program this year. Fred Vincent mentioned that the Director had discussed this issue in past Roundtable meetings and DEM made some tough budget decisions and unfortunately this project could not be funded.

A question was asked on pesticide usage at golf courses and how much Atroazine and Tributyl 10 is used in the state. Liz Duguay indicated she could provide this information when a request for information is filled out.

One participant wanted to know where the funding for the pesticide program was going. Fred indicated the funding was going into the general fund and not back into the program.

IV. Next Meeting Topics

The group suggested the following topics as potential agenda items for the next meeting:

- ◆ Update on Solid Waste Plan
- ◆ Litter
- ◆ Pawtuxet River update
- ◆ Phosphate in dishwater detergents
- ◆ Update on Phase II stormwater comments
- ◆ Tires – What do we do with tires after they are collected?
- ◆ DOH and their involvement in the mosquito issue
- ◆ Invite Gov. Carcieri to the next meeting
- ◆ Affordable housing versus sprawl
- ◆ Consider having the meeting from 3-5

V. Next Meeting August 13, 2003