

**Notes from Rhode Island Litter Task Force Meeting
January 18, 2006**

Participants:

A. SanAntonio, J. Fornaro, B. Schiller, G. Gerritt, L. Ruggeri, A. Miller, L. Aurecchia and T. Getz

The December meeting notes were accepted.

Legislative Update

Litter Tax – The ECRI & Sierra Club organizations have supported litter issues in the past. The organizations, however have not taken a formal vote of support for these bills. Barry Schiller indicated that Rep. Schadone had redrafted the legislation, and may have even gone further than he was requested.

The group then discussed where the money is spent from the money collected for litter purposes. According to the one bill DEM is to pass \$225K to the Department of Corrections (DOC) for their work and DEM is to collect the rest of the funding for establishing or expanding community recycling centers, improvement of litter laws etc. According to Lynn the DOC program costs are approximately \$400,000. The bill does not indicate that funding would be passed through to DOT, as is the practice to help in the litter pick-up effort. DEM indicated with the existing FTE cap, it does not have the staff to manage a 1.2 million dollar program unless this program was made a high priority. Jef Fornaro reminded the group that the litter program could be run by a non-profit organization, if DEM did not have the resources to manage the program.

There was a discussion concerning the need to require all monies collected from the litter tax be appropriated to the litter fund. A suggestion was made to page 2, line 17 of the Rep. Schadone bill to add the words “collected pursuant to Chapter 44.44” be added after the word appropriations.

There was a suggestion that language should be inserted in the bill for education and outreach.

The general consensus is to move forward on the bill.

Lynn will e-mail her counterpart in the DOC to verify funding DOC receives to run the program.

There was a discussion on the second bill that would require a credit of \$.03 a bag for customers bringing their own bags to the store. Barry Schiller indicated Eastside /Whole Foods Market voluntarily refunds the \$.03 per bag. Anita SanAntonio (RIFDA) opposes this bill. She thought the new bag-recycling program is a big hit and would prefer to go in this direction. She said that small stores would be hurt if they have to pay customer for bags from other stores. However the bigger issue is the cleanliness of the bags. She had concerns that the bags could have carried meats and would have germs in them such as salmonella, listeria, etc. She thought the Dept. of Health would be concerned about this.

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The group did not get consensus on this bill. Discussion was stopped on the proposal and there was an agreement to agree to disagree on this issue.

Barry will pass on the concerns of the Task Force to Senator Ruggerio and Schadone.

SMOKING ON BEACHES

Jef Fornaro indicated Rep. Peter Lewis will re-introduce the bill. HE also wanted people to come to the hearing & testify. Liz Stone indicated she keeps track of legislation for DEM and would pass on information concerning litter bills to ECRI. There is a need for a Senate sponsor for the smoking on beaches bill. Greg Gerritt ERCI suggested Rhoda Perry as sponsor. Art Handy and the Lung Association could also be asked to support this bill.

Route 295 Visitor Center was dedicated last week (1/14/2006).

Lynn Ruggerie was trying to collect litter information on the Rt 146 border. DOC Collected 60,000 bags of litter.