

MEETING NOTES - Litter Task Force

3pm - September 29, 2005
DEM Fester Conference Room

Attending: Greg Gerritt (ECRI), Nancy McIntyre (DOA), Lynn Ruggeri (Conservation Commissioners), Anita San Antonio (RI Food Dealers Association), Barry Schiller (Sierra Club), John Trevor (RI RRC), Jeff Fornaro (Earth Day RI), Tom Getz (DEM)

After introductions T. Getz reported the new DEM Director Dr. Michael Sullivan had indicated he may try to have DEM recapture the proceeds of the litter tax not now going to Corrections or RIDOT for litter pickup, about \$1 million/year, for a DEM litter control program. The task force indicated it would be willing to help in this process, still in the beginning stages, especially if it gets to the legislature.

A. San Antonio reported the new plastic bag recycling initiative was working very well and had received excellent publicity. 75% of shoppers are now going to stores that participate in the plastic bag recycling program. She also indicated that almost 400 containers of bags were collected from Shaw's supermarkets in one week. She mentioned that pallet wrappings are also being collected. There was mention of Eastside Market's incentive, i.e. refund for those who bring their own bags); to reduce plastic bag litter in the long run.

The Task Force discussed the 888-CLEANRI anti-litter hotline that is currently run by RIRRC, but not well publicized. There was some discussion that if the litter tax was recaptured; it might go back to DEM which more directly has litter control in its legislative mandate.

There was a review of the New Jersey litter control programs in a report distributed by T. Getz and J. Trevor. It was noted that the report suggested that a comprehensive statewide program can be effective, that container deposits were an expensive way to reduce litter, that an advertising campaign can be effective, that much of the litter (45%) is accidental rather than deliberate, that adopt-a-spot programs were not especially effective, and that hiring a statewide non-profit can be a good way to run the program. Two local non-profits, Earth Day RI and Groundworks Providence were mentioned as two possible local organizations.

J. Trevor indicated an update of the state's solid waste plan is likely to go to public hearings before the State Planning Council later this fall. He is now a member of that group. He indicated there was no anti-litter program in the draft update, even though it is part of the solid waste stream. Thus the task force may want to consider addressing this at the hearing. J. Trevor said he would let the Task Force know when the hearing is scheduled.

L Ruggeri noted that some 700,000 tourists visited the I-95 Richmond Information Center but here was no information or active recycling on that site. There was a brief discussion about how the new visitor center being built on I-295 might address that issue.

The next Task Force meeting was scheduled for 3pm, Thursday, October 20. While the Visitor center would be one agenda item, and the Audubon Society would be asked to report on the litter composition found in their coastal cleanup, the main focus would be about legislation for the

2006 session. B. Schiller reminded the group about a bill (H5621) to ban smoking on some public beaches introduced, but not enacted, in the 2005 session. All members of the task force are asked to forward legislative suggestions to Tom Getz by October 14, a week before the meeting. He would then distribute the suggestions to the Task Force prior to the next meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Barry Schiller, recorder