

Litter Task Force Meeting

October 20, 2005

235 Promenade Street, Providence
Conference Room B (Legal Services) 3-4 PM

Draft Meeting Minutes

Present: Terri Bisson (RIDEM, meeting convener), Eugenia Marks (Audubon), Liz Stone, (RI DEM) Barry Schiller (Sierra Club) Greg Gerritt (ECRI), Anita San Antonio (RI Food Dealers Association), Jeff Fornaro (Earth Day, RI), Lynn Tondat Ruggeri (Conservation Commissioner)

September Meeting Notes were approved.

2006 Legislative Initiatives:

The deadline for submission to the Governor's office is Nov 10th.

Litter Tax: Recouping litter tax monies for purpose of litter control/education is on the RI DEM's director's list of initiatives that will be considered for submission to the Governor. There was consensus by the task force that trying to re-coup the litter tax is preferable over reallocation of funds or increasing the litter tax. In addition, Barry suggested that separate stand-alone bill be submitted; the deadline would be by early February. Eugenia stated that any submission would need to have wider appeal either through Tourism and/or by demonstrating an increase in revenue stream, such as through recovered aluminum cans. As an example, Coastal clean up recovered 3,500 cans in just one clean-up effort. Jeff and Barry both suggested that legislative support could come from representatives of individual towns and cities, as they would benefit from a return to local litter control programs if the litter tax monies were fully restored for litter control purposes.

There was consensus that any recouped litter tax funds be administered by RIDEM to distribute to towns and cities for litter control programs and for any such bill to have assurances that such funds not be taken away by reallocation/cuts from other RIDEM programs. Lynn suggested that an example of a project or expenditure for returned funds could be for a litter control and recycling education campaign at the Welcome centers where millions of people each year could see.

ACTION: Barry agreed to take the lead on working on an outside bill. Jeff agreed to help Barry on this to submit the bill simultaneously to both the House and Senate Finance Committees.

Other relevant information: Liz Stone presented the following data: The beverage tax for FY 2005 and FY 2004 generated approx 1.6 million each year. The amount of expenses by DOC for litter works crews as \$231,000/year and by DOT was \$75,000-95,000/year.

Summary: These other issues were discussed and actions/tasks for these initiatives are given below:

Bills requiring a charge on plastic bags and bottle bill refund: Both of these did not have task force consensus. Concerning a bag refund program: Anita stated reform was better served if this were a voluntary rather than a mandatory program on the part of retail stores. Anita mentioned the recent statewide successes for plastic bag recycling and how an Eagle Scout will be using the Trek made from RI recycled plastic bag for decking (public project?). Jeff stated the importance for the consumer to see

a product/outcome for these and other recycling efforts. Regarding the bottle bill, since glass is now used as the required cover each day for the land fill, perhaps a limited bottle bill that concentrated on aluminum can could be considered.

Bill banning smoking on public beaches

Bill addressing proper fish line/net disposal education (to reduce entanglement of wildlife, esp. turtles in both fresh and salt water areas)

Bill addressing proper tire disposal that would lead to reducing the serious problem of abandoned tires, esp. in waterways.

Regarding this last item on the environmental impact of improper tire disposal, Jeff mentioned that some years ago an independent company was willing to put into place a recycling program for discarded tires for only 1.75-disposal fee per tire. However, because the RIDEM directorship at that time did not and would not resolve the details/procedures with this company, after two years the company withdrew the plan due to lack of action.

ACTION/TASKS TO WORK ON THESE LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES BY NEXT MEETING:

PLASTIC BAGS:

- **Anita San Antonio was going to check with Stop and Shop to see if they do or do not have the 5-cent donation per bag to the Nature Conservancy when someone brings their own bag(s)**

Fish-Line:

- **Eugenia Marks will send Liz Stone some suggestions/solutions to the Fish line problem. One suggestion might be to have an educational piece on this as part of the boater/fishing registration, either on licenses and/or at the office/online sites for people to see when they apply /renew their licenses.**

Non-Smoking at beaches:

- **Jeff Fornaro will contact Peter Lewis to see the status of bill sponsorship for the ban on smoking at public beaches**
- **Liz Stone will check the RIDEM regulations to see what authority DEM might have to change the regulations for state owned parks/beaches to put into place a ban on smoking.**
- **Greg Gerritt will check with the RI Lung Association to see their interest in such a bill**

Tire Disposal:

- **Terri Bisson will check RIDEM to see what the current practice/regulations/fees for tire disposal.**

Other agenda items to be continued for next month's agenda:

Results of Audubon's coastal cleanup
Richmond RI Welcome/Visitor Center recycling discussion

Next Meeting November 17, 2005

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lynn Tondat Ruggeri