

Minutes of the Waste Prevention Steering Committee Recyclables Subcommittee August 1, 2007

Attendees:

Chair: Jim McCullough, Legislator from Williston

Members: Renny Perry, Vergennes City Manager; Judy Jamieson, Purchasing Division State of VT; Clare Innes, Chittenden Solid Waste District; Bob Blankenheim, VOCAL; Peter Crawford, Small Business Development Center;

DEC Staff Support: Dave DiDomenico; Julie Hackbarth; Carolyn Grodinsky

Background

Dave DiDomenico reviewed goals for the meeting and how the subcommittee fits into the bigger waste prevention planning process.

Julie Hackbarth presented information from the Solid Waste Program's 2001 waste composition study

<http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/wastediv/solid/pubs/VT%20WASTE%20COMP.pdf>

about the amount of recyclable materials (fibers and containers) being disposed of. The study showed the large amounts of packaging materials being disposed of because they are not recyclable. Julie mentioned a recent Chittenden Solid Waste District Study that found similar results (although slightly lower %'s). Information from the 2005 Solid Waste Diversion and Disposal Report

<http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/wastediv/solid/pubs/2005DDfullrpt.pdf>

included that the materials recycled had the highest tonnage in the fibers and containers categories (cardboard & newspapers, glass bottles & cans). The increase in the volume of plastics was noted, both in recycling and disposal. To stimulate discussion and the brainstorming exercise that followed, Julie suggested that based on this information, this subcommittee may want to focus their efforts on containers, fibers and packaging. The subcommittee agreed to focus on these three areas for waste prevention.

Subcommittee exercise to generate new solutions:

Group completed an exercise to help determine and prioritize waste prevention opportunities. Members evaluated all stages of material flow (extraction, manufacturing, distribution, retail, consumption, reuse/recycling/disposal) and tools needed such as education/public awareness, regulations, government leadership, productivity improvements, economic incentives) which could be used to meet the overall goal of waste prevention.

(The full list of ideas generated during the brainstorming exercise is listed below under **Brainstorming and Prioritizing***)

Priorities, Challenges and Next Steps

After the group brainstormed on strategies, it voted on its highest priorities.

They were:

1. Create a labeling seal of approval for recycling or promote another existing sustainability seal
 - a. DEC to research what programs already exist (including check with Jen Holliday, look to CA)
 - b. DEC to look into "buy local" for packaging including partnering with VT Chamber, look into working with Agency of Agriculture to expand their seal of approval
2. Legislative mandates for packaging
 - a. DEC to research what other states, nationally, regionally, and the EU are doing
 - b. Group to continue to vision beyond these programs
 - c. DEC to get a federal representative from Bernie Sander's, and/or Peter Welch office on the subcommittee
 - a. DEC to insure they coordinate this group's work with the Solid Waste Management Facilities Working group (Section 293b of the 2007 Capital Bill)
 - d. Challenges identified were:
 - a. Mandates that government requires for packaging
 - b. DEC staff to provide subcommittee with background information about the multifaceted purposes for packaging (send NERC primer on packaging discussion)
3. Landfill bans
 - a. DEC to research what other states, nationally, EU are doing
 - b. Group to continue to vision beyond these programs
 - c. DEC to ID specific materials for a ban based on which materials have existing markets
 - i. and concurrently help construct the infrastructure
 - d. How will the bans be enforced?
4. Requiring manufacturers to be responsible for their packaging (product stewardship)
5. Waste prevention in schools
 - a. DEC to research existing programs in VT, could pattern after DARE program, fire prevention programs
 - b. Environmental curricula and infrastructure become part of school accreditation process (include under potential legislation)
6. Providing recycling opportunities away from home (special events)
 - a. Legislation for businesses, towns... to provide recycling away from home. Require establishments to have bins
 - b. Look to model programs
 - c. Challenges
 - i. Isn't easy to implement!!!! Even with recycling bins

Brainstorming and Prioritizing list*

The following ideas were posted and placed on sticky notes under the seven categories listed below. The second part of the exercise was to prioritize the ideas by voting based on 1) easiest to implement, 2) most exciting or 3) biggest results. The number of votes for each is shown below:

Note: for more details on definitions of potential strategies and programs around the world see pages 14 - 47 of the State of Oregon's Waste Prevention report at <http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/pubs/docs/sw/WPSBkgd07.pdf>

PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS - *(Such programs are aimed at improving resource productivity from manufacturers and business service providers. These include: Pollution prevention (P2), Lean manufacturing, Green permitting, Lightweighting, Industrial ecology, Technological advances, including Miniaturization and dematerialization and Micro- and nanotechnology. These efforts are all aimed at changing private-sector behavior through education, technical assistance, incentives, and/or regulation, and have considerable overlap with other strategies)*

- Provide incentives for companies to "green" their supply chains, i.e. use fiber board for appliance packaging - National/State (3 votes)
- Organize retail space in stores by environmentally friendly packaging (similar to natural food areas of a grocery store)

ALTERNATIVE BUSINESS MODELS *(Emerging business models have emerged that reduce waste and prevent toxic pollution. These alternative models include: Design for Environment DfE, Supply Chain Management, Product Stewardship, leasing and "servicing")*

- Require manufacturing responsibility for packaging (6 votes)
- Charge package to product ratio fees (1 vote)
- Provide grants to manufacturers to retool to meet environmental standards

REGULATIONS

- Legislative mandates to reduce packaging material (6 votes)
- Landfill ban on recyclable materials (5 votes)
- Ban the use plastic film bags, styrofoam containers and plastic clamshell containers
- Expand the bottle bill - include water bottles for example (4 votes)
- Incentives for Environmental management systems for businesses - i.e. ISO 1400 system
- Clear marking requirements on types of waste to direct waste stream
- Require packaging be made of recyclable materials
- Work regionally and nationally on packing reduction

- Work regionally and nationally on distribution changes to reduce transportation requirements
- Legislative bans on various products
- Institute a packaging tax

ECONOMIC INCENTIVES

- Institute pay per bag system (3 votes)
- Weigh household waste and pay if over a specific amount, free if under (2 votes)
- Provide more funding for business assistance, VT Business Environmental Partnership (2 votes)
- De-manufacturing of electronics (1 vote)
- Fund R&D for manufacturing waste products
- Provide incentives to have items repaired - not disposed of, encourage durability
- Provide incentives to buy locally
- Provide incentives for alternative ways to display items - rather than packaging
- Offer incentives to use canvas tote bags at stores
- Provide incentives for businesses that resell, refurbish or provide to low income, charity etc.
- Increase funding to Solid Waste Districts and Association of VT Recyclers

EDUCATION & PUBLIC AWARENESS

- Create an R3 star labeling program or “product stewardship” seal of approval (10 votes)
- Teach waste prevention in schools (6 votes)
- Look for recyclable materials in business sector’s dumpsters (1 vote)
- Start a campaign “You are not buying the package” - demand less (1 vote)
- More marketing for UBEP and EPP database (1 vote)
- Discourage consumption
- Discourage single use or disposable products

GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP

- Start a campaign to reduce paper use in state and local governments (2 votes)
- Include a packaging “Take back” requirement for state government (1 vote)
- Require EPP (environmentally preferable purchasing) for state purchasing (1 vote)

RECYCLING

- Capture recyclables generated outside the home - provide more containers where needed (8 votes)
- Develop markets for #3 through 7 plastics/capture all recyclable materials (3 votes)

Next Steps for Subcommittee and DEC Planning Team

1. Next meeting on **August 21 at 9:00 am, room 10 in the State House in Montpelier.** (DEC to develop meeting agenda)
2. DEC Team to research topics listed above and provide information to members before the meeting.

Members of the Recyclable products Subcommittee (to include materials such as paper, plastics, glass, metals, packaging and to include product stewardship and opportunities for both waste prevention and recycling)

Note: * = member of steering committee

Julie Hackbarth and Dave DiDomenico, Carolyn Grodinsky DEC Staff Support

Sector	Organization	Representative
Citizen	Legislator	Jim McCullough* Chair
Citizen	VOCAL	Bob Blankenheim
Business	Green Mt Coffee Roaster	Paul Comey*
Business	Small Business Development Center	Peter Crawford*
Business Retail/Grocery	Hannaford	Megan Hellstedt*
Gov	BGS State Purchasing	Judy Jamieson*
Solid Waste District	CSWD	Claire Innes*
VLCT	State	Karen Horn
Local town	Vergennes city manager	Renny Perry
Local town	St Johnsbury	Dale Urey
Local town	Williston	Rick McGuire
Local Town/legislator	Underhill	Bill Frank