

**Minutes of the Waste Prevention Steering Committee  
Recyclables Subcommittee  
August 21, 2007**

**Attendees:**

*Chair:* Jim McCullough, Legislator from Williston

*Members:* Judy Jamieson, Purchasing Division State of VT; Clare Innes, Chittenden Solid Waste District; Bob Blankenheim, VOCAL; Peter Crawford, Small Business Development Center; Matt Deluca, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters

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

**Updates**

VOCAL - doing recycling at Champlain Valley Fair with help from CSWD, will work with vendors to recycle cardboard and will set up recycling bins next to trash cans

Review of waste prevention related information from an ASTSWMO state solid waste managers' conference in Portland, Oregon.

1. Recommend looking at entire life cycles of products (energy savings from waste prevention far outweigh collection and processing costs).
2. A related archived webcast of a talk titled "Life Cycle Thinking and Solid Waste: A State's Perspective" is available at this website: <http://www.clu-in.org/live/archive.cfm> Once you click on the link, scroll down the page and the ASTSWMO Conference webcast is the third one listed, from the top.
3. Key documents developed by the Oregon Waste Prevention Program are available at this website: <http://www.deq.state.or.us/lq/sw/wasteprevention/wpstrategy.htm>
  - a. Oregon Waste Prevention Strategy
  - b. Background paper #1 - "How waste generation has changed and the possible causes of these changes."
  - c. Background paper #2- "The relationship between waste prevention, generation, consumption and broader environmental concerns. "
4. OR Oregon has added water bottles to their bottle bill, effective January 2008.
- 5.

**Review of Brainstorming list, is anything missing from the priorities list:**  
Look for ways to streamline hauler routes

**Refining priorities, Challenges and Next Steps August 1 meeting minutes at:**  
<http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/wastediv/R3/WPplanning/steering.htm>

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

1. **Promote Standards:** Create a labeling seal of approval for recycling or promote another existing sustainability seal  
<http://www.epa.gov/innovation/international/ecolabel.htm>
  - a. Germany's blue angel [http://www.blauer-engel.de/englisch/navigation/body\\_blauer\\_engel.htm](http://www.blauer-engel.de/englisch/navigation/body_blauer_engel.htm) and <http://www.greenlabelspurchase.net/oe-blue-angel.html>
  - b. Green Seal program <http://www.greenseal.org/>
  - c. Do we promote a labeling program locally, nationally, or do we look to existing efforts to include more waste prevention in their labeling criteria?
    - i. Look to larger states such as CA, NJ, NY, MA, MN (Carolyn to request for information through the JTR listserve)
  - d. Do we make it mandatory or a voluntary tool that companies want to use (a marketing and sales tool)?
  - e. Best to use an existing standard and make sure it includes criteria that incorporate waste prevention
  - f. Challenges
    - i. Expensive to implement if done on a state scale
    - ii. Identifying the standard and taking into consideration the product life, protection, etc.
  - g. Check with WalMart, and other large retailers for their packaging reduction initiatives  
<http://www.walmartfacts.com/articles/4564.aspx>
  - h. 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
  - i. Launch an awards program for green products. Could tie with DEC's Governor's awards program  
<http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/ead/gap/index.htm>

## 2. Source reduction (waste prevention) for packaging

Packaging includes primary packaging, secondary packaging, transport packaging, retail display... Groups still needs to define what is packaging and what parts (packaging types) does this group want to focus on. Packaging types can be illustrated using an inverted triangle.

DEC to research what has been proposed in other states and what is the status of these bills? Jim McCullough to check with the National Council of State Legislators

Can we mandate certain types of packaging such as Styrofoam be replaced with molded pulp or other. (Ask Claire for clarification of what she said at meeting)

- a. DEC to research what other states, nationally, regionally, and the EU are doing<sup>i</sup> (see endnote about EPA's packaging work)

- b. Jim to check National State Legislative list serve for any legislation proposed in other states.
- c. State or region to provide incentives for research and development for source reduced packaging and more environmentally friendly packaging. (Carolyn to check with minutes from last Northeast Recycling Council NERC meeting about R&D for packaging). State assistance to manufactures to retool manufacturing facility to reduce packaging.
  - a. SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING COALITION  
<http://www.sustainablepackaging.org/>
  - b. Universities with a packaging specialty include RIT, MICHIGAN STATE, RUTGERS
- d. Group to continue to vision beyond these programs
- e. Assist businesses to determine/calculate green house gas impact of a product.
- f. DEC to get a federal representative from Senator Sanders, Leahy 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)
- g. Require manufacturers to be responsible for their packaging (product stewardship)
  - a. Look to national organizations such as the Product Stewardship institute <http://www.productstewardship.us/> to include packaging in their efforts
- h. 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 (Carolyn to send NERC primer on packaging discussion)

### 3. Landfill bans

- a. Northeast Recycling Council report  
[http://www.nerc.org/documents/recycling\\_rules.html](http://www.nerc.org/documents/recycling_rules.html)  
summarizes landfill bans for 10 NE states from DE and NJ up to ME. (Carolyn to check with EPA JTR listserve for packaging bans and look at archives. Also Nova Scotia Canada bans on packaging materials)
  - i. Fibers, glass and containers are the most recyclable materials collected through Vermont facilities (from 2005 diversion data)
    - 1. Need to insure adequate infrastructure exists throughout the state for whichever materials get targeted for a ban. (including collection sites with milk runs)

- b. DEC to ID specific materials for a ban based on which materials have existing markets. Will concurrently need to know the current capabilities of the SWDs and the private sector to divert materials

#### 4. Waste prevention in schools

- a. DEC to research existing programs in VT, could pattern after DARE program, fire prevention programs, Association of Vermont Recyclers -- <http://www.vtrecyclers.org/>, FoodWorks -- <http://tworiverscenter.org/home.htm> Highfields Institute -- <http://www.highfieldsinstitute.org/>
- b. Create network of teachers to promote waste prevention and reduction (similar to Master Composters <http://www.uvm.edu/mastergardener/mastercomposter/>, Train the Trainer)
- c. Environmental curricula and infrastructure become part of school accreditation process (include under potential legislation)
- d. Look to other sustainability organizations such as Vermont Earth Institute <http://www.vtearthinstitute.org/>

#### 5. Providing recycling opportunities away from home (special events, airport, convenience stores, downtowns...)

- a. Need carrots (more than sticks?) and sticks
- b. Legislation for businesses, towns.... to provide recycling away from home. Require establishments to have bins
- c. Look to model programs - need a carrot and stick approach
- d. Need to work with special event organizers to understand roadblocks and address the challenges
  - i. Provide incentives - pilot projects, grant funding to develop case studies
- e. Challenges
  - i. Resource issue - education, costs, contamination
    - 1. Could there be statewide resources that could serve throughout the state (in addition to Peter Crawford of the Small Business Development Center)
    - 2. Could get some of the large companies to help fund some of these efforts

#### Potential Funding Sources:

Mill tax for tax on convenience packaging? (CHECK WITH ANDREA COHEN - WAS THIS PART OF GREEN UP?)

Carolyn to check with Chris Beling - can with bridge the energy savings through source reduction and reuse and recycling to the successful energy star program?

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## <sup>i</sup> EPA Packaging Activities

EPA collaborates with many manufacturers, retailers, and trade associations to achieve its goals. EPA is working with them to better manage packaging materials by:

- Studying successful programs and collecting data;
- Sharing information about successful programs;
- Helping to implement container and packaging management plans; and
- Conducting education and outreach campaigns

EPA is participating with major retailers (Wal-Mart and Target) and CPGs (consumer packaged goods companies, such as Unilever, SC Johnson, Estee Lauder, Nike, etc.), packaging suppliers and trade associations to reduce the amount of packaging in the municipal solid waste stream. EPA's work with the value comprises

- design elements (Wal-Mart packaging scorecard, material selection project with the Sustainable Packaging Coalition, "right-sizing", design for disassembly) (Sara Hartwell is working with DuPont to develop criteria for their sustainable packaging awards)
- consumer education & outreach (packaging eco-label project with the Sustainable Packaging Coalition and the FTC, significant revisions to packaging portion of EPA's Product Stewardship website, incorporating packaging standards into EPEAT, CPG & retailer messaging),
- projects with a package-specific focus (plastic/paper/reusable bags, the implications of biodegradable packaging)

### Sustainable Packaging Coalition

EPA is a founding member of the Sustainable Packaging Coalition, a group of packaging industry professionals formed in 2004. SPC represents all packaging materials, across the entire supply chain, working to define issues relating to the environmental footprint of packaging, and to suggest and implement solutions. The coalition provides a framework for discussion on issues and ideas, and works collaboratively on projects to advance the sustainability of packaging. These projects include a consensus definition of sustainable packaging, and guidance on sustainable packaging design -- all of which support our goals of reducing the amount of packaging in the municipal solid waste stream.

EPA is working with the Coalition to identify and use innovative, functional packaging that promotes economic and environmental health. EPA has made really good progress in packaging recycling. From 2001 and 2005 the recycling rate for packaging material increased by 1.5 percent - and one percent of that increase occurred between 2003 and 2005. EPA is working actively with industry partners and state and local governments to ensure that the trend

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continues, by taking advantage of systems already in place, as well as designing and implementing new systems.

**Design Guidelines for Sustainable Packaging (v.1)** a design resource and guidance on the design and development of environmentally responsible packaging

**Merge Tool** - EPA awarded a grant to the SPC to redevelop the Merge Tool - a lifecycle based tool to assess the environmental impacts of packaging design and materials

### **Wal-Mart**

EPA is working with retailers like Wal-Mart on ways that they can influence their supply chain to reduce the environmental footprint of packaging. Wal-Mart has been working with their extensive supply chain to drive environmental innovation in packaging, including developing a "packaging scorecard" that will help suppliers and Wal-Mart's procurement staff evaluate the environmental impact of packaging on their shelves. EPA has been working with Wal-Mart and their supply chain since they started this effort, because EPA believes their packaging goals overlap with EPA goals.

\*One element of the scorecard is the greenhouse gas emissions of the package as calculated by our Waste Reduction Model (WARM). [WARM was designed as a tool for companies and waste managers to assess the GGE and energy impacts of their waste management practices. By quantifying the climate impacts of waste management decisions, companies and others can measure the benefits of their actions.]

For your more info on the Local Government Recycling Toolkit (final in October/November of this year) please see the following links:

This is the toolkit: <http://www2.ergweb.com/projects/obd/localgov/>

user name = obd

password = outreach

This is the calculator: <http://www2.ergweb.com/recyclemodel/index.cfm>

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