

Waste Prevention Full Steering Committee Minutes September 11, 2007

Attendees:

Erich Kruger, ReNew Materials and Salvage; Vicky Tebbetts, VT Hospitality Council; Peter Crawford, VT SBDC; Tracy, VOCAL; Judy Jamieson, State BGS Purchasing Division; Renny Perry, City Manager of Vergennes, Karen Horn, VT League of Cities and Towns; Jim McCullough, Williston Representative; Jen Holliday, Claire Innes, CSWD, Donna Barlow Casey, CSWD; Jessica Edgarly, Toxics Action Center; Cathy Jamieson, DEC Solid Waste Program Manager, Paul Comey, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters; Annie MacMillan, Agency of Agriculture; Mary Ann Remolador, Northeast Recycling Council

DEC Support Staff:

Dave DiDomenico, Jeff Fehrs, Carolyn Grodinsky, Julie Hackbarth, Buzz Surwilo

Next Steps:

1. Next steering committee meeting - Oct. 23, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Montpelier State House Room 10.
2. EWaste/HHW and Organics groups to meet again before October 23rd and report back to main steering committee with priorities
3. Other groups meet one more time (if needed) to refine and provide more details on the "homework" assignments
4. Group will consider developing specific *Guiding Principles/Mission Statement* to present as part of the final product. (get examples of Guiding Principals from CVSWMD, can look at Precautionary Principle)
 - a. All priorities from the subcommittees should meet the Guiding Principals
5. Use October meeting to look at the commonalities between subcommittees
6. Prior to the Oct. 23 meeting, DEC will put the subcommittee recommendations into a table organized by type of approach. This will help the steering committee to review similarities or differences recommended by the 4 subcommittees for education, for mandates, etc.
7. At end point of recommendations, need to look at total costs (social, environmental), life cycle costs. Comment: This important factor is very hard to implement! Need to at least pass the "straight face test" for the recommendations.

Discussion on Integrating Work of this Subcommittee with other Planning Processes

Jeff Fehrs described how the results of the Waste Prevention Planning efforts could be incorporated into the Vermont Solid Waste Management Plan (State Plan). The State Plan is adopted by the ANR Secretary every 5 years and establishes solid waste management goals, critical issues, and action steps for the state overall. DEC staff envisions the State Plan would be amended to include a new waste prevention and diversion chapter that reflects the recommendations of the Waste Prevention Steering Committee. When amending the State Plan, DEC must follow the Vermont Administrative Procedures Act, which is a relatively long and involved process. The State Plan was last adopted in 2006, meaning it is due expire in 2011. DEC staff expects the State Plan will be completely revised prior to readoption in 2011. The State Plan could be revised (in whole or part) and readopted at any time before 2011. One option is to adopt the Steering Committee's recommendations without amending the State plan. DEC can do this because the Steering Committee's recommendations will be consistent with the State Plan (it is hard to imagine the recommendation not being consistent), meaning DEC can adopt them at any time.

Some Steering Committee members raised concerns about not revising the State Plan to incorporate the Committee's recommendation before 2011, since this provides more certainty the recommendations will be implemented. Jeff Fehrs noted the Steering Committee could request, as part of its recommendations, that the State Plan be revised soon after the Steering Committee finalizes its recommendations.

- Tracy - recommends having members of this committee be part of the legislatively appointed State Solid Waste Plan Review
- Jim - What's going to happen when the other group gets a hold of this work, may lose some of the individual great ideas (such as controversial recommendation - what won't fly) How to stay involved - may be asked to testify before the legislature
- Erich - requested that this group be kept in the loop about the legislative committee group work
- Jen - What will be the driver to commit the Agency to act on the recommendations?

Review Subcommittee Priorities:

C&D

- Develop regional markets

- Need to discuss specifics about how these markets will be developed and the need to use existing other existing agencies and organizations (such as Sustainable Jobs Fund, Vermont Environmental Consortium) to help develop the infrastructure. Comments: Would like to discuss how regional markets will be developed. Markets are too far away.
- Landfill bans - bans would be phased in with conventional materials (such as cardboard, metals, asphalt, brick, and concrete) first than harder to manage materials (such as asphalt roofing shingles, drywall)
 - Issue: Rural areas/dispersed locations - environmental impacts of recycling might be worse than disposal
 - Issue: Need to look at implications of a ban - rural and more dispersed areas might see issues with illegal dumping more emissions
 - Issue: 46% of greenhouse gas emissions are due to transportation.
 - Comment - Already transporting long distances for disposal
 - Look regionally to passing bans - Northeast Recycling Council has a summary of bans in the NE on its website http://www.nerc.org/documents/recycling_rules.html
Comment: Is consistency between states possible?
 - Issue: Bans can drive materials to cross state lines
- Include Waste Reduction (reduce, reuse, recycling) in Job-site Specifications
- Tax shifting
- Provide low interest loans
- Work with regional and national organizations
- Incorporate more waste prevention in the Act 250 application process and provide for enforcement so that plans are actually implemented
- Switch to IRC (International Residential Code)
 - There are construction code changes going on right now around efficiency (including incentives) (currently towns have option to adopt codes, current code is focused on life protection)
- Reduce packaging of C&D materials - especially finish products in construction (e.g. require take back, include reduction in specifications).

C&D subcommittee work is done. Task is now how to take recommendations to the next step

Recyclable Products

- Promote labeling standards (create our own or promote an existing one (e.g. Green Seal)
 - Use labeling program

- Comment; How can we build off of a successful labeling program for waste prevention, such as Energy Star.
- Target packaging
 - National efforts exist to target packaging (see end note from EPA)
 - R&D needed - edible packaging
 - “product stewardship” labeling for products (Paul highlighted the Timberland Company is starting to do this)
 - Big business already doing this (e.g. Coke reducing thickness of their bottles)
- Landfill bans (starting with materials with existing markets (glass, paper, plastic bottles) and then building infrastructure to add other materials and underserved parts of the state
 - Issue: Infrastructure currently varies around the state
 - Comment: Did the subcommittee look to incentives and incentive policies rather than bans.
 - Comment: Explore local options for legislation -- SWDs can pass local ordinances, VLCT can help to promote these ordinances across the state
- Education - especially target schools to start the paradigm shift (get waste reduction in the curriculum)
 - Comment: Also need to address other sectors, such as commercial sectors/ businesses, education, government
 - Comment: Some paper mills closing in NE, leads to higher paper costs. Now is a good window to promote waste prevention for paper.
 - Need education programs for local solid waste district boards
 - Need basic education about recycling - what the recycling logo means? What can be recycled and composted and what cannot?
 - Hard to distinguish what is compostable vs recyclable
 - Comment: Some televisions show have a requirement to show recycling in their shows (such as Law and Order)
- Provide recycling opportunities away from home (fairs, downtowns, gas stations, convenience stores, fast food, airports...)
 - Comment: EPA has a program for this “*Recycling on the Go*”
<http://www.epa.gov/recycleonthego/>

Misc. comments

- Recycle Bank is a good tool (paying consumers to recycle) to promote recycling <http://www.recyclebank.com/>
- Bottle bill - could be expanded into other materials (other types of litter)
- There has been a jump in price of paper. Could result in greater demand for recycled paper.
- What about environmentally preferable purchasing? Has this been missed?

Organics (note: the group's top priorities are linked)

- Education
 - Provide case studies to specific studies
 - Promote existing venues such as VT Fresh Network
- Infrastructure development
- Incentives
 - Incentive based rate structure (price by weight)
- Legislation
 - Ban certain organics from waste stream
 - Make waste water treatment plant improvements so can co-compost biosolids
 - Comment - Mandate composting by grocery stores and restaurants. Ban certain waste streams from landfills.
- Minimize packaging and add compostable content

Issues

- Regulations can be an impediment to building an infrastructure. Changes need to come from the top down. Not just isolated to VT, this is a national problem
- Need to provide curbside collection of organics in densely populated areas and subsidize backyard composting bins
 - Comment: In MA, their wastewater program linked with the organics program to reduce use of garbage disposals in order to reduce damage on pipes and to compost the organics resource

Other comments: Promote Vermont Fresh Network. Introduce zero waste lunch challenge. Coordinate with wastewater management (garbage disposals)

Next steps

How do you find the appropriate balance between education and regulation?

Electronic Waste and Household Hazardous Waste (e-waste/HHW)

- Need for public education and public awareness. Increasing volumes.
- Product Stewardship. Make products less toxic and more recyclable. Use universal design standards.
- Landfill bans for export of waste for incineration, international ban of e-waste, landfill bans on ewaste)
- State should lead by example (environmentally preferable purchasing)
- Develop a statewide infrastructure for these wastes

Key Themes of the Meeting

Productivity Improvements, purchasing
Education and Public Awareness, labeling
Standards (Model, _____)

Regulations, Government Leadership, Incentives

Regional Markets
Infrastructure Development

**Guiding Principles that will help make Waste Prevention work (developed at
June 18th 2007 first Steering Committee meeting)**

- Change perspectives
- Measurable Goals
- Holistic/Sustainable Approach
- Infrastructure
- Economic Effectiveness
- Common Sense
- Leadership

Next Steering Committee Meeting:

**Tuesday October 23rd
9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Room 10 at the State House, Montpelier**