

Waste Reduction Task Force

Waste Reduction Goal & Methodology Work Group #1

Second Meeting – November 15, 2007

Conference Call Summary

Work Group Members Participating: Bruce Wood, Bill Yearwood, Lucian Lawson

Facilitator: Nick Lytle, TDEC

This meeting was held in conference call format due to the wide range of home locations of the participants. Lisa Williams & Charles Wood were unavailable for the call, but added comments during a phone conversation later that day with Nick Lytle. Phillip Nappi was also unavailable for participation.

Three specific items were slated for discussion during the meeting.

- Review and finalize the survey to be sent out to identified stakeholders within the state.
- Discuss possible waste reduction goals
- Rank top 5 priority topics from October Task Force Meeting for Task Force meeting on Dec 4th.

The discussion began with a quick talk about the survey. The initial draft survey was 8 pages and all agreed to be too lengthy to be effective. The majority felt that whatever is done with the survey, it needed to be much shorter, possibly as short as one page or at least front and back of one page.

The group talked about the importance of the survey and clarified its need. Most were in agreement that if rules were enacted that significantly changed the way programs were run, then stakeholders should have at least some sort of input, and the survey could help accomplish this. There was an expression that the survey should be changed from "1-5 scale" rating questions to free response questions. It was noted that too many of the questions were confusing and many of the members did not know what some of the questions were pertaining to.

Lucian Lawson suggested taking the survey to the East TN Solid Waste directors meeting the following week and getting others' input on it. With that input the survey will be changed and submitted to the task force on Dec 4th. All seemed to be in agreement with this.

The next topic of discussion was the 5 topics to highlight during the next Task Force meeting.

Below is a list of those items:

1. **Clearly define why we are considering changes to the current waste reduction goals.** What are the weaknesses and downfalls of the current methods? What are the positives? How can we fix those things that are wrong? Are the current waste reduction goals leading to true waste reduction?
2. **Develop a method to isolate and keep different waste groups out of all landfills.** The group felt that firm landfill bans might not be the best course of action. By telling people that they “can’t” do something, then that tends to make them want to do it. Also the implementation across the state of a standardized ban would be impossible. Instead of this, choices need to be given. What programs can we implement to encourage diversion of materials away from landfills? How can we make these programs more economically appealing than mass landfilling of all materials? This pertains to both Class I and Class III/IV disposal.
3. **Find ways to provide better solid waste services, recycling, and landfill diversion without putting additional strain on already cash strapped local governments.** This was an idealistic goal of the group and be in the interest of all in the state. The problem is how to come up with answers to this.
4. **Implement the ideals of full cost accounting into all solid waste programs.** By this the group wanted to emphasize that they were not only looking at the present day cost of disposal per measured unit but also all potential long term costs. This should be done by factoring in all future environmental costs of landfilling not limited to but including: devaluation of land, ground water issues, proper solid waste management, and the urgency for waste reduction becomes more apparent and convincing. Education at all levels could achieve this much in the same way other environmental programs have been presented. The ideals that “trash does not simply go away” and “what you dump might be what you drink” are key to this effort.
5. **Strive to limit transportation of materials.** How can we keep more of the waste stream local? This can be by more on site composting activities and more recycling centers closer to the communities. This makes each community and region more responsible for the waste they create.

Other Points of Discussion:

Yard Waste Bans/Other Landfill Bans: The group generally argues against on the following grounds:

- Alternative disposal is not universal across the state, so any band would have to be dated out into the future, and possibly only enforced in certain areas. Numerous other unanswered questions exist, such as if any contamination levels will need to be explored, and what other area states have done to successfully enact bans. Are these other state’s bans successful?
- Banning of plastic bags speeds up the decomposition of matter in landfills along with leachate recirculation through the landfill.

- Giving counties and cities multiple options for recycling and landfill diversion.
- Giving out primarily positive rewards for quality programs rather than handing out fines and violations.
- Potential for additional grants to develop programs to capture significant amounts of organic waste from the waste stream and manage it locally.

The group will correspond through e-mail and by phone before the Dec 4th meeting to organize thoughts for discussion and to finalize the survey.