

Waste Reduction Task Force

Second Meeting –October 23, 2007

Meeting Summary

The second meeting of the Waste Reduction Task Force took place at the L&C Towers in Nashville on October 23, 2007.

After a call to order, review of meeting rules, objectives, and some housekeeping issues; the meeting began. Facilitator Don McCain reviewed topics from the “Parking Lot” that had been submitted during the first meeting. A course of action was discussed for each topic, and it was discussed if each item was suitable for the day’s agenda or needed to be put off until a later date. There was a consensus that the agenda was ok.

Bob Knight, Division of Solid Waste Management, presented a short history of waste reduction in Tennessee. Several members of the Task Force requested that this presentation be posted on the website as handouts were not available at the time of the meeting.

Next, each work group leader gave a recap of communications and meetings that had occurred since the last Task Force meeting. Each group leader summarized their topics and suggested any work group recommendations to the full Task Force. It was decided at the suggestion of Mr. McCain that after each group’s presentation, discussion would take place immediately while ideas are still fresh in everyone’s mind. The summary of each group’s presentation can be found under the work group section of the website currently located at: <http://www.tdec.net/swm/prwr/taskforce.shtml>.

The first to present was Phillip Nappi for the “Waste Reduction Goal and Methodology” group. In addition to the recommendation in the summary, this group discussed that Class III/IV landfills should charge by the ton rather than the cubic yard. This would allow for a more accurate measurement of materials going to Class III/IV landfills. Charging for C & D materials to be landfilled would automatically reduce the volumes being landfilled. Also discussed was that local and state government agencies should set a precedent by making material purchases of recycled Construction and Demolition material. Shelby County purchases large volumes of recycled concrete each year. It was discussed that C & D materials are highly recyclable and a suggestion was made that recycling by the larger cities should be emphasized due to existing infrastructure.

Below are the highlights of Task Force’s discussion which followed the presentation of the Waste Reduction Goal and Methodology work group.

1. A full waste stream analysis should be performed with the aid of the Tennessee State University. When finished, that waste stream analysis should be utilized to identify all those items that could be intercepted from entering the landfill system.
2. Class III/IV landfilling should not be counted towards any future recycling or diversion goals or measurements. As much as 95% of C & D materials can be recycled.

3. Landfill bans are a good way to lower landfill tonnages, but much deliberation would be needed as to a course of implementation. The Task Force was split on this issue with concerns for what resources and management plans would be available for the banned items once the ban was in place. Most agreed that the cost of equipment and infrastructure to manage banned materials was expensive. Concerns over collection, labor, and equipment burdens dominated the discussion by those members involved directly in waste collection. Also, with bans, lead time is needed to get infrastructure in place to collect and process materials. There is also a need to develop and use end markets for the materials.
4. The government could institute incentive or disincentive programs directly on landfills to encourage them to assist and promote waste reduction. Tax breaks for using products made with recycled products and charges directed towards generators of waste would also help level the playing field. It was noted repeatedly that in the end, economics would do the most to promote waste reduction.
5. The Department should analyze which counties are generating the greatest amount of solid waste, evaluate what needs to be kept out and put resources where it can do the most good.
6. Waste reduction goals might need to have flexibility to take into consideration the resources within each of the solid waste planning regions. The Task Force talked at length about fairness of sliding goals and standards for different solid waste planning regions; especially rural and urban areas.
7. Education was discussed as a key component of any goal, both of residents, but especially of elected officials and policy makers.

The Waste Reduction Goal and Methodology work group was tasked in the first meeting with finalizing a survey to poll solid waste officials in the state. The use of this survey will be to gain additional input from these officials. This will assist the Task Force in their decision making process. The final survey will be presented at the next Task Force meeting in December.

Next the Government Organizations Role work group presented ideas they had discussed in their meeting. Andy Ashford gave the key recommendations and discussion topics. A summary of discussion is listed below.

1. All local governments must share responsibility equally in waste reduction. Municipalities cannot be exempt. Methods to hold other local governments besides counties responsible must be built into any waste reduction goal. Often the counties do not control a majority of the solid waste flow and in many cases have a much smaller portion of the total population than more urban areas.
2. A re-assessment of solid waste planning boards needs to be considered. Many solid waste planning boards are dysfunctional and their roles are unclear.
3. Governments need some oversight of waste haulers. Some tracking of waste haulers is needed.
4. Solid waste infrastructure needs should be identified statewide. The Infrastructure and Financial Development work group will be addressing this topic.
5. Municipal solid waste planning boards need to take a more active role. They need to network and share information with other boards.
6. The Task Force needs to look at other states' waste management plans for answers to waste reduction programs that work. It was suggested that the Task Force look at models from San Jose CA, Portland OR, Seattle WA and Charlotte NC

7. Governments should be held accountable for only those things they can control.

Sami Barille then gave a report for the Public and Private Participation work group. The following key points came out of their discussion.

1. There is a need to increase industry and commercial participation in the waste reduction process. This can be accomplished through laws to compel them to participate in accurate reporting and disclosure of waste streams.
2. Initially in the late 80's and early 90's there was a scare that landfill space was in short supply. Once it was assumed that landfill space was abundant or at least available for the long term, the urgency for waste reduction ended. This perception of endless landfilling availability needs to be curbed.
3. Any incentive or disincentives from the state must be very clear and universally applied. Many on the Task Force felt that TDEC had a history of inconsistency in handing down penalties due to political pressures and that enforcement was slow and drawn out over many years.
4. Most industries that can recycle do because it makes economic sense. However many never do for one reason or another. The Task Force needs to study the reasons that industries do not recycle. One item mentioned was that cost advantages towards a practice must be great to affect a cultural change. Sometimes hidden costs such as additional labor required to handle a separate waste stream negate any marginal savings added by recycling.
5. Solid waste and waste reduction must be marketed as a "job creator" that can boost the state's economy, bring revenue into the state, and increase the tax base.
6. The "Bottle Bill" was discussed; however, no consensus could be reached. An informal poll was taken whether the Task Force was for or against the bottle bill. The majority were against a bottle bill as currently presented.

Next, Randy Etheridge reported for the Infrastructure and Financial Development work group. This group's discussion points are as follows:

1. Waste to energy is an avenue towards waste reduction that needs more consideration. After a recent ruling by a federal judge, it was recommended that waste tires and wood wastes be identified by law as alternative fuels to protect these commodities and the industries that rely on them as these generally burn cleaner than other fossil fuels. However, Alan Leiserson the Department's legal counsel, raised a concern that this might cause confusion between state and federal requirements. A few members expressed strong concern about the possibility of increased pollution and trace element releases that some waste to energy practices can produce.
2. Every county should provide opportunities to recycle that are available to all its residents.
3. Members of the Task Force expressed that currently a 25% reduction in waste can be achieved through an exercise in paperwork with no real waste reduction being accomplished. Any future waste reduction goals and policies need to be through quality programs and a real, tangible reduction in waste.
4. The work group suggested providing a grant for the labor involved in the start up of a recycling program should be considered. The grant would have a declining dollar amount over a couple of years with an increasing match by the local government. The reason is that the first year or two of labor costs at a recycling or waste reduction center is difficult to

maintain during the start up of a new program and can doom the program's success. There is an immediate need for help in this area.

5. The work group recommended that all government operated solid waste management operations use enterprise fund accounting or a full cost accounting method. This would mean that solid waste would be treated like any other utility. Revenues and expenses would balance, with any extra funds being used as capital funds or returned to the customers. To do this, new benchmarks would need to be established to define solid waste and its management components. A dissenting view was that even with all parts of the measurement system identical, the result might still be an unequal measurement between regions; thus comparing "apples to oranges". The main reason for this change is not for local government comparison but to know exactly what it costs to manage solid waste by each local government in Tennessee.
6. New markets need to be explored to boost the economics of recycling. Tennessee should encourage market development. Life cycle management of commodities should be considered.

After all presentations and discussions concluded, it was determined that the Task Force would forego a second day of discussion. Mr. McCain tasked each work group with looking at the bulleted notes and topics recorded from the September 27th meeting and prioritizing the top 10 issues on the list for the next meeting. Notes from the September 27th meeting can be found on the Task Force website.

A list of possible presentations for future meetings was composed and prioritized by the Task Force. TDEC was charged with organizing these presentations with the help of Task Force members for content and speaker suggestions.

This list is prioritized as follows:

1. Logistics of Construction and Demolition Recycling
2. Composting, Food and Yard Wastes
3. Collection and Transporting of Solid Waste
4. Waste Tires
5. Bottle Bill
6. Hazardous and Toxic Wastes
7. Zero Waste Goal
8. Waste Reduction Survey

Solid waste impact on groundwater from landfill leachate was deemed by the Task Force to be out of the scope of responsibility of the Task Force.

The Task Force members were encouraged to bring in outside sources of knowledge into the meetings to expand the understanding of members of various issues.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 4, 2007 at the Fleming Training Center, Murfreesboro, TN.