

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
Lansing, Michigan
Thursday, January 19, 2006 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Members in attendance: William Beckman, Janis Bobrin, Andy Buchsbaum, Steven Chester, Jim Frey, Kurt Giberson, Mike Johnston, Ellen Kohler, Maya Fishoff for Terry Link, Paul Murray, Allen Reilly, Sue Forest for Debra Rowe, Pamela Smith, William Stough, Donele Wilkins, Tom Woiwode.

DEQ Staff in attendance: Linda Albro Sparks, Dennis Armbruster, George Bruchmann, Amy Butler, Marcia Horan, Robert Jackson, Jim Kasprzak, JoAnn Merrick, Frank Ruswick, Liane Shekter-Smith.

OPENING

Frank began the meeting announcing we will be having two presentations today. Our first presentation will be from Amy Butler, Chief of Environmental Sciences and Services Division (ESSD) on pollution prevention, and our second presentation will be from JoAnn Merrick, DEQ Executive Office on the DEQ. We are interested in your thoughts on the presentations.

CURRENT ISSUES

Director Chester thanked EAC members for their time and efforts working on recommendations on the environmental justice policy. He appreciated the stimulating and engaged discussions. The issue was first brought to the EAC after discussing with Dana Debel in the Governor's Office. Director Chester indicated that he is discussing the recommendations with other department directors before transmitting to the Governor's Office. He plans on having something more definitive to share with the EAC at the February meeting.

Director Chester described the second phase of an innovative effort to improve the groundwater discharge program. That program is one-third the size of what it was in the early 1990's. To address this deficiency, the DEQ had sought \$3.4 million from legislature, but received only \$1.7 million. In addition, the Legislature wanted the DEQ to eliminate a backlog in deciding permit applications that had developed because of reductions in program size. In an attempt to address these issues, the Water Bureau developed an initiative to contact over 300 facilities holding expired permits to determine whether permits were still needed and provide incentives for updating applications and paying required fees. Over 90 percent of the facilities were contacted; 45 percent of these no longer needed permits. Bringing those facilities that do still need a permit into the program raised \$250,000 in fee revenue. The DEQ will now be taking the same approach for a second group of facilities that may also need groundwater discharge permits.

In response to a question, Director Chester provided an update on DEQ efforts to address dioxin contamination in the Midland/Tittabawassee River area. Director Chester explained the basis for the described Governor Granholm's veto of HB 4617, which would have required unnecessary testing for contamination, thereby increasing the costs and slowing environmental cleanups.

George Bruchmann, Chief of the DEQ Waste and Hazardous Materials Division indicated that the DEQ had received Dow Chemical Company's proposed Remedial Investigation Work Plan on December 29, 2005. A public meeting will be held on the Work Plan on February 9, 2006 in the Midland area. Copies of the document are available on the DEQ website and in various locations in the Midland/Tittabawassee River area. Because the document is so extensive, George anticipates that the DEQ's review will take until the end of March.

Director Chester alerted the EAC that the DEQ has issued a hazardous waste operating license to the EDS facility in Romulus. This was a decision that was required by law once EDS built the facility in compliance with its construction permit. The construction permit had been issued under Governor John Engler's administration.

In response to a question, Frank explained that there was a House Committee hearing that morning on proposed legislation to manage water withdrawals. Frank described the process in the Senate by which the package of bills was developed and the wide support that the bills enjoy. Some amendments are still being proposed. We anticipate that the House will consider and move on the bills quickly.

PRESENTATION: POLLUTION PREVENTION FUNDING ISSUES

James Kasprzak, Chief of the DEQ Financial and Business Services Division explained that much of the DEQ funding previously provided through general funds are now provided through restricted funds, such as fees. Many of these fees are coming up for renewal or involve structural deficiencies which will cause funding shortfalls in the near term. He has asked DEQ division chiefs to prepare presentations depicting their programs and funding needs. We are asking the EAC to help us refine our presentation so that we can most effectively relay our message.

Amy Butler, Chief of the DEQ Environmental Science and Services Division, gave us a presentation on pollution prevention programs and funding needs. The EAC provided comments on the presentation. Among the themes expressed in those comments were:

- Accentuating directly beneficial activities, such as clean sweeps for hazardous waste in communities and high schools.
- Describing how voluntary programs relate to regulatory programs.
- Providing an overriding message that these programs assist companies reducing costs and environmental impacts.
- Presenting the business case for needed funding.
- Making sure the presentation is short enough to maintain the attention of the audience.
- Effectively depicting partnerships and testimonials.
- Tailoring the presentation to the audience.

- Quantifying program benefits.

PRESENTATION: DEQ OVERVIEW

JoAnn Merrick, Executive Assistant to the Director explained that the DEQ is developing a presentation to provide an overview of the DEQ and what we do. This presentation would be general, and could be used for legislative briefings, new employee orientation, and even with community groups. It can also be tailored so that it could provide more specific information on a given aspect of DEQ operations, such as what a particular division does. JoAnn gave the presentation and asked the EAC to comment on how we could more effectively provide the information.

The EAC provided comments on the presentation. Among the themes expressed in those comments were:

- Provide a historical context for the DEQ and its programs.
- Provide a consistent format for all slides that visually depict the DEQ's work.
- Accurately stating the interconnection between a healthy environment and healthy economy.
- Making sure the photographs chosen represent best management practices for environmental protection.
- Being accurate in descriptions of the DEQ's role.
- Presenting information by organizational structure versus by the resource protected.
- Using terms the audience can identify with.
- Making generous use of pictures.

CLOSING

Frank thanked everyone for their comments and insights. He noted how difficult it is for us to view the information from a fresh perspective because we are so close to it. The EAC has been very helpful by providing that perspective.

Frank explained that the two-year term of twelve EAC members will be ending after the February meeting. We will be bringing a couple of new things to the EAC in February. One will be the 2005 State of Michigan's Environment Report. Although we are still organizing our thoughts, we are also planning to introduce a new topic about a specific pollutant. He hopes to see all members at the next meeting on February 16, 2006.

Notes by Linda Albro-Sparks. Summary by Frank Ruswick