

**ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
**Lansing, Michigan**  
**Thursday, December 16, 2004 – 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

Members in attendance: Jack Bails, Chris Bates, William Beckman, Janis Bobrin, Steve Chester, Wil Cwikiel, Marty Fluharty, Bill Murphy for Don Inman, Terry Link, Steve Luzkow, Terry Miller, Frank Mortl, Mark Parrish, Pamela Pugh, Lana Pollack, Allen Reilly, Jr., Debra Rowe, Dr. Janet Vail, Scott Piggott for Wayne Wood.

DEQ Staff in attendance: Cathy Ballard, Bill Creal, Susan Erickson, Lynn Fiedler, Dave Hamilton, Diana Klemens, Lynelle Marolf, JoAnn Merrick, Colleen O'Keefe, Pete Ostlund, Amy Peterson, and Frank Ruswick

**OPENING**

Frank opened the meeting by indicating that Director Chester had a conflict beginning at 1:30 and so we will move directly to any questions or comments that EAC members would like to discuss with the Director.

A member asked about the status of discussions with Dow Chemical Company on actions to address dioxin contamination in the Midland and Tittabawassee River areas. Director Chester indicated that the Department and Dow were continuing discussions and making progress. However, he was not able to provide any specific indication of the nature or status of those discussions at this time.

A member noted the recent Ann Arbor News article about drinking water monitoring and supply issues in the Village of Chelsea. The article was characterized as balanced and described the effects of DEQ staff shortages on oversight of the drinking water system.

A member asked about a concern previously expressed about the potential reduction in federal coastal zone management funding for Michigan based on inadequate program staffing. Frank indicated that he had talked to staff about this and learned that the issue was one of potential reductions in the federal budget, and did not relate to Michigan specifically, nor is it any indication that Michigan's program was considered inadequate.

A member asked about the status of the Nugent Sand surface water discharge permit in Muskegon. Director Chester indicated that this issue has been appealed through the contested case process and that a proposed decision had been previously forwarded to him by the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). However, Director Chester had remanded the case back to the ALJ for further consideration of the potential for feasible and prudent alternatives to the discharge. A variety of procedural matters are currently being handled in the case, including a petition by the City of Muskegon to intervene.

In response to a question about the status of the budget development process, Director Chester described the current outcome based budget process that the Administration is undertaking. This process involves ranking priorities across all state programs, which have been grouped into six broad topics. Director Chester is participating with the Departments of Natural Resources and Agriculture on the group reviewing programs pertaining to the environment.

Since there were no more questions for Director Chester, Frank moved to the initial agenda item: Discussion of the proposed revision to the DEQ Public Involvement Policy. Frank indicated that the proposed revision incorporates the principles contained in the EAC's Public Involvement Recommendations and charges division chiefs with a process of continuous improvement to public involvement at the program level. This responsibility will be overseen through the Department's annual performance appraisal process. Frank asked if there were any comments on the proposed revision. A member suggested that the "Issue" statement include a reference to notification of those affected by DEQ decisions. There were no further comments and the EAC indicated its support for the proposed policy. Frank indicated that he would proceed toward finalizing the policy.

## **RECOMMENDATION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Frank described the process that the EAC would follow to develop recommendations for advancing a "systems" approach within the DEQ. A "systems" approach was defined as one that recognizes interconnections and interrelationships, improves communications and coordination, and adopts effective approaches to solving problems rather than treating systems. The EAC will break into two work groups—one to make recommendations for improving the systems approach to watershed management, the other to the DEQ overall. These work groups will be assisted by DEQ staff assigned as resource persons and it is up to each work group to decide upon the level of participation by these resource persons. A facilitator has been assigned to assist each work group. The goal at the end of today's session will be for each work group to identify 15 to 20 possible recommendations for refinement and further discussion by each work group at the January meeting. The hope is to have about 10 proposed recommendations by each work group at the end of the January meeting. The full EAC would make final recommendations at the February meeting.

## **FACILITATED BREAK-OUT**

The EAC divided into separate work groups as described and began their deliberation process.

## **CLOSING BUSINESS**

Frank described his impression of the efforts of both work groups. Both had broad participation by DEQ staff serving as resource persons and had generated a lengthy list of recommendations and topic areas for consideration. Both had then grouped their list into broad categories. At Frank's urging, each group had then indicated through individual selections, the items on their respective lists that had most interest for members of the work group.

Frank indicated that neither work group had been able to discuss and select a "short list" of 15 to 20 recommendations for consideration in January. Therefore, he would be meeting with the DEQ staff persons on each work group to review the efforts of each work group and determine how the January meeting should be organized to facilitate the efforts of the EAC.

Frank thanked everyone for their efforts today and throughout the year and wished everyone a happy holiday season.

Meeting summary by Frank Ruswick.