

**State of Mississippi  
Task Force on Recycling  
November 1, 2006  
Meeting Minutes**

**Attending Task Force Members**

Phil Morris	Barbara Dorr	Kathy Avis
Butch Meredith	Renee Howell	Lori Langford
Russell Bennett	Vernon Hartley	Ron Aldridge
Jerry Wilkerson		

**MDA Staff**

Kenneth Calvin

**MDEQ Staff**

Mark Williams  
John David Burns

The meeting was called to order. The minutes from the past meeting were accepted and adopted with no changes. Mark Williams gave a brief report on attending the National Recycling Coalition conference held in Atlanta. New programs and promotions for recycling were also discussed.

Chairman Morris asked about the status of discussions on possible legislation for environmental liability protection for recyclers and collectors under the Federal Superfund clean up program. The potential to include recommendations in the report regarding this liability protection was discussed to some degree. Mark stated that a contact for ISRI, Mark Sykes, has offered to provide information to the Task Force in its evaluation of whether language recommended state legislation should be included in the report. Chairman Morris pointed out that any legislative language would need to include statements that recycling activities were not waste processing activities, nor was it disposal. This type of designation could be used to protect companies that were collectors of recyclables against liability for clean up costs for contamination or pollution that might be caused by the end user or processor. It was agreed that this issue could potentially be addressed in the section for Recommendations in the final report. According to Mr. Morris, the state of Arkansas has already addressed this issue and may have model legislation to consider.

Mark Williams then distributed a recent copy of Biocycle Magazine to the Task Force that contained a national survey on the state of garbage disposal and recycling in the country. While the numbers in the report for Mississippi do not appear to be correct, the national trends in the survey and article appeared fairly representative and may be helpful in developing the final report. Also distributed were copies of existing tax incentives as

provided by Bob Lord of MDA. A USA Today article on recycling struggles was also presented and discussed. The article discusses local government recycling programs that are struggling, where the local leaders are contemplating discontinuing their recycling programs because of the associated costs. Discussions centered on how such problems could occur in light of the strong existing markets and high prices for collected commodities. Madison County, Mississippi was mentioned in the article as a local government program considering halting their curbside recycling programs.

Ron Aldridge pointed out a new recycling promotion program was in the works to be conducted by the American Aluminum Can Council. The group has started a program for local and municipal programs to help encourage further collection of recycled aluminum and raise the rate of recycling. Cities such as Meridian, Gulfport, and Jackson are possible areas that might receive assistance and promotion through this effort. Also, there will be an increased push by the National Recycling Coalition to rebrand recycling and push to encourage the recycling rate all across the country. It was noted that some believe that one of the ways to do this is to increase the size of the recycling bin available. The focus of the NRC campaign will be curbside recycling programs in the hopes that any increase in recycling in the home will carry over into other aspects of life and increase recycling there also. There was also a brief discussion on the new products made from biodegradable plastic now in the market and the fact that many in the recycling industry are concerned with its effect on the plastics already being collected and recycled. Also discussed briefly were certain aspects of agricultural recycling in particular pesticide containers and irrigation tubing. The pesticide container recycling industry has been strong in Mississippi for years but is experiencing changes due to the types and sizes of containers used. Many of the new agri-chemical containers are being reused which limits the number of recyclable containers, but also lowers the overall waste generation rate.

There were no other old business matters to be discussed by the Task Force; so the Task Force moved onto the next topic at hand. Mark distributed notebook binders containing the responses to the survey from the various recycling businesses. The copies were provided so that Task Force members could have the information necessary for each recycling sector so that they could better develop their information for the final report. Copies of the notebooks were provided to persons in each of the recycling sector work groups.

After distributing the survey binders, Mark gave a report on the status of survey responses. He indicated that surveys were sent to some 260 facilities including both in-state and out of state. However, some facilities were owned by the same company and so only one survey may have been submitted for several facilities. There were 20 survey mail outs that were returned because the facility had closed or because of an undeliverable address. There were 57 responses to the surveys returned as of the date of the meeting. Some of these however were incomplete. Some respondents claimed that the survey was too difficult and tedious to complete. In addition, it was noted that some facilities were not included because they are not specifically in the recycling industry even though they may recycle much of their solid waste. The final report will reflect the

numbers of responses received. The survey information will also be forwarded to Bob Neal with IHL so that his agency may begin compiling its report.

The content of each work groups' report was then discussed. Each work group report should reflect the status of that segment of the recycling industry in the state, the location of the recycling industry, potential for growth, barriers, or disincentives (Is there even a market for that commodity within the state?), as well as recommendations for improvements in the necessary infrastructure and growth of that segment of the industry. It was pointed out that while we may have quite a few collection points inside the state, much of the actual end use of what is collected is shipped to end users outside of Mississippi.

It was also discussed and agreed upon that the recommendations in the report for improving recycling business conditions should be consolidated into a single summary section that would be easily accessible to Legislators and others reading the report. The existing recycling infrastructure and markets would be described by various sectors (e.g. metals, paper, plastics, etc.). The work groups would also attempt to include information on quantities of recyclables and whether that recycled material is used in-state or is exported to an end-user outside the state. This would likely be based on the level of information reported in the surveys. Employment figures, including existing jobs and new jobs created, may be described in the sections on the potential for growth but also in the economic impact report to be developed by IHL. Kathy Avis also pointed out that including a state map with the recycling businesses plotted would likely be helpful and should be included in the report.

In writing the work group reports, the Task Force members were reminded that this report is to be a business assessment of the recycling industry in the state. The economic outlook should be addressed, as well as the potential for growth of existing industries within the state. The final report will address the potential for growth and recommend incentives to further encourage growth of that segment of the recycling industry. With the emerging global market, foreign markets will continue to grow and prices for collected commodities will remain high. As a state, we should be in a position to take advantage of these aspects. Many recycling experts believe that this trend will continue. The report should also include a recommendation to encourage growth by offering incentives to recycling industries. There was also discussion on the fact that there are recycling sector specific national organizations and trade associations that can provide information on the respective industry sectors. Mark agreed to consolidate links to various recycling web sites that can provide valuable information for the report and email those links to the Task Force for reference.

It was also noted that any new surveys received would be sent to MDEQ first and then properly processed and distributed to each work group. The Task Force agreed that each work group would meet prior to the next main Task Force meeting and would begin developing its report information for the final report. Mark will provide the Task Force with an overall outline of the information needed from each group for their portion of the final report. Work groups with particular problems were asked to contact Mark as soon

as possible so that they can be addressed. Mark will also attempt to disseminate the information on incentives that are offered by other states. Work groups were also encouraged to share information between other recycling sector groups if new information was discovered that could benefit another sector group. The report compiled by Bob Neal would be integrated into the overall report by Mark. The Task Force agreed that the Sector Work Group reports should be completed and submitted to Mark electronically by November 30. These reports will be discussed at the next meeting.

The Task Force then scheduled its next meeting for Wednesday, November 29, 2006, at 10:00 AM. The location will be determined and members notified in advance of the next meeting. The meeting was then adjourned.