

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
TASK FORCE ON RECYCLING
SEPTEMBER 6, 2006
MEETING MINUTES

Attending Members/Designees

Phil Morris	Barbara Dorr	Nick Wilson
Stuart Dean	Butch Meredith	Ron Aldridge
Renee Howell	Richard Harrell	Lori Langford

MDA Staff

Kenneth Calvin

MDEQ Staff

Mark Williams
John David Burns

The meeting was called to order with a welcome and introduction of members present. Mark Williams was recognized and thanked by the Task Force for his work and preparation done for these meetings. The minutes from the previous meeting on August 23, 2006 were presented by the Chairman, and reviewed and approved by the Task Force.

In items of new business, Mark Williams advised the Task Force that the web page would be changed and updated to reflect the current Task Force actions. Also, the Task Force was advised of the opportunity to invite other interested parties to attend these meetings where those persons could provide valuable input and perspective to the development of the Task Force report. While these guests may not be able to fully participate in the duration of the Task Force's activities, the input and advice of persons in the industry would be extremely helpful to the Task Force. The Task Force was also reminded that these meetings are open to the public. Corrections were also noted to the List of Task Force Members.

The Task Force reviewed the topics that were covered in the previous meeting. The Task Force will consolidate some actions to satisfy a number of requirements for different reports necessary for different agencies and groups. Mark Williams reviewed and summarized the actions of the work group that met to determine the format and content of the report. The work group also discussed and developed a draft survey that will upon completion, be sent to the recycling industry to assist in the collection of information necessary for the final report.

Kenneth Calvin presented his discussions with the State Economist related to his assistance in developing the report. Kenneth had provided him with background information about the Task Force and brought him up to date on the activities of the Task Force. The Task Force will need some type of overview from the State Economist so that the economic impact of the existing industry can be addressed. The State Economist is planning to develop a report on the economic impacts in November so that information can be included in the final Task Force report. It will assess the existing industry, but any assessment of the future of recycling and growth of the industry will not be able to be covered in a comprehensive manner. The survey that the Task Force will send out will provide him with information that he needs for his report.

The intended survey that would be sent to the recycling industry was discussed. The sector groups to be surveyed included transporters, collectors, processors, brokers, manufacturers, remanufacturers, and end-users, not necessarily those that generate recyclables. It was discussed whether local governments should be included in receiving the survey and the Task Force decided that the survey would not go to local governments but the Task Force would be allowed to access information from a similar survey that MDEQ is doing of local governments. In addition, it was agreed that the survey will not be sent to every manufacturer or to those that generate recyclables, only to entities in the commercial recycling industry.

The content and layout of the survey was discussed extensively during the meeting. Recommendations for the survey centered on the ease and convenience of the responders in completing the survey and returning it. Task Force members felt that any actions that would simplify and encourage participation should be utilized to ensure a strong response. The survey should be as short as possible with a minimum of time necessary for the respondent to reply. A self-addressed, stamped envelope should be included for the convenience of return by the respondents. It was also agreed that the survey will be offered on-line at the Task Force website. All information will be arranged in such a way as to be included on one page, front and back. It was proposed that a statement be included, to foster responses and encourage support for the survey, which stated that “your response will help determine the availability of future, financial incentives offered by the state for recycling.” Kenneth Calvin had suggested that copies of the final, aggregate report be provided to respondents who provide their mailing information as a way of encouraging response. It was discussed and agreed upon that individual surveys and survey information will be kept confidential. There will be opportunities for respondents to further clarify or explain things not specifically asked by the survey, such as an explanation of the activities of the respondent in addition to asking for SIC/NAIC Codes, or for the facility to briefly describe what they recycle. Another change suggested by Mark Williams was that a column be added to reflect the amount of recyclables collected from government sources. While the report will focus on the recycling industry and will make recommendations to the Legislature to further encourage the recycling industry, it may also need to reflect local governments’ role and the role of government offices in recycling programs and what is collected. The survey should also inquire what percentage of that recycled is from Mississippi. The survey will ask for facility/respondent specific information, but it will not be required. While the final report will not list specific recyclers, it would be helpful to see what facilities are doing within the recycling industry. This facility-specific information will not be required, though, to further encourage responses, even if the responses are anonymous. A deadline for responding will be included, and it will have a quick turn-around to further encourage responses. It was pointed out that the instructions may be unnecessary, and their omission will free additional space, as the survey should be as short and simple as possible. A consensus was reached that the survey should be revised with much of the content rearranged for better convenience and ease of responding.

Another matter discussed involved the degree of detail in the information requested by subdividing the commodities further than the just generic categories of paper, plastic, glass, and metals. Some in the meeting believed that the survey should be less specific and less extensive. Others believed that there was a greater benefit with an even more extensive survey. Renee Howell offered to develop a less extensive version of the survey that would still answer the necessary questions. Richard Harrell offered to also further refine the existing survey. Mark Williams agreed that he and Richard and Renee would serve as sort of a small work group that would draft alternative surveys that the Group could review. It was suggested that perhaps the single recycling materials table could be divided into separate tables so that it will look shorter,

even though respondents can still answer all that apply. All versions will be submitted to the Task force for review to determine which will be the most effective for the present task at hand.

The Task Force was reminded that the goal is to have the survey finalized and mailed to prospective respondents by the end of September. It was proposed to have a two week deadline for respondents to return the survey. The surveys will be sent to all applicable recycling facilities taken from the Recycling Directories and any other applicable sources of information available to the Task Force. Local governments and state agencies will receive a separate survey developed by MDEQ as a part of the development of their report and local governments will not receive this survey.

Also discussed was the draft format of the final report to the State Legislature. A draft outline of the format was emailed to Task Force members several days in advance of the meeting. The Executive Summary in this new report is expected to be much shorter, and much of the Background will include information from the previous Task Force work from 2004. Suggested aspects of this report will include recommendations for the growth of the recycling industry, a list of definitions, if not listed in each individual category, possibly a section on the non-economic benefits of recycling (the quality of life benefits), barriers to recycling such as low landfill tipping fees, lack of resources that drives the industry, lack of communication and outreach (including education), problematic transportation issues, potential for growth and expansion, a section that addresses research and development, applicable environmental regulations, as well as the issue of "beneficial use".

Section V and VI will be driven by the information received in the survey, and, while this report will reflect the economic benefits of recycling, it will be need to be qualified with respect to the lasting effects of Hurricane Katrina that occurred in the reporting year of 2005. The report will also include a status of the existing recycling industry that includes their respective locations. The report will also include volumes and amounts of recyclables collected, as reported from the survey. The report should also reflect the status of the solid waste that could not be recycled because of the absence of a suitable market, or if it was cost-prohibitive, for whatever reason. National trends in recycling can also be addressed in the section for potential for growth. Additionally, the report should address existing and potential financial incentives and the current market values for recyclables collected. Much of the information in the final report will be dictated by what is received in the survey, which should reveal and disqualify areas that should be addressed in the report. While the outline is more for organization, the survey will effectively drive the content and format of the final report.

The next meeting of the Task Force was scheduled for Monday September 25, 2006, to be held again at the offices of the Supervisors' Association at 12:00 noon. Chairman Phil Morris offered to provide lunch for the Task Force on that date. It was discussed in closing that at a future meeting, the Task Force will need to discuss whether subcommittees should be appointed to work on various aspects of the report, similar to the previous Task Force, report. In addition, the Task Force agreed to work towards finalizing a mailing list for the survey. Kenneth Calvin stated that he would work to get Mr. Bob Neal with Institution of Higher Learning to attend the meeting. Mark Williams asked that members encourage other Task Force members that have not been able to participate to attend the next meeting. Mark also stated that he and MDA staff would work to keep the senior management officials of MDA and MDEQ briefed on developments of the Task Force.

The meeting was then adjourned.

