

## **Increasing Source Reduction and Recycling Rates- Education Subcommittee March 25, 2008**

Chair: Mary Sherwin, DEP

Minutes Submitted By: Nan Peckham, DEP

Attendees: Judy Belaval, DEP; Mary Bigelow, North Branford; Bethany Dunbar, DEP; Frank Gagliardo, DEP; Mike Harder; James Hogan; Robert Isner, DEP; Tom Metzner, DEP; John Phetteplace, Stonington; Pam Roach, Hamden; Kevin Sullivan, DEP; Laurie Vitagliano; George Wallace, Bristol

After introductions, the group discussed a brochure produced by DEP targeted municipal officials for the purpose of increasing recycling. The recycling Coordinators Handbook was on the agenda, but was not discussed because we ran out of time.

The comments and suggestions listed below are arranged by brochure panel, not necessarily in the order they were given:

### Cover

- The brochure needs a title on the front that indicates its audience

### Panel 1 (Why Recycle)

- The brochure should emphasize that by increasing recycling, the municipality will save money
- Connect some of the bullet points to role recycling plays in the CT Connecticut Climate Change Plan
- The brochure should say how CRRA (for CRRA member towns) can assist the town in its efforts to promote recycling and recycling education. Paul Nonnemaker, CRRA, has offered support (e.g. sending staff out)

### Top 10 Tips

- Middle panel is too busy and picture on the third panel is too small
- Are the tips prioritized correctly?
- Tip #2 needs to be clarified
- Tip #1- towns will not provide larger bins unless there is a reason – e.g. single stream
- Tip #4 and #6 (unit based pricing and incentives) may be able to be combined
- Tips #5 and #10 re: recycling coordinators and enforcement should be closer together.
- Tip #8 (ordinance) This tip needs to be expanded to include all communication about the town's program (e.g. web sites, help desk, CRRA or Operating Committee info)
- There is nothing in the brochure about environmentally preferable purchasing (EPP)

### Back panel (Recommendations For Citizen's groups...)

- Citizen groups may not be able to influence list of recyclables or do all of the things outlined in this panel
- This panel may be able to be replaced with a suggestion to form a committee of citizens interested in increasing recycling

### Back Middle Panel

- Take out "especially municipalities" because it is everyone's job to recycle. Change "Set an Example" to "Municipalities Can Set An Example"

### General Discussion about increasing recycling unrelated to any brochure changes:

- There is a lot of misinformation about recycling. Needs to be a central place with reliable and up-to-date info. People are confused about what can be taken and what can't, especially about plastics 3-7. Town web sites are not updated as CRRA's.
- Towns should be pro-active and regularly get info out. People need to be informed when the program changes or just reminded from time to time. For example, Hamden sends out packets to new residents.
- Some members were frustrated that the brochure was "old hat" and that we should be discussing more innovative ways of increasing recycling. Others pointed out the basics need to be stressed over and over and the message needs to be very simple.
- When recycling goes "flat", enforcement does help. "Enforcement with mirrors" – makes enforcement look bigger than it is as an incentive for the "stragglers to recycle. Bristol has a "tagging program" that is carried out by the driver (city employee) or the solid waste coordinator. Hamden has a recycling coordinator and an enforcement person.
- North Branford has a recycling committee and they have been able to achieve good recycling rates without a coordinator. They are doing even better because of the rebate on recyclables from CRRA. They also have a recycling hot line with a recorded message.
- DEP or CRRA needs to get on the agendas of town meetings or outside groups instead of expecting them to come here (to DEP)
- State recycling goals may not be met unless DEP requires a recycling coordinator. A tool like NERC's environmental benefits calculator can show or justify the position's value
- DEP's Municipal Honor Role may be a model for other towns
- Can we get SEP money (Supplemental Environmental Programs) to produce a recycling coordinator's manual?

### **Next Meeting, April 22.**

Athena Bradley from NERC will provide training on their Environmental Benefits calculator. Subcommittee members should look at the site ([nerc.org](http://nerc.org)) ahead of time. The training will take about one hour and will be held in the DEP's computer room. Mary and Nan will let people know what they will need to compile before the training.