

PLASTICS ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday, November 1, 2022, 9:00 a.m.
Meeting #8 - Minutes

All Council meetings will be held via Microsoft Teams.
The meeting agenda provides the planned action items of the Council to the extent known at the time of sending.

I. Roll Call (5 min)

Christine Cassidy
Nandini Checko
Judith Enck
Tim Fekete
Janine MacGregor
Charles Malaniak
Gary McElyea
Melissa Miles
Loel Muetter
Amanda Nesheiwat
Mary Ellen Peppard
Beth Ravit
Gary Sondermeyer
John Weber
Cindy Zipf
Jeanne Cretella

Additional
Erin Jensen- DEP
Dan Milleman- DEP
Jill Aspinwall- DEP
Christina Page- DEP
Kari Martin- COA
Alan Talarsky- DOH

II. October Meeting Minutes Certification

Gary Sondermeyer motioned to approve the October meeting minutes. John Weber seconded the motion to approve the October Minutes. All were in favor of approving the minutes and therefore the minutes were certified.

III. State Agency Report (20 min)

a. DEP report

The DEP continues to develop regulations through the rulemaking process. The DEP also reports that the number of phone calls, emails and waiver requests continue to remain low, with staff receiving a handful of calls and emails each week. There is currently one waiver under review. The DEP will also work to develop a social campaign for the Holiday season to remind people to reuse bags, take them shopping, and to go bagless whenever possible. DEP is also developing questions for Recycle Coach to ask through their app in order to possibly gain additional metrics for the first-year report.

The Council members asked questions regarding the pending waiver, which requested relief from the polystyrene prohibition through the 2023 school year and was made on behalf of several school districts. The Council asked the DEP to let the Council know of its decision, and the Council indicated that their recommendation on the waiver request would be denial. NJ School Boards Association and the Council's Education, Assessment and Compliance Committee may be sources of information on issues schools and others are facing with polystyrene supply and supplier contracts, if needed.

b. NJBAC/NJCCC report

Board Secretary Julia Rossi reported, based off a weekly meeting with NJBAC, that the NJBAC and NJCCC are working on an education campaign to reduce straws in chain food restaurants, gathering reusable bags for donation, and creating tags on the donated reusable bags to explain cleaning the bags.

Melissa Miles pointed out that Clean Water Action is preparing educational materials for food pantries, and that food pantries and the New Jersey Environmental Justice Alliance would like to meet and work with NJCCC and NJBAC on education and other issues. NJEJA has credibility and reach to many communities but is not able to launch education campaigns on their own. Council members requested to let the PAC know about the possible meeting with NJEJA so others interested may participate.

It was also reported that the Community Food Bank of New Jersey (CFBNJ), the largest of NJ's 5 recognized food banks, is assembling a toolkit regarding compliance with the single-use plastic legislation. The Council recommended connecting the NJEJA with the CFBNJ so that NJEJA could provide input in the toolkit development.

The NJCCC ordered the next shipment of bags, and they meet weekly with food banks to distribute them.

c. DOH report

Chapter 24 revisions are underway to include the straw portion of the Law, which would give local health departments more oversight. DOH continues to receive and follow up on complaints. Joanne Gemenden and Melanie Willoughby will reach out to DOH regarding additional public education on the straw regulations.

IV. Old Business (70 min)

a. Reusable Bag issue, Third-party grocery delivery services (5 min)

Instacart was not able to join the panel hosted by the Council during the October meeting. Staff attempted to invite Instacart to the November meeting but were not successful in obtaining confirmation of attendance. However, the Council would still like to learn more about operations of third-party food delivery services in the context of the Law and Gary M. will reach out to an Instacart contact for follow-up by Janine, so that they can be invited to the December meeting.

b. Feedback on Reusable Bag Panel (5 min)

The panel discussion was informative, and the Council will follow up on some ideas that were presented. DEP sent out an advisory to its county and municipal enforcement partners to remind them that the first step of enforcement is to help with compliance with a warning, and to allow a period of time to attain compliance. It is expected the food pantries will be especially busy over the holidays, and this advisory should ease their concerns with this Law.

c. Updates from Committee/ Discussion

i. Education, Assessment, and Compliance (John Weber) (10 min)

The committee met on October 18. Delaney Redford from the Food Council attended in Mary Ellen's place, and the committee prepared a presentation to discuss data, to be given by Christina Page.

1. Metrics (10 min)

Christina Page shared 3 types of data to be used as metrics evaluating the Law:

-Implementation and public outreach data, such as Bag Up NJ website hits, visitors, and individuals, NJCCC campaign exposure, and the DEP website (200k views and third top site within the DEP).

-Enforcement data, such as the number of instances reported to the county (about 136 incidents most in May, decreasing through September).

-Effectiveness/outward facing data, such as plastic avoidance numbers from NJFC (68 million less paper bags, 3 billion less plastic bags, 17 million straws down to 2 million straws). It was recommended the Committee convert these numbers to graphics, perhaps for the opening of the report. Beach sweep data from Clean Ocean Action including collected items per person as well as total number of items. Corporate beach sweep and the Delaware sweep data was considered, but there are no significant trends, so it will not be included in the first-year report. Recycle Coach data and Monmouth University poll will also be considered for inclusion in the first-year report.

ii. Environment and Public Health (Beth Ravit) (10 min)

The next meeting is scheduled for November 28th, and the committee will discuss regulated discharge in wastewater treatment plants. In December, Gary S. and Gary M. will present case studies about the plastic waste stream. The committee suggested that a good research topic would be "What happens to microfibers contained in sludge?" The committee would also like to see if microplastics consolidate in and contaminate the environment. The Aries Biosolids Gasification Facility located at the Linden Roselle Sewerage Authority and issues surrounding Advanced (Chemical) Recycling were discussed. The discussion included environmental justice issues as well as proposed legislation that would exempt such projects from solid waste facility

permitting under a manufacturing exemption. These topics will continue to be discussed in the future.

iii. Plastic Reduction and Recycling (Judith Enck) (10 min)

The committee will meet Nov. 16th at 1:30 and will focus on writing recommendations for the report that the committee has discussed. They have 8 topics and a new draft bill about filters for washing machines to capture microplastics to discuss. The committee has much to divide up between the first-year report and the year-two report, with one long section covering core opportunities and another focusing on actions.

iv. Discussion/Questions (5 min)

d. Discussion of First-Year Report (Gary Sondermeyer) (15 min)

Council members are starting to write the first-year report. The Council considered the format used by the Recycling Market Development Council report, with one paragraph on each issue and an opportunity of action approach. Another format considered is 15 short 2-3 sentence recommendations, along with more detailed explanatory paragraphs. The first-year report will likely include a short intro, and a summary for recommendations, with a second section for data evaluating effectiveness of the Law, then a section for each of the committees displaying their work from the first year. The October 7 email from Gary S. contains the new report structure. The Council aims to have a first full draft done by Dec. 31.

i. Recommendations

ii. Timeline

From September to December, the PAC should finish up the first-year report draft and complete presentations. We have 5 months and 3 days until the due date, and Gary S. offered to be the main scribe of the report.

V. New Business (20 min)

a. Letter from PAC to Governor and Sen. Smith, Sen. McKeon, Sen. Kennedy

i. PAC Role in pending legislative activities per legislative requests

ii. PAC Role in external vendor or interest groups requests for consideration or consultation.

Following numerous comments and referrals to the PAC, the Council considered writing a letter to clarify the role of the Council versus that of DEP, and to provide input on the pending legislation. The Council decided not to write the letter since it would not be within the role of an advisory body. Janine, as the NJDEP representative, would be the person to share insight before the report is drafted, and people seeking contact with the PAC may reach out as they have before. Entities with questions or seeking any type of approval relative to the Law should go through the DEP.

VI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 by Cindy Zipf