

Toxics Steering Group Meeting Minutes November 18, 2008

Attendees:

Christina Rose Bush, DCH	Deb Mackenzie-Taylor, WHMD, DEQ
Dennis Bush, Chair, WB, DEQ	Amy Perbeck, WB, DEQ
Gary Butterfield, AQD, DEQ	Lisa Quiggle, DCH
Mike Depa, AQD, DEQ	Divinia Ries, RRD, DEQ
Christine Flaga, RRD, DEQ	Amy Salisbury, RRD, DEQ
Kay Fritz, WHMD, DEQ	Robert Sills, AQD, DEQ
Jennifer Gray, DCH	Jim Sygo, Deputy Director, DEQ
Kory Groetsch, DCH	Emily Weingartz, Librarian, WB, DEQ
Mary Lee Hultin, AQD, DEQ	Eric Wildfang, RRD, DEQ

1. Miscellaneous - The MDCH has a new toxicologist named Jennifer Gray and Robert Sills is the new chief of the Air Toxics Unit.
2. News from the front office - Jim Sygo, Deputy Director, provided an update on the budget and discussed Executive Order 2008-20. This Executive Order consolidates activities related to energy into the Department of Labor and Economic Growth (the department will be renamed the Department of Energy, Labor, and Economic Growth). Some staff from the Environmental Science and Services Division will be moved into this new department.
3. Slope factor ranges - The TSG discussed how situations where EPA provides a range of slope factors in the IRIS database should be handled. This issue arose because EPA is proposing a range of slope factors in the IRIS database for perchloroethylene (PERC). Gary Butterfield provided a handout to show whether EPA routinely provides ranges for slope factors. Over the last eight years, Gary located 14 new cancer assessments in the IRIS database. Of these cancer assessments, EPA provided a slope factor range for only one other compound, benzene. Gary's summary also showed that EPA provided two slope factors for vinyl chloride (a slope factor for lifetime exposure and one for just adult exposure) and 1,2-dibromoethane (a slope factor for the 95% upper bound value and one for the central tendency value). It was concluded that the basis for EPA's decision to provide a range of slope factors must be examined before a decision can be made on what value to use for criteria development. In terms of PERC, Dennis Bush is going to let the TSG members know why the EPA is proposing a range of potencies, and will determine if the comment period for the draft assessment is still open.
4. Environmental Justice Workgroup (EJW) - The EJW was created by the Governor's Executive Order 2007-23. Robert Sills summarized the results of the EJW meetings thus far. The EJW consists of 28 stakeholders from various backgrounds. The primary purpose of the group is to assist the Director in developing an EJ Plan for the state. The EJW operates under a set of guidelines, including the development of consensus recommendations. So far, they have gone over the history of EJ efforts, and have developed the group's operating charter and guidance. At the meeting on November 10, 2008, the EJW will start addressing the more substantive issues such as cumulative exposure and adverse impacts. The EJW is required to submit annual reports to the Governor but no reports have been completed so far. The next meeting is scheduled for

January 12, 2009. Robert plans to keep the TSG members apprised of the activities of the EJW.

5. "Pollutants and Toxicants" Web page - There is currently a Web page on the DEQ Web site titled, "Pollutants and Toxicants," which provides links to Web pages titled, "Dioxin Information," "Environmental Lead (Pb)," "Mercury P2," and "Toxics Steering Group." Chris Flaga briefed the group on these Web sites and wanted to know if the group should determine whether these Web pages should be updated or removed. A small workgroup consisting of Amy Perbeck, Divinia Ries, and Mary Lee Hultin will assess this issue.
6. Phenytoin - Kay Fritz is currently developing human health criteria for the pharmaceutical, phenytoin. Kay provided the group with general information on the carcinogenic and noncarcinogenic effects of phenytoin on humans and laboratory animals and she discussed her concerns about the potential for phenytoin to interact with other drugs. The group discussed the similarities and differences between pharmaceuticals and other chemicals in the environment, the use of uncertainty factors, and phenytoin's environmental fate and transport. Also discussed was the difficulty in accounting for interactions of phenytoin with other drugs when developing statewide criteria, and the possibility of including consideration of drug interactions on a site-specific basis.
7. TSG Policy and Procedure Changes - Dennis Bush mentioned that there are two substantive changes proposed to the TSG Policy and Procedure. One change formalizes the formation of subcommittees and the other involves making it clear that attendance at the meetings is voluntary. Dennis provided draft language based on comments received from TSG members. Since he received some additional comments at the meeting, he will redraft the procedure and send it to TSG members for one last review. After receiving the final comments, Dennis will send a draft to Jim Sygo for his consideration.
8. Subcommittee updates -
 - PBDE - The final PBDE report has been sent to interested parties. No comments have been received thus far.
 - Children's health - Only limited work done on this subcommittee since the last TSG meeting due to time constraints.
 - MnPSIC - It is planned that the final draft of the MnPSIC be completed prior to the next TSG meeting so that input from the group can be obtained.
9. Brown Bag luncheon year-end synopsis - Eric Wildfang summarized the types of presentations that occurred at the brown bag luncheons during the year. Presentations were given to educate other toxicologists, to practice future presentations, and to review articles as a group. Overall, the brown bag luncheons were successful. Eric is seeking more topics for discussion.
10. Lame duck session - Dennis Bush mentioned that he is going to try to get a draft of the 2008 Toxics Steering Group report completed by the end of the year. He will be requesting input from TSG members in the near future. Robert Sills agreed to be the new TSG chairperson.