

MEETING SUMMARY

Alaska Climate Change Mitigation Advisory Group

Meeting #3 September 22, 2008

9:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Attendance:

Mitigation Advisory Group Members (MAG):

Bob Batch, Bruce Botelho, Michael Cerne (Captain), Jeff Cook, Steve Denton, Bryce Edgmon (Rep), Stan Foo, Amy Holman, Richard Glenn (by phone), David Hite, Meera Kohler, Kate Lamal, Peter Larsen, Bob Pawlowski, Greg Peters, Chris Rose, Jeffrey Short, Sean Skaling, Orson Smith, Jamie Spell, Bill Streever, Curt Stoner, Kate Troll, Kathie Wasserman

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC):

Mike Black, Alice Edwards, Clint Farr, Larry Hartig, Susan McNeil, Kolena Momberger, Jackie Poston, Doug Vincent-Lang

Center for Climate Strategies (CCS):

Ken Colburn, Dick La Fever, Steve Roe/Brad Strode (*by phone*), Nancy Tosta (*by phone*), Chris James/Jeremy Fisher (*by phone*), Jeff Ang-Olson (*by phone*)

ICF International:

Randy Freed, Dick La Fever (representing both O&G for ICF & ESD for CCS)

Technical Work Group Members and Public:

Peter Crimp, Sami Glascott, Mark Hamilton, Steve Haagenson, Paul D. Kendall, Charles Knight, Marilyn Leland, Rick Rogers, Steve Rupp, Diane Shellenbaum, Mike Sfraga, Aves Thompson, Erin Uloth

Brian Rogers welcomed all attendees and provided an overview of the agenda. He led a round of introductions, including attendees by telephone.

Larry Hartig welcomed the group to this meeting and thanked everyone for participating. He provided an overview of the status of the project and explained the decision to shift state resources over to Mitigation to be responsive to requests by AG members such as more local facilitation and in-person meetings. This was possible due to funding which came from EPA to support the Adaptation side. The Oil & Gas Technical Work Group (TWG) would also fall under that contract for facilitation support. He introduced Randy Freed and Fran Sussman, of ICF and Dick La Fever who will be taking over both Oil & Gas with ICF and Energy Supply & Demand with CCS. He assured everyone that the State is interested in hearing from everyone and encouraged them to feel free to bring any needs or concerns to his attention.

Questions & Comments for Commissioner Hartig yielded the following information:

- Think broadly regarding the type of information which should be directed to the Research Needs Work Group.
- The Climate Change Strategy should result in recommendations that don't have to be restricted to state agencies. The guidance should be based on best judgment.

- Governor Palin has been supportive of everything that the Commissioner has brought to her. She has been in the news a great deal since her selection to be the vice presidential running mate with Senator McCain. Many questions about climate change have been raised. Commissioner Hartig explained that the Governor has been asking appropriate questions on topics such as the effect of a Climate Change Strategy on various industries or how this process integrates with other planning efforts such as those focused on Energy, Transportation, and Sustainability. She appreciates the deliberative stakeholder process.
- One MAG member inquired as to how they will actually get to a final work product and would like a better understanding of the interface between the MAG and the TWGs. An explanation for “unanimous approval” which appeared in the draft of the last meeting would be arrived at. The Commissioner said they have been given a “working list” from which to develop their options. After the TWGs determine the five or so best candidates for inclusion in the draft strategy, they will be seeking approval and direction from the MAG. The MAG will eventually have to give them a green light and may also communicate direction such as a need to develop something further, drop something, or combine options. The TWGS will then develop straw proposals and then dig deeper into feasibility, rough costs, Pros & cons, and will continue to check with the MAG to reach satisfaction. We are trying to achieve a high level of consensus but not necessary 100% on decisions. We will acknowledge minority opinions in the report.

University of Alaska President Mark Hamilton:

President Hamilton shared support personally and on behalf of the University for this process. He emphasized the need for public policy to be informed by sound science as opposed to bumper stickers. He stressed the importance for downscaling models and plans for Alaska and suggested that they be informed with every iteration of new data. The University has invested in the SNAP program to advance that cause (Scenarios Network for Alaska Planning.); they are beginning to compile information to be used as part of the Climate Change process.

The difference between scientists and public policy folks was pointed out. Whereas scientists tend to be very comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty, public policy officials prefer to operate in a known set of circumstances in order to apply risk-matrix management to decisions.

President Hamilton closed with a statement about how significant threats due to a rapidly changing climate are and the attendant need for action and financial backing. He would like to see a “go forward plan” comprised of great ideas from people without constraints based on funding. He feels it’s the job of people in his position to find financial support to make these ideas a reality.

Scenarios Network for Alaska Planning (SNAP):

Dr. Scott Rupp introduced Dr. Mike Sfraga, the Director of the Geography at UAF where SNAP is housed. Scott presented an overview of SNAP’s efforts to try to provide useful downscaled information to the Climate Change Technical Work Groups. The bulk of their work is collaborative and each project is based on stakeholder needs. He invited everyone to view the website for additional information. In support of Climate products, they are looking at various future scenarios of Alaskan conditions. They work with the most recent IPCC assessment (4th – Feb. 2007) and have determined that five of the 12 global circulation models (GCMs) perform best in Alaska and high latitudes. Although they looked at various global emissions scenarios for the future (all from 2000), current conditions exceed all predictions. Scott explained the

ground-breaking work of Dr. John Walsh who has compared past data from three spatial resolutions and used PRISM (Parameter-Elevation Regressions on Independent Slopes Model) based on Climate Resolution Unit (CRU) historical data. This fall, all work will be updated to 0.8 km resolution from 1990 to 2007. They have compiled data so far on surface air temperature and precipitation. There is a report to the Governor's Sub-Cabinet on Climate Change on their website which shows a summary of the data. SNAP is looking for input on how to display the information so it is useful to decision-makers. Some issues to take into consideration are as follows:

- Uncertainty
- Capture and communication of precipitation, e.g. extreme events, average v. irregularities in events as that impacts flora and fauna
- Overlay of other information such as increased incidence in infectious disease, fire, subsidence, sea level changes, etc.

Forestry, Agriculture and Waste – Conditional Approval to Develop Straw Proposals on Priority Options

Brad Strobe provided an overview of the recommended priority options, as shown on the first page of each catalog. He provided a brief description of each option and invited discussion. If the MAG concurs, the FAW TWG may move forward and develop straw proposals taking into consideration input from the MAG.

The following points were discussed:

General –

- There was discussion about the overall purpose of the MAG and whether or not their purpose is to reduce emissions. It was confirmed that the goal of the MAG is to develop policies to reduce emissions and which are socially responsible, and economically feasible.
- The process will include an estimated look at cost effectiveness after the options are expanded on within the TWGs.
- Further clarification on the overall process confirmed that new options can be added to the catalogs for consideration. It is up to the Advisory Group to make them though, not the TWGs. Some AG members expressed a desire to make sure this is a dynamic process and all new ideas or key elements should be evaluated as well as options eliminated on a case by case basis.

FAW Specific -

- Six out of 10 TWG members voted.
- The TWG consolidated some like options from the catalog.
- The five highest ranked options received 5 votes. They were
 - Advanced Waste Reduction and Recycling, 9.3 & 9.5
 - Forest Management Strategies for Carbon Sequestration (2.5, 2.4, 2.3, 2.7)
 - Expanded Use of Biomass Feedstocks for Electricity, Heat, or Steam Production (1.1, 9.1, 4.1, 3.1, 3.2)

- Expanded Use of New, Used, & Recycled Wood Products for Building Materials (1.5)
- In-State liquid Biofuels Production (1.2, 4.2, 9.2)
- Medium priorities included
 - Promotion of In-state Forestry Products, 3.3
 - Promotion of Bioreactor Technology (Advanced Municipal Solid Waste Practices), 9.4
 - Decrease Emissions from Waste Collection, 9.9
 - Mixed MSW Composting, 10.4
- Low priorities were not recommended for further analysis at this time.
- There was discussion regarding the number of votes, the consensus of the TWG, and the dissension, if any.
- In addition to Curt Stoner, who also sits on the MAG, two TWG members were present – Charlie Knight and Rick Rogers. Rick expressed concern with the low level of participation by MAG members on the TWG and wondered if that was due to low interest in Agriculture. He also explained that even though some of number of ballots were low, by the time they were grouped together, it made up for that. TWG members present did not find any disagreement or lack of support for any of the priority options.
- Charlie raised the issue of Agriculture in Fairbanks and pointed out the relative insignificance of CO2 emissions. He also pointed out that some options could reside in multiple places, e.g. harvesting willows. Do you treat as Ag if they're farmed (siviculture) or as Forestry if they're wild?
- A MAG member inquired about how to address fire and insect infestations. What about the dead forests? Rick Rogers responded that if they had a silver bullet to stop the spruce bark beetle 20 – 30 yrs ago, they would have. He didn't think aforestation was an opportunity in AK, but there may be opportunities for forestation (fires) and shoudn't dismiss any opportunities.
- It was requested that since only 6 out of 10, or 60% of the TWG members balloted there be a process to go back to the TWG to try to boost that percentage. Jackie Poston will work with the TWG to pursue this.
- It was decided that the FAW TWG should move forward with development of straw proposals on options that receive a high level of consensus in the group.

Cross-Cutting – Review of Priority Options

Nancy Tosta provided an overview of their progress which, to date, has reduced the number of options in their catalog from 64 to 26. They have added a "Government Lead By Example" column to their list. The TWG has gone through with initial balloting and had substantial conversations on the options which move ahead for further consideration. 7 out of 17 TWG members voted. They have divided the options into high, medium, and low priorities. They still wish to ensure that the overall catalog is complete.

Input from the MAG consisted of the following:

- Support for the format in which the priorities were displayed, as it reflected some insight into the rationale employed by the TWG members
- Would like to see a higher level of participation – methodology is important
- Cross-cutting options should not necessarily involve quantification of options

The CC TWG will re-ballot and attempt to increase the level of participation. If members have not been participating, they should not ballot. The TWG facilitator will make a note of that so the recommendations can accurately reflect only active participants. All TWG facilitators should follow suit.

Transportation and Land Use – Review of Options

Jeff Ang-Olson provided an overview of the TLU Catalog and described some of the clumping together they did to streamline the options and achieve some consistency. They looked at a number of things related to motor-vehicles, e.g. clean car program, electric and natural gas vehicles, and improving engine efficiencies. The TWG will be focusing on reductions from the Aviation sector during the next TWG all-day meeting. They will also consider creation of a stand-alone option for marine transport as it relates to commercial fishing which is a major industry in Alaska. The TLU TWG plans to present its priority options at the next MAG meeting.

Energy Supply and Demand – Status Report

Dick La Fever reported that he will be serving as a local Alaskan facilitator along with Chris James and Jeremy Fisher, both of Synapse Energy, who will continue on as technical experts. This TWG needs to continue finalizing its catalog before they can begin the balloting process. The TWG has requested a review of the overall process and would like to have Commissioner Hartig present at its next meeting on September 30th. They are also interested in learning more about how the options will be quantified regarding costs and benefits and how they will be implemented.

Various TWG members are working on fleshing out the options. Dick is contacting members who have not been active to encourage participation. Finally, they are planning a full day in-person meeting on October 16th in Anchorage. Chris James and Jeremy Fisher from CCS (Synapse Energy) will be traveling in to attend.

Oil and Gas – Status Report

Dick La Fever introduced himself as the new facilitator for the Oil and Gas TWG. He will be subcontracting to ICF International who will be leading the Adaptation effort plus this TWG for the State's Climate Change Strategy from this point forward. The TWG has maintained an aggressive meeting schedule. They had a meeting on September 11th during which they met with Commissioner Hartig who provided a refresher on the overall process, the charge for this TWG, factors which should be considered in the process, available resources, and the proposed timeline for bringing forward prioritized options, and what success would look like. They understand that their recommendations need to be folded into a report to the MAG April/May 2009.

Kate Troll asked about the disposition of her earlier recommendation for this TWG to conduct an independent energy audit on the North Slope. She mentioned that this was submitted to the MAG at the July 15th meeting and inquired as to its status. She would like to see a task, outline and adopt a game plan. She also would like an explanation as to why it isn't in the O&G TWG catalog

Next Steps

Ken Colburn explained the next steps for the TWGs and the MAG. The FAW TWG will continue making progress by fleshing out their strawmen after trying to boost the number of ballots. All other TWGs will try to do what they can to achieve a high level of participation. The State will help where needed. By the next MAG meeting on November 6th, the remaining 4 TWGs will attempt to have balloted and present priority options

As part of this screening process, Recent Actions and Related Programs and Policies will be included in the catalog. Members will discuss the merits and drawbacks of the options. The goal is for each TWG to identify 6 to 10 priority policy options for recommendation to the MAG in November.

The MAG will complete the prioritization process in November.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the MAG will be held on Thursday, November 6, 2008 in Anchorage. The meeting details will be determined later and posted on the website, as well as circulated to members.

Public Comment and Announcements

There was public comment at this meeting by Mr. Paul D. Kendall who urged everyone to review his Energy Plan and take Hydrogen into serious consideration in the future to address energy costs and emissions. His PLAN was subsequently distributed to both Advisory Groups.

Jackie Poston reviewed some of the recent activities which were planned in response to needs and requests for information to Stakeholders. They included a September 11th briefing by EPA on the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and the GHG Reporting Rule followed by a briefing by Alice Edwards, ADEC, and CCS. Upcoming events including the Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental Management during which the State of Alaska Climate Change Strategy will be holding a session on October 27th and the Alaska Forum on the Environment scheduled for the week of February 2, 2009.