

Advisory Committee on Mercury Pollution

Meeting #97: February 8, 2010

Time: 9:30 am to noon

Location: Laundry Building Conference Room, Waterbury State Office Complex
Waterbury, Vermont

DRAFT MINUTES

Members Present:

Michael Bender, Mercury Policy Project
John Berino, Fletcher Allen Health Care (by telephone)
Gary Gulka, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Environmental Assistance Office
Jennifer Holliday, Chittenden Solid Waste District
Senator Richard McCormack
Representative Jim McCullough

Guests Present:

Anthony Otis, Otis and Brooks, representing Northeast Delta Dental (by telephone)

The Committee members and interested parties gathered at the Waterbury State Office Complex, Laundry Building Conference Room and via telephone. Jen Holliday called the meeting to order.

Agenda Item 1

Accept minutes from January 11 meeting

The draft minutes were approved as drafted.

Agenda Item 2

Public comment/committee member concerns

Michael Bender mentioned two CFL giveaway events at hardware stores in South Burlington and Barre to highlight use of energy efficient bulbs and recycling of spent fluorescent bulbs. There was press coverage in the Burlington Free Press and Times Argus. Senator Ginny Lyons attended the South Burlington event.

Michael Bender mentioned a legislative bill in committee in Washington State where lamp manufacturers were agreeable to paying \$10,000 each to support lamp recycling.

Michael Bender also mentioned a letter that was sent by the Domestic Policy Subcommittee of the Government Oversight Committee of the House of Representatives to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, asking EPA for a timeline and schedule for revising EPA's 2002 mercury emissions inventory for dental mercury. EPA has until February 16 to respond to this Congressional request. EPA's 2002 inventory indicated one-half ton of dental mercury releases.

More recently the Mercury Policy Project and others have estimated releases of 7-9 tons per year.

Agenda Item 3

Committee work plan for 2010

The Committee discussed the 2010 work plan.

Senator McCormack raised the issue of thimerosal in vaccines and what progress was being made to inform the public of mercury-free vaccines and to what extent the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) has been able to obtain mercury-free vaccines. Gary Gulka indicated that he had communications with VDH through Bill Bress, and there seemed to be willingness to place thimerosal information on their web site. Mr. Gulka referred to a CDC fact sheet on the topic that the VDH seemed willingly to consider for posting on the web site. The fact sheet provides general information on thimerosal and mercury-free vaccines.

It was agreed that the Committee would draft and send a letter to VDH on the Committee's interest to see better public information and more mercury-free vaccines available to the public, and invite the appropriate VDH representative to the next meeting for a discussion of these issues. This will be added to the work plan.

It was agreed that the Committee would have involvement in reviewing methodology developed by DEC to estimate the number of mercury thermostats available for collection on a yearly basis, in order to determine thermostat recycling rates in the state. Gary Gulka indicated that in the coming months he will be convening stakeholders/interested parties to receive comments on this.

Michael Bender suggested that the work plan include public outreach on thermostat recycling and finding ways to improve public awareness, through public service announcements and more active involvement in recycling by the large box stores in Vermont.

It was agreed that fluorescent lamp recycling will be on the work plan to review progress in finding a sustainable source of funding for public collection and recycling programs, as well as exploring ways to improve public outreach on lamp recycling. There was consensus that public awareness on lamp recycling can be improved.

It was agreed that a draft work plan would be circulated to Committee members before the next meeting for further discussion and approval at the next meeting.

Crematory mercury emissions will be on the work plan. Michael Bender said that if EPA revises dental mercury emissions inventories, there may be more national interest in reducing emissions from crematoria.

Agenda Item 4

Public dissemination of Dental Amalgam Fact Sheet

The Committee agreed on the language for a press release about the Dental Amalgam fact sheet. Prior to issuing the press release, DEC will post the fact sheet on the mercvt.org web site.

It was agreed that there would be further discussion at the next meeting on methods to disseminate the fact sheet to the healthcare community and various healthcare providers.

Agenda Item 5

Legislative update

S.232 on mercury lamp recycling will be discussed soon in the Senate Natural Resources Committee. A stakeholder meeting has been organized by DEC to discuss the bill.

H.484 is being discussed in the House Fish, Wildlife and Natural Resources Committee. Representative McCullough indicated that this bill could have an impact on the future of Mercury Advisory Committee.

Agenda Item 6

Committee appointments

There are a few committee appointment terms that have expired and a few terms that will expire this year. Mary Jean Rajda has indicated that she can no longer serve on the Committee. Bill Bress' term has expired and needs to be renewed. Other expired terms include Ruma Kohli and Michael Bender. In August, Neil Kamman's term expires. Gary Gulka indicated that he will follow up on appointments.

Agenda Item 7

Planning of commemorative event marking 100th committee meeting

It was agreed that this agenda item will be discussed at a later date.

Agenda Item 8

Set next meeting date and agenda

It was agreed that April 19th was the suggested date for the next meeting.

Agenda items will include:

- Discussion with VDH on thimerosal issue
- Finalize work plan
- Legislative updates
- Program updates

Summary of Motions and Actions

It was agreed that the Committee would draft and send a letter to VDH on the Committee's interest to see better public information and more mercury-free vaccines available to the public, and invite the appropriate VDH representative to the next meeting for a discussion of these issues.

The Committee agreed on the language for a press release about the Dental Amalgam fact sheet. Prior to issuing the press release, DEC will post the fact sheet on the mercv.t.org web site.