

**PBT Drafting Team Conference Call Summary**  
**May 11, 2005, 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm Central Time**

*Participants: Ted Smith, Sue Brauer, Todd Nettesheim, Melissa Hulting, Beth Murphy, Carri Lohse-Hanson, Liz LaPlante, Dale Phenicie, Jennifer Feyerherm, Emily Green, Mena Shaw, Paul Loeffelman, Michael Rossler, Frank Anscombe, Jim Zorn, Dwain Winters, Jon Dettling, Laura Rauwerda, Joe DePinto*

### **Introduction and Meeting Agenda**

Ted Smith welcomed participants and reviewed the agenda, which contained the following two items:

1. Review May 9 Draft Strategy (posted on the PBT website)
  - Recommendation Content
  - Implementation Leads
  - Results
  - Costs
2. Next steps

### **Review of May 9 Draft Strategy**

Ted noted that it would be important to determine whether the team agreed with the content of recommendations included in the May 9 draft. He also pointed out that information gaps still existed with respect to the implementation leads and costs associated with some of the recommendations. However, the team still has to work within the five-page limit set for the document by the Executive Committee.

Ted reviewed the comments that he has received thus far on the Strategy. Jon Dettling had not yet joined the call, so Ted summarized Jon's comments. Regarding the fourth recommendation, which emphasized public education on environmentally-friendly behaviors and choices, Jon pointed out that education alone may not be sufficient to bring about behavioral change. If "green" products are not easily accessible, people still may not use them. Jon recommended including an element that focuses on facilitating access to environmentally-friendly products and services. Dale Phenicie agreed with Jon's suggestion. Ted noted that Jon also recommended using the term "dioxin/furans" instead of "dioxin" throughout the document.

Ted invited Mike Murray to summarize his comments. Mike noted that Jon raised a good point on the issue of education and the importance of having infrastructure in place to help consumers be more proactive with respect to their purchasing decisions. He also remarked that manufacturer take-back programs can be valuable tools for helping people to properly dispose of products. Mike recommended adding to Jon's text a notation that in some cases, environmentally-friendly products will be more expensive than other options. Mike noted that the team should still encourage, wherever possible, the promotion of environmentally-sound products, even those that are more expensive.

Regarding the discussion of mercury in the first recommendation, Mike suggested including a statement about the potential for the Great Lakes region to strive toward more stringent reduction targets for mercury emissions from electric utilities than those established by the Federal Rule on mercury. He also suggested adding a footnote to the text of the first recommendation indicating that the Federal requirement of a 70% reduction in mercury emissions from electric utilities nationwide by 2018 may not be met. Paul Loeffelman of American Electric Power responded that the electric utility industry should be able to not only achieve the 70% reduction but may be able

to exceed it; therefore, he suggested keeping the language the way it is. Michael Rossler of the Edison Electric Institute agreed that industry should be able to achieve the 70% reduction in emissions by 2018. Mike Murray noted that there is also a potential for regional discrepancies in emission caps and asked the utility representatives to comment on whether they believe that a 70% reduction can be achieved within the Great Lakes region. Paul Loeffelman responded that the regulation is designed to ensure that mercury levels in fish tissue do not increase, regardless of where the fish are located. Paul believes that the EPA has correctly determined, through careful analysis, the steps that need to be taken to achieve this goal. Some states will have to do more than others, but the end result (reduced mercury levels in fish) will be the same everywhere. Michael Rossler agreed with Paul and noted that the Federal Rule takes into account that mercury is a global problem. However, the rule is designed to reduce emissions from the electric utility industry.

Ted asked the utility representatives if they would like to change or add anything to the current language related to mercury in the draft. Paul suggested that the case for controlling mercury could be made even stronger. Dale noted that it would be impossible to provide a detailed analysis of mercury in the five-page Strategy document and that the team had already achieved its objective of identifying mercury as an important issue.

Frank Anscombe asked if global sources of mercury were being addressed. Michael Rossler responded that it would be appropriate to note that mercury is a global concern. Ted noted that the fifth recommendation, Beyond the Basin, references the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and its efforts to address mercury emissions. Paul remarked that, since a great deal of the mercury deposited in the U.S. originates in China, it might be worthwhile to suggest that efforts need to be made to reduce emissions outside the U.S. Ted responded that the third recommendation includes modeling activities to study this issue.

Jim Zorn suggested that a method of linking mercury reduction activities with fish consumption in tribal communities be included in the document. Members of tribal communities are currently altering their fish consumption habits in response to fish consumption advisories. Jim questioned whether efforts to reduce mercury could be assessed in terms of the need to avoid fish consumption. Ted responded that such an assessment would be very difficult. The modeling capabilities required to conduct this type of analysis are in the earliest stages of development. Paul Loeffelman noted that a suggestion for additional funding to continue measurement and modeling activities would be helpful in this regard. Michael Rossler commented that the EPA recognizes that additional monitoring is needed in areas where subsistence fishing is common.

Ted noted that he will accept additional comments on mercury before making any changes to the text.

Mike Murray suggested that the fifth recommendation, which refers to U.S. participation in UNEP mercury reduction activities, be modified to suggest that the U.S. play a stronger role in these efforts. Mike based his recommendation on the fact that other countries have expressed a desire to pursue more aggressive global action on mercury emissions. Paul noted the importance of explaining in the document that the reference to international cooperation involves countries beyond Canada.

Ted asked Carri Lohse-Hanson to discuss the article she posted on the PBT website related to global sources of mercury deposition in the United States. Carri noted that the article answers questions that were raised in Traverse City related to the quantity and sources of mercury deposited in the U.S. The article that Carri posted reports that 33% of the mercury deposited in the U.S. comes from natural sources; 30% originates in North America, and 21% comes from Asia, with the rest originating from other continents.

Ted summarized the comments submitted by Sue Brauer, Joe DePinto, and Liz LaPlante on the third recommendation, which calls for a basin-wide, coordinated, surveillance and forecasting

program. One comment was that the text needs to delineate more clearly what the program will include. The second paragraph of this recommendation details the components of the program. Liz LaPlante had commented that this paragraph is difficult to read. She suggested using bullets to make it more reader-friendly. Melissa Hulting responded that the third recommendation is still in progress and will be significantly improved in its final version.

Liz summarized other comments she had on the rest of the document. She noted that there are chemical committees within the Lakewide Management Plans (LaMPs) that are pursuing chemical reduction activities similar to those suggested in the first recommendation. Liz pointed out that these committees should be considered potential implementing parties for the first recommendation. Ted agreed. Liz commented that the focus of the fourth recommendation, which deals with public education and outreach, is unclear. Ted responded that this recommendation attempts to capture several different concepts; he will work with Liz to make the language clearer. Dale Phenicie will also submit comments on this recommendation.

Sue Brauer suggested adding a link in the document to the US EPA website that details the various pollution prevention programs listed in the second recommendation. Ted suggested changing the text to refer readers to the EPA website and adding a footnote that lists the programs instead of including them in the text.

Ted asked the group if anything was missing from the five recommendations currently included in the draft Strategy. Melissa noted that the first recommendation includes support for garbage collection programs but does not incorporate recycling. She feels that recycling programs should be added to this recommendation, since recycling would eliminate the need for disposal.

Emily Green of the Sierra Club Great Lakes Program commented that she and her colleagues are uncomfortable with some aspects of the current Strategy draft (e.g., the recommendations for mercury and other chemicals). Emily noted that the Sierra Club will provide written comments on the draft. Ted responded that it may be difficult to address major concerns prior to submitting the final draft in May, but he welcomed her comments.

Mike Murray commented that some of the key emerging chemicals of concern should be specifically mentioned in the document. Ted replied that the group had decided at one point not to list specific chemicals of concern. If any of these chemicals are listed, the team will have to recommend remedial responses for each one. The group briefly discussed potential actions that could be taken to address flame retardants, which are already being phased out. Ted noted that there simply isn't enough space in the five-page document to address all of these chemicals. Melissa reminded the group that more specific actions may be placed in the Action Item Matrix, which will be attached to the document.

Ted prompted the group to discuss remaining gaps in the document, including: who the main implementers will be for each recommendation, the results that can be expected, and the potential costs associated with each item. Ted asked for opinions about the text that is currently in the draft. Carri Lohse-Hanson noted the importance of stressing that the costs detailed in the document only represent the first three to five years of reduction efforts and not the complete costs of cleanup. Dwain Winters suggested drafting an initial budget and submitting it to the group to see if the estimates are reasonable. Sue Brauer remarked that the Great Lakes Binational Toxics Strategy (GLBTS) might not be the appropriate party to lead some of the recommendations. Ted responded that the GLBTS would not be expected to do the work; it would be more of a coordinating entity.

Frank Anscombe noted that the article posted by Carri Lohse-Hanson regarding global sources of mercury does not address the contribution of gold mining activities. Ted and Melissa responded that text may be added to recommendation five to note the impact of gold mining on mercury emissions.

Ted commented that no results statement currently exists for the third recommendation. He suggested making a qualitative statement instead of trying to identify quantitative results.

### **Next Steps**

Ted will work on preparing another draft of the Strategy. The next PBT Team call is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on May 23. Once the next Strategy draft is posted, the team can decide whether another call needs to be scheduled before May 23.