

PBT Drafting Team Conference Call Summary
May 4, 2005, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm Central Time

Participants: Melissa Hulting, Beth Murphy, Todd Nettesheim, Susan Boehme, Dale Phenicie, Seth Dibblee, John Gilkeson, Tom Looby, Joe DePinto, Deb Jacobson, Ron Janke, Ted Smith, Arnie Kuzmack, Liz LaPlante, Cameron Lory, Alan Waffle, Carri Lohse-Hanson, Sue Brauer, Jen Zewatsky, Dwain Winters, Mike Murphy, Laura Rauwerda

Introduction and Meeting Agenda

Ted Smith welcomed participants to the call and reviewed the agenda, which included four action items:

- 1) Recap Traverse City meeting
- 2) Review the new Strategy format
- 3) Review draft sections for new format
- 4) Discuss next steps

Discussion of Traverse City Meeting and New Strategy Format

Ted briefly summarized the progress made at the April 28-29 meeting of the PBT Reduction Strategy Team in Traverse City, Michigan. Ted reminded the group that the Strategy draft submitted on April 21 contained 26 key recommendations. In Traverse City, the Executive Committee directed each Strategy Team to condense its list of recommendations down to five key items. In response to this directive, the PBT Team spent its time in Traverse City evaluating the recommendations it had already made and bundling these items into five broad categories.

Ted listed and described the five new recommendation categories: 1) "Finishing the Job" (of eliminating releases of priority pollutants into the Great Lakes Basin); 2) "Getting Ahead of the Curve," which focuses on anticipating pollution by persistent toxics and using tools to prevent it (e.g., pollution prevention); 3) "Knowing What We Need to Know," which involves the collection of information needed to address problems related to persistent toxics; 4) "Empowering the Public's Choices," which deals with education and outreach; and 5) "Out of the Basin," which addresses problems that originate beyond the borders of the Great Lakes Basin.

After explaining the new categories of recommendations, Ted suggested that the fifth one, "Out of the Basin," be renamed "Addressing International Sources," since beyond-the-Basin issues within the United States are already being addressed to a significant degree by the other four recommendations. Joe DePinto commented that, for some contaminants, significant sources exist outside the Basin but within the U.S. Melissa Hulting responded that national-scale items can be addressed in the first two recommendations. Ted noted Joe's concern and stressed that the team must be vigilant in ensuring that all important national issues are included in the other recommendations. Susan Boehme suggested that there might be a place for national issues in each of the first four recommendations. Dwain Winters recommended stating in the text that national sources are being addressed by the first four recommendations and that the fifth is international in focus.

Review of Draft Strategy Sections

Ted Smith began this discussion by explaining how the Strategy will be revised from this point forward. Ted had been accepting drafts from various people and allowing the entire group to comment on them. Due to the approaching final Strategy deadline of May 27, he will now have to

gather all the submissions and combine them into a coherent document. Ted suggested that the team review the Strategy between now and next Wednesday (May 11) and consider whether the right topics are being covered in each of the five recommendation categories. Ted will work with the co-chairs and with other teams to make sure the document is formatted properly. Ted will take the sections and comments submitted thus far and combine them into a single document for discussion at the next PBT Team call, scheduled for May 11.

Ted invited Seth Dibblee to comment on the text Seth developed for recommendations 1 and 2. Seth noted that his section includes a paragraph detailing the principles that govern the first two recommendations. Initial comments on Seth's section were related to the concept of fully funding existing statutory programs. Melissa Hulting suggested naming specific programs and noted that there was a placeholder in a previous version of the Action Item Matrix for such information. The group agreed that funding should not be portrayed as a stand-alone goal; rather, it is a tool that is necessary to reach the actual goal of removing toxics.

Mike Murphy remarked that the Strategy seems to place a higher priority on regulatory programs than on non-regulatory programs. Dwain Winters agreed and noted that the only discussion of burn barrels in the document relates to Subtitle D of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). A number of people echoed Mike and Dwain's concerns as the group discussed the strengths and weaknesses of both types of programs. Sue Brauer suggested noting in the document that the five recommendations are not necessarily presented in order of priority. Ted agreed that the text should be rewritten to make both types of programs seem equally important.

Additional comments were made on the specific language that Seth used in his section. Dale Phenicie questioned the sentence at the end of the first recommendation that called for industry to act "in accordance with the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants." Dwain Winters suggested revising the language from "in accordance with the Stockholm Convention" to "consistent with the Stockholm Convention." Dale felt that this sentence was still worded too strongly but agreed to wait for Ted's revisions before providing further comments.

Ted suggested to the group the possibility of including a product stewardship program within the first recommendation. In particular, Gary Gulezian and others had discussed developing a mercury management package. John Gilkeson responded favorably to the idea and noted that some states have already adopted product stewardship programs. Several people agreed that a mercury care or management package would fit within the first recommendation. Cameron Lory and others suggested that such an approach would not necessarily be limited to mercury; there is a potential for application to other contaminants, as well.

The group resumed discussion of the emphasis on funding in the Strategy and newly drafted recommendations. Dwain Winters noted that nothing the team suggests will result in major funding expansions at the federal level. Therefore, merely asking for additional funding is unlikely to produce a favorable response. Instead, Dwain suggested that the group focus on getting a commitment to certain outcomes (e.g., technical assistance programs, infrastructure), which can then be parlayed into funding in future years. Ted suggested that the team identify infrastructure as a need while revising the language to soften the request for funding. He also noted that the team has been asked to cost out its recommendations and that other teams will be asking for vast sums of money. Arnie Kuzmack emphasized the need to have a credible strategy for carrying out the team's recommendations without requiring a great deal of additional funding. Arnie suggested articulating, whenever possible, how existing resources could be used to perform some of the tasks that are being recommended. Ted reiterated that the team has been asked to identify specific resource needs. Joe DePinto cautioned the team not to be too conservative with respect to requesting additional funds, since some tasks clearly will require a significant influx of new money. Joe suggested identifying tasks that can be accomplished with existing resources, as well as those that would require additional funding. Ted responded that he will try to address both points of view when he revises the text.

Ted asked team members for comments on the content of recommendation 2: Getting Ahead of the Curve. Ted informed the team that one of the suggestions embedded within the recommendation will probably have to be removed. The National P2 Technical Advisory Committee had previously made a recommendation for the Great Lakes region to host scaled-up pollution prevention pilot projects. However, that recommendation has recently been retracted.

Since no one had comments on the second recommendation category, Ted asked for reactions to the third: Knowing What We Need to Know. The text for this recommendation, submitted by Peter Landrum, points out that a great deal of scientific research is taking place but is not necessarily coordinated. Therefore, the recommendation calls for the creation of a centralized database and modeling center within the Basin, which would allow for better coordination of modeling capabilities and activities. Ted noted that there is some crossover between the PBT Team and the Information and Indicators Team on this issue. Joe DePinto suggested adding text to the recommendation specifying that multi-media models will be needed, since persistent toxics affect multi-media pathways. Also, Joe advised stating that data collection should support not only monitoring activities but also the development of progress indicators.

Dwain Winters objected to the text contained within the third recommendation. Dwain contended that the recommendation is based on two false premises: 1) that the required information already exists and simply needs to be pulled together, and 2) that appropriate models have already been developed. Dwain also noted that the recommendation does not capture the quantitative link between source and exposure. Ted suggested that a subcommittee (consisting of Dwain, Joe DePinto, Melissa Hulting, and Peter Landrum) be formed to work on this recommendation offline.

Susan Boehme requested comments on the text she submitted for the fourth recommendation, Empowering the Public's Choices. Ted responded that the section seems to fall naturally into two separate pieces: 1) conducting education and outreach to inform the general public about health issues, such as fish consumption, and 2) informing the public about how lifestyle choices can impact issues related to persistent toxic substances. Ron Janke observed that this recommendation should emphasize behavioral change rather than lifestyle choices. Liz LaPlante asked if it would make sense to adopt a general management framework to coordinate education and outreach activities. Susan responded that such a framework would be a tool, not a goal. Liz suggested that the Lakewide Management Plan (LaMP) Forum could serve as an implementing agency for this framework. Mike Murphy commented that the general public might be more likely to adopt environmentally friendly practices if a more organized mechanism for communicating information about recycling and other programs were to exist. Beth Murphy observed that this recommendation is primarily focused on product use and not on human health.

Ted asked Melissa Hulting to summarize the fifth recommendation, Addressing International Sources. Melissa noted that the Strategy draft submitted to the Executive Committee on April 21 did not contain many international actions. Therefore, she modified the one recommendation that focused on working with international programs to include both monitoring and persistent toxics management programs. Melissa also added a reference to the Binational Toxics Strategy, recommended that the U.S. ratify the Stockholm Convention, and included an item from the matrix that focused on international efforts to reduce mercury. Melissa plans to add funding information after consulting with people who are familiar with international issues.

Next Steps

Ted will work on drafting a revised Strategy that accommodates the suggestions people have made by COB on Friday, May 6. A full team call is scheduled for Wednesday, May 11. Additional comments by team members on the Strategy should be submitted to the entire drafting team.