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DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY
Vermont Governor's Commission on Climate Change – Plenary Group (GCCC-PG)
Agriculture, Forestry & Waste Resource Management (AFW)
Technical Work Group
Call #2, November 9, 2006

Attendance:

1. TWG Members: Paula Calabrese (for John Casella), Donald DeHayes, Bill Driscoll (for William Sayre), Jennifer Jenkins, Craig Metz (for Steve Faust), Sandy Wilmot, Netaka White, Deb Sachs
2. Public: None
3. CCS: Steve Roe, Katie Bickel
4. VTDEC: Jeff Merrell

Background documents:

(all posted at http://www.vtclimatechange.us/Agriculture_Forestry.cfm)

1. Agenda
2. Power Point Presentation to the AFW TWG
3. AFW Policy Options Catalog
4. Summary notes from Call #1

Discussion and conclusions:

1. CCS briefly reviewed their role as facilitator and the role of the TWG in providing technical support and recommendations to the Plenary Group. CCS noted the Plenary Group meeting held yesterday (Nov. 8) and that the policy catalogue of options was discussed at length. CCS reported that the Plenary Group is aspiring to achieve the goals of Executive Order #07-05, which are to reduce emissions by:
 - 25% below 1990 levels by 2012
 - 50% below 1990 levels by 2028
 - 75% below 1990 levels by 2050
2. Discussion moved to the policy options catalogue. No suggestions were offered by the requested date of November 1 for additional options missing from the original catalogue. The TWG reviewed all items in the policy options catalogue, discussing new items added by the Plenary Group and clarifying existing options. Specifically:



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- The scale for high/med/low GHG reduction potential was discussed. For context, it was noted that the city of Burlington's GHG reduction targets were of the same order of magnitude as the current high category (i.e., Burlington's goal is to reduce emissions by 156,000 tons per year; the high category is set at 100,000 tons of reductions). This indicates there will be relatively few high priority categories determined. CCS acknowledged that this could be the case; and that the higher reduction options for the AFW sector could end up being designated with an "M". However, this should not affect the ability of the TWG to rank the various reduction options.
- Clarification was made to item 1.3, so that it includes crops grown for the purpose of generating energy; it was noted that there is interest in using waste hay or growing grass for the purpose of pelletization, which would then be used to produce residential/commercial heat.
- Regarding catalogue items 4.x, it was noted that the "Current Use Tax Program" already provides incentives to protect agriculture and forest land.
- Option 5.4 (covering non-irrigated cropland) was removed from the PG list because it refers to practices that are common in arid regions and not in Vermont. It was subsequently removed from the version of the catalog used by the TWG.
- Regarding Option 5.3, the concept of virtual farmers markets may be applicable. A model program exists in Plymouth, NH where consumers order produce from local farmers on-line.
- The Plenary Group decided to separate Option 6.2 into its own higher level category. There was some discussion over the distinction between this category and community forests, which are more like managed forest lands. The TWG recommends calling that category "Management of Developed (or non-forested) Areas", with two subcategories, one of which is the old 6.2, and the other would be called "Tree planting in developed areas"; a third category was discussed regarding enhanced soil carbon sequestration in newly developed areas. A proposal for an option covering soil carbon management in developed areas will be incorporated if provided by the TWG.
- The mechanisms for enhancing carbon sequestration under Option 6.6 were discussed; there were views in support of this category and others suggesting it may not have much potential for reducing GHGs. This will be addressed further through the prioritization process.
- It was suggested that Options 6.7, 6.15, and 6.17 could be bundled and that Options 6.12 and 7.5 might be considered together. CCS explained that the TWG will have the opportunity to suggest bundles of options when voting on priorities for analysis is done.
- The Plenary Group decided to expand item 7.3 to include other types of wood products, beyond building materials (e.g., furniture).



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- It was noted that there is ongoing work with the Chicago Climate Exchange, Winrock International, and the University of Vermont to develop GHG reduction projects and these may be relevant for the policy analysis process. CCS requests that any relevant options that don't appear in the catalog be forwarded to Steve Roe by 11/13 for incorporation into the catalog.
 - CCS review some additional clarifications made to the waste management options during the PG meeting on 11/08. This included the addition of an option covering wastewater treatment biosolids composting/anaerobic digestion.
3. CCS provided an overview of the VT inventory and forecast and explained that the inventory and forecast will be reviewed in greater detail during the next 2 to 3 TWG calls. In the last call, the VT Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation reported having potentially useful data on harvest statistics. After internal review and discussions, the VT Dept of Forestry determined that the FIA data currently used in the inventory will provide the best estimates for long term comparisons and comparisons among Northeastern states. The draft inventory and forecast report is nearing completion. CCS will notify the TWG when the report is posted.

Next steps:

1. The TWG agreed to have CCS begin to fill in the information on potential GHG reductions and costs based on the VT inventory and forecast data, reductions estimated for similar options in other states, and professional judgment. The next call will review the prioritization process.
2. Scheduling was discussed. CCS is preparing a schedule of all remaining TWG calls to enable long-term planning and facilitate participation. It was determined that Tu/Thu afternoons (1-3pm) were good time slots for future calls. CCS will provide a notification to the TWG when the schedule is drafted.
3. Any additions of options to the catalog should be provided to Steve Roe by 11/20/06.
4. CCS will notify the TWG when the draft Inventory & Forecast document is posted and ready for review.