



DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY

Vermont Governor's Commission on Climate – Plenary Group (GCCC-PG) Agriculture, Forestry & Waste Resource Management (AFW) Technical Work Group Call # 9, June 5, 2007

Attendance:

1. TWG Members: Bruce Shields (for William Sayre), Jamie Fidel (for Elizabeth Courtney), Sandy Wilmot, Paula Calabrese, Jackie Folsom
2. Public:
3. CCS: Steve Roe, Brad Strode
4. VTDEC: Jeff Merrell

Background documents

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

1. Notice and Agenda
2. PowerPoint Presentation to the AFW TWG
3. AFW Policy Options Document (distributed via email prior to the call)
4. Summary Notes from Call #8

Discussion and conclusions:

1. CCS reviewed the agenda for the call. The agenda included reviewing notes from the last call and solicited comments for revisions to the Call #8 Summary, updating the TWG and PG member list to include more input from the Agriculture sector, discussing the remaining steps in developing policy options, continuing the review and discussion of the Vermont inventory & forecast (I&F; if necessary), and providing a reminder of the date and time for next meeting, as well as soliciting public comments.
 - a. The review of the call summary included a discussion regarding input from waste management experts. Also, the incentives program for the biofuels option (AFW-5) was addressed and input was solicited. With regards to the diagram of biomass supply across AFW and other sector options, a report of VT Biomass Resource Potential has been identified and will be distributed to the TWG once obtained by CCS.
 - b. CCS recapped the 5th plenary group meeting. There were minimal comments for the AFW TWG at this meeting, except to encourage continued data collection, evaluation of data appropriateness for Vermont, analysis and fleshing-out of



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various options. The next PG meeting is on June 21 and the policy options document must be complete one week prior to the next PG meeting, June 14.

- c. CCS emphasized that the AFW I&F appendices are available on the Vermont AFW TWG webpage (http://www.vtclimatechange.us/Agriculture_Forestry.cfm). The entire VT I&F is available at <http://www.vtclimatechange.us/plenarygroup.cfm>. TWG members were asked to raise any concerns they have with the Draft I&F as it now stands. Members should correspond with one of the CCS facilitators regarding suggestions.
2. The attention of the call turned from the PowerPoint to the VT AFW Policy Options document that was distributed via e-mail to TWG members prior to the meeting. All changes from the last version are highlighted in yellow. CCS emphasized the process of policy options development. TWG members are encouraged to submit additional or alternate language for policy options and support CCS with analysis and quantification, as the GCCC / Plenary Group / TWG effort is a public-driven process.
3. The targets of AFW-1 were questioned. AFW-1 addresses the sales and consumption of local farm products. The concern was raised that by disaggregating food shopping through farmer's markets and co-ops, the benefits of reducing food transport are offset by additional trips taken by private motorists. CCS suggests - rather than re-working the policy design - altering the goal to include a more regional scope of product origin. It is suggested that the goal of 30% increase in consumption of local agriculture products is over-ambitious. Another issue raised was the lack of food processing analysis. It was noted that the baseline capacity for food processing (as well as cold storage capacity) in Vermont is relatively low. A member suggested that the VT Department of Agriculture also be consulted for cost estimates.
4. AFW-2 concerns greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction potential related to Agricultural Nutrient Management Programs. The title of Agricultural Soil Carbon Management Programs is somewhat a misnomer, as the bulk of emissions considered in the analysis of this option are related to nitrous oxide (N₂O). The soil carbon quantification is still under development at the time of this teleconference. Pertaining to the cost quantification of this option, the issue of feasibility was raised.
5. The quantification of AFW-3 was presented. The feasibility of utilizing incentives from the 2002 US Farm Bill was addressed. The economics of anaerobic digesters for on-site electricity generation were strongly questioned, with members stating that the life expectancy, price and efficacy of electricity sold by these digesters, and other barriers to the implementation of this option restrict its economic feasibility.
6. A member raised the issue of cost incidence of agriculture land conservation prescribed by AFW-4. Feasibility of this option was questioned, as property rights issues may prevent full implementation of this option. Increasing property values and other factors that drive development may increase the cost of implementing this option.



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7. CCS suggested that members work together offline or set up another call to discuss the development of AFW options specifically related to forestry. As a great deal of new information has been added, some TWG members were in favor of an additional meeting.
8. Preliminary quantifications for AFW-8 were presented orally by CCS. CCS requested TWG members to provide input regarding data availability related to the use of wood in construction and the consumption of durable wood products. The TWG suggested that the transition from wood to other building materials is the result of fire codes, which must be understood before assuming that wood can directly replace steel.
9. CCS presented additions made to AFW-9, raising the question of whether incentives (subsidies) are necessary to implement recycling and composting more broadly. A TWG member agreed to gather some data and contact CCS later in the week to improve quantification of this option.
10. AFW-10: CCS described difficulties related to the quantification of the costs of this option.
11. TWG members are asked to provide additional data regarding potable water processing, which is currently absent from the quantification of AFW-11.
12. In-state production of biofuels (AFW-12) was discussed. Questions were raised regarding feedstocks, transportation, incentives, permitting, and the impact on food for human or livestock consumption. CCS acknowledged that the permitting process and other barriers may need to be represented in the quantification. CCS also emphasized that future technologies such as cellulosic ethanol and algal feedstocks are going to be necessary to meet targets without greatly impacting the availability of food.
13. Public comment was solicited. There were no public comments.

Next Steps:

1. CCS will contact interested TWG members to set up a forestry subgroup call, to take place as soon as possible.
 - a. *CCS mentioned on the call that a report regarding the biomass resource potential (as an energy feedstock) in Vermont would be circulated. As the report is still in draft form, the authors have requested that CCS not distribute said report to the TWG. CCS will synthesize the information from the report and include this information in the AFW policy options document.*
2. There is a Plenary Group meeting on June 21. The AFW policy options document must be finished and posted on June 14.
3. The next meeting of the AFW TWG is June 28, where the TWG will review comments from the Plenary Group.