

PUBLIC INTEREST ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PIAC) MEETING

Thursday, August 11, 2005, 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Battelle, Duxbury, MA

MINUTES

AGENDA TOPICS

- MWRA permit renewal
- Review of OMSAP meeting

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Patty Foley, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay (Chair); Bruce Berman, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay (alt.); Peter Borrelli, Center for Coastal Studies; Sal Genovese, Safer Waters in Massachusetts; and Steve Tucker, Cape Cod Commission.

Observers: Michele Barden, EPA; Todd Borci, EPA; Andrea Rex, MWRA; and Cathy Vakalopoulos, MADEP.

MINUTES

Minutes from the September 27, 2004 meeting were approved.

MWRA NPDES PERMIT RENEWAL

Michele Barden is the lead permit writer at EPA for MWRA's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. As discussed at the OMSAP meeting, the permit expired yesterday (August 10, 2005). MWRA has sent in a timely application and their current discharge permit will remain in effect until the new one is in place. M. Barden said that EPA is planning on writing a clearer permit and is in the process of determining what initial questions about the outfall have been answered.

B. Berman asked about effluent blending. M. Barden replied that EPA is conducting a technical review of effluent data and plant operations and has requested additional information from MWRA. B. Berman would like to see blending discussed at an OMSAP meeting. P. Borrelli noted that the 2005 red tide was likely influenced by unusual weather patterns. He is concerned that the quality of the Deer Island Treatment Plant discharge will change with harsher winters and wetter springs.

P. Foley asked the group for other ideas as to how PIAC can participate in the process. P. Borrelli replied that there is always the question of monitoring verses research. MWRA is required to monitor but there is not enough research being funded, yet MWRA should not bear all of the responsibility.

ACTION: PIAC members present request a list of potential changes to MWRA's NPDES permit from EPA and a list of items from MWRA that they would like to see changed in their permit. S. Tucker would also like to see a list of permit modifications to date. PIAC recommends that EPA host at least two public meetings (in Boston and Cape Cod) before the draft permit is released for public comment. PIAC also requests the EPA share information as it becomes available. PIAC will set-up a conference call with EPA to discuss planning for the public meetings.

REVIEW OF OMSAP MEETING

C. Vakalopoulos summarized the OMSAP meeting. S. Genovese thinks that it is important that MWRA continue to monitor flounder. He believes that if the flounder lesions were more of a concern, then there would be more funding provided by the fisheries agencies. PIAC was pleased to see the agencies work together to monitor the red tide. P. Borrelli agreed that MWRA should continue to monitor flounder. He hopes to see research on flounder migration conducted. He also hopes that MWRA's modeling efforts are continued. S. Tucker thinks that since MWRA's permit is so comprehensive, it would be nice to see parts of it applied to other discharge permits.

ADJOURNED

MEETING HANDOUTS:

- Agenda
- September 2004 draft OMSAP meeting summary
- September 2004 draft PIAC meeting summary
- March 2005 flounder lesion focus group meeting summary
- MWRA information briefings

Summary prepared by C. Vakalopoulos.