

Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA)
Environmental Task Force
Galvez Building, Room 1051
April 20, 2006

I. Call to order

Tom Henning, chairperson of the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA) Environmental Task Force, called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. The meeting was conducted in compliance with the Louisiana Open Meetings Laws.

II. Introductions and Roll Call

Present:

Tom Henning, Chairperson
Sharon Parson
Henry Graham
Mark Davis
Patrick Talley
Maura Wood

Absent:

Representative Cravins, Jr.
Senator Amedee
Senator Fontenot
Robert Twilley
Robert Thomas
John Pardue
Representative Damico
Jerome Ringo
Bob Berkebile
Rickey Melerine
Kent Satterlee

III. Approval of Minutes

A quorum was not present so the approval of minutes was carried over until May 11, 2006.

IV. Environmental Updates

- a) Waste Water Treatment Status Report -
 - Cameron and Delcombe systems are running.
 - Eden Isles and St. Tammany have flow through – 360,000/day, treated with disinfectant.
 - St. Bernard has the same situation as New Orleans. Repairs, new construction will not be finished until sewage systems are up and running.
 - Plaquemines – unsure regarding flood maps and the levee issues. No repopulation south of Belle Chase.
 - The funding report from Water Recovery Environment Association with the estimates to recover Katrina affected areas is almost ready to be released – Recovery cost around \$1B.
 - Costs to access/inspect underground damages are ineligible for FEMA funds unless Katrina damage is evident.
 - HAZMIT funds with FEMA are restricted to existing affected areas to abate future storm damage. Wetlands assimilation area is ineligible for FEMA funds.

- b) Sediment Update, Tom Harris
- Sediment/Soil sampling in Katrina flooded areas:
 - Joint effort among USEPA, LDEQ, CDC, ATSDR, LDHH and the N.O Health Department.
 - Over 1000 soil/sediment samples collected to date.
 - Samples analyzed for over 200 chemicals.
 - Tiered approach with multiple phases.
 - Phase I Sediment Sampling
 - Sampling began as floodwaters receded.
 - Biased samples were collected to identify possible releases.
 - Samples were collected from sediments with stains or odors and from curbs/storm drains and drainage paths.
 - Phase II Sediment Sampling
 - Objective – more extensively characterize chemical nature of sediment in areas with heavy deposits.
 - 9th Ward and St. Bernard Parish (excluding the area impacted by the Murphy Oil spill).
 - Phase III Focused Sampling
 - 43 sample locations out of 800 taken from earlier phases identified as localized areas that may require additional evaluation.
 - Arsenic, lead or benzo(a)pyrene
 - The neighborhood around the Thompson-Hayward site was also identified for further evaluation.
 - To determine if elevated levels were isolated or representative of a larger area.
 - ~10 composite samples within a 500' radius of each of the 43 original sample locations.
 - Compared results to long-term residential standards (30 year, children)
 - Phase III Findings – Arsenic
 - Arsenic concentrations are not expected to cause health impacts to children or adults in a residential setting.
 - Highest arsenic concentration detected (13.8 mg/kg) was above the Louisiana background of 12 mg/kg, but well within EPA's acceptable risk range and below the level protective on non-cancer impacts (22 mg/kg).
 - No follow-up is necessary for arsenic.
 - Phase III – Benzo(a)pyrene
 - One composite sample in the Agriculture Street landfill area exceeded EPA's acceptable risk range for B(a)P assuming long-term residential exposure.
 - All other Phase III samples were below residential levels.
 - Not a widespread problem, limited to a small area – we are currently working with EPA to determine the appropriate course of action.
 - Phase III – Thompson –Hayward
 - Analyzed for complete spectrum of pesticides.
 - 9 composite samples taken in the surrounding neighborhood.
 - Results indicated no adverse health effects for long-term residential exposure.
 - Phase III – Lead
 - Lead concentrations exceeded residential screening levels in 57 of 147 composite samples where lead had been detected in earlier samples.
 - Samples results ranged from below 400 mg/kg to 3960 mg/kg.

- Results do not appear to be hurricane related, but are consistent with historical levels in New Orleans and with national studies.
 - Further analysis is underway to determine the source of lead contamination.
 - Lead recommendations
 - Residents in these areas should take steps to prevent exposure.
 - Cover bare dirt.
 - Washable floor mats at all entrances.
 - Keep kids away from peeling paint.
 - Frequent hand washing for children.
 - Wet mop floors and damp wipe other surfaces.
- c) Landfill and Debris Recycling, Dr. Brown
- DEQ ER staff has been manning their workspace at the LOHSEP EOC around the clock since before Katrina came ashore.
 - Immediately following Katrina's landfall, an Incident Management Team (IMT) began assembling at DEQ HQ Galvez building. A Unified Command Center (UCC) was established to house and support the IMT.
 - Working from the UCC were DEQ and representatives from EPA, TCEQ, COE, USCG, NOAA, USGS, LOSCO, LDHH and local government.
 - A similar IMT and UCC were established at DEQ's southwest regional office in Lake Charles following Hurricane Rita.
 - Teaming with the Louisiana Sheriff's Association, LDEQ employees aided in the rescue of approximately 480 people from the hurricane affected areas.
 - Storm debris management: Based upon Corps of Engineer debris models:
 - Hurricane Katrina generated an estimated 22M tons (55M CY) of debris.
 - Hurricane Rita generated an estimated 2.6M tons (6M CY) of debris.
 - Debris management sites have been designated for specific purposes:
 - Wood-waste Burning Operations
 - Wood-waste Chipping and Grinding
 - Construction and demolition staging or disposal
 - Staging of boats, vehicles, white goods
 - Staging of household hazardous waste
 - Current debris management sites have been used to process 72% of the Katrina generated debris and 98% of Rita generated debris.
 - 343 approved sites in the state
 - 173 for Katrina debris
 - 170 for Rita debris
 - Storm debris quantity estimates:
 - 98.1% / 6,154,614 CY of Hurricane Rita debris has been removed as of 4/19/06. 2,956,542 CY has been reduced.
 - 72% / 15,028,778 CY of Hurricane Katrina debris has been removed as of 4/19/06. 1,333,839 CY has been reduced.
 - Electronic goods disposal – cumulative total (units) = 3,356,558 as of 3/14/06
 - Freon extraction – cumulative total (units) = 289,550 as of 3/14/06
 - White goods – Katrina & Rita (USACE; refrigerators, freezers, A/C, W/D, stoves, water heaters, D/W, water fountains, and microwaves):
 - Katrina – 714,120 tons
 - Rita – 30,106 tons
 - Grand total – 714,226 tons as of 4/19/06

- Preservation of landfill capacity provides capacity of disposal of hurricane debris, capacity for disposal of future debris, and capacity of residential repopulation debris.
- Management of demolition debris from the hurricanes and management of development debris from home rebuilding activities.
- DEQ has given FEMA a plan for debris, but costs for disposal are an issue. FEMA pays for the disposal, any additional costs for recycling are not covered and parishes left without a tax base can not make up the difference.
- Landfills will be monitored for up to 3 years after accepting debris by DEQ for safety.
- When hazardous materials being disposed EPA and CDC protocols are being used.
- Many of recycling efforts will not occur due to right of entry laws, and the fact that materials are located on private properties.

V. Smart Growth Template Discussion

Discussions were held over until the May 11, 2006 meeting.

VI. Public Comments

The Hope Team presented the task force with Hurricane affected areas problems, economic impact and work being done by eight of the largest Disaster Recovery firms, as well as addressing legal issues/concerns.

Some of identified problems were tax base loss, perceived vs. actual risks, regulatory compliance, legal liabilities, inadequate site preparation and evaluations.

The Hope Team addressed statutory requirements from HUD/NEPA and CERCLA, as well as right of access liabilities, RCRA notices of endangerment and future toxic tort liabilities.

Some of the solutions discussed were enabling risks to be responsibly identified, communicated and mitigated. A handout containing further solutions and work being done by The Hope Team was given to each task force member.

Dr. Daryl Wiley with the Sierra Club presented the task force with landfill dilemmas situated by the Holy Cross and the Vietnamese community, located around the lower 9th Ward in New Orleans.

A temporary landfill near the two communities was approved without public input. The two communities do not want the landfill near them since the landfill would impact the two communities negatively as well as being under water after the hurricanes.

Another concern is the Newport landfill which houses wood chips which are a potential fire hazard, as well as the downed trees in the area.

Concern was raised over the chartering of the Melton School regarding contamination of the area.

Dr. Wiley asked for more information to channel down to the grass roots levels so the public can have input into decisions being made that would affect their communities.

One New Orleans citizen/worker brought up problems with funds, mitigation and educating the public and workers.

404 funding, levee around waste-water treatment plant has infrastructure recommendations since the 406 funding is ineligible, and all comments have been submitted to FEMA. It was requested that DEQ and the New Orleans group schedule a future meeting to help the system.

VII. Other

Maura Wood presented (see handout) the task force with a draft of the guiding principles of the LRA Environmental Task Force from the approved strategic plan. (An email of the information will go to Joanna Gardner of DEQ).

Maura Wood also presented (see handout) the board with the New Orleans harbor dredging proposal. The task force should be alarmed about the proposal because the Port of New Orleans has requested funds to relocate businesses. Another problem is the Holy Cross, Lower 9th Ward disposal site will cut short eco-tourism and a trolley to St. Bernard visions. Also where will the contaminated sediments be housed? Linda Mathis with DEQ will be given the presented information for assistance.

It was voiced from a task force member that they become involved with policy, not individual projects.

Ms. Wood also handed out a pamphlet from the Sierra Club as a guide to “Build Back Green, Clean and Safe”. She also described work being done by the Sierra Club regarding the testing for formaldehyde levels in FEMA trailers in Mississippi. Test kits will be given out in the New Orleans areas but can also be purchased from Advanced Chemicals since only a limited number are available.

VIII. Next meeting

Next scheduled meeting – May 11, 1-3 pm @ DEQ

Adjourned @ 3:40 p.m.