

Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force Meeting

Meeting Notes

Facilitated by White Bluffs Consulting (Ben and Lara Floyd)

Friday, March 8, 2019 | 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Conference Call

Meeting Documents: <http://srrttf.org/?p=10079>

Attendees:

Voting Members and Alternates (*Denotes Voting Member)

Tom Agnew*, BiJay Adams – Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District

Mike Anderson* – City of Coeur d'Alene

Doug Krapas* – Inland Empire Paper (IEP)

Mike LaScoula*, Vikki Barthels – Spokane Regional Health District

Bud Leber* – Kaiser

Cadie Olsen*, Jeff Donovan – City of Spokane

Mike Petersen* – Lands Council

Advisors

Karl Rains – Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology)

Interested Parties

David Darling – American Coatings Association

Melissa Gombowsky – IEP

Elizabeth Schoedel – City of Spokane

2019 State Legislative Funding Request and communications with Legislators update:

Status of Bill: Doug Krapas and Melissa Gombosky shared an update on the state legislative process. Usually they take the request directly to local legislators and generally have received around half of the money requested. This time they requested \$800,000 but will not know what was included until the first budget drafts are released by the House and Senate. The next revenue forecast is March 20 and the budgets will be released shortly after this date. The local delegation is asking why the TF is not in a carry forward position so the process of requesting new funding does not have to be done each biennium, and they suggested trying to codify the TF. A bill to codify the TF was crafted but was introduced after the cut-off date and likely has died in committee, but Representative Fitzgibbons said his committee would hold a hearing on the bill to give an opportunity for TF members to testify on the importance of receiving funding. They anticipate a scheduled hearing in the next couple of weeks.

Comments: (replies by Melissa Gombowsky)

- Ben mentioned concerns from the TF about the language of the bill and how the bill was crafted, and whether the bill might advance and if the TF should work on proposed changes to the text of the bill at this time? *It is not worth the time as the bill probably would not move forward. But if it did there would be time to amend it, and also the TF would have the opportunity to say to the local legislative delegation that the TF does not want it moved forward but just wants a hearing.*

- Doug asked if she and legislators see this (codifying the TF) as something to do in the future to secure funding? *Definitely, and it would help improve the chances for ongoing funding, and give the TF the opportunity in 2019 to agree on bill language. The TF would want to meet with the local delegation in Spokane when they are not in session and the TF could also request a Senate companion bill and seek more sponsors. The legislature is facing a large funding deficit this year so they are more anxious about funding than typical, so a hearing for TF members to share the importance of receiving continued funding may help in securing funding.*
- Doug suggested putting it on the agenda for future TF meetings and asked when the process should start? *The TF should start soon to find an agreement on bill language and once there is agreement then take it to legislators later in 2019.*
- Ben asked Melissa about funding status and if there is something the members of the TF can do to help encourage funding further? *Calls, emails, appointments with local legislators. They have so many requests coming at them. The TF can reach out to Senator Padden in the 4th district and on the Appropriations Committee, and the 3rd, 6th, 7th and 9th districts where there are some dischargers. Anyone that has relationships with the Governor's office and Rob Duff, which is his policy advisor, should reach out to them.*
- Cadie asked about the TF status with only being organized through an MOA. How does codifying the MOA language in the bill affect our more informal status per the MOA? If we were a stronger association would we get more funding going forward? *It was suggested to talk to organization attorneys about this question.*
- Ben said if the TF decides to support legislation, that is a good question. Ben asked about the hearing status or if she had any idea when it could happen? *It could be anytime or not till the end of the session. She will let the TF know as soon as she knows anything.*
- Karl asked how codifying the TF would help future funding? *When she speaks to their legislative champions they say it would be nice to codify the TF but she can pose this question to the Appropriations chair to see if we can get additional details on the benefits.*
- Can you share prior examples of codification that have been successful in receiving long term budgeting? *It was suggested the City talk to Luke Esser, who is the lobbyist in Olympia and represents the City of Spokane.*
- Ben said he took the past TF letter to the Governor and retooled it for a communication for State Legislators and identified things out of the 2019 work plan or comprehensive plan in the list of things the TF would need funding for.
- Doug asked if specific TF members are interested in attending a hearing if it happens?
- Mike P. said he is checking with one of his board members Neil Beaver to see if he would be available to represent the Lands Council. The Lands Council would support this hearing.
- Tom Agnew plans to attend.
- Ben asked if anyone is uncomfortable about supporting points in the legislators letter? No
- Karl wants to double check with Ecology about taking a neutral position with the bill although they of course support the TF. As the chair of the Funding work group and being with Ecology is it ok for him to assist in moving this along?
- Ben suggested having a separate conference call with the Funding work group and include Melissa and any other advocates. The group could talk about strategy, take talking points

that the TF agrees on and use them if there is a hearing or at individual meetings with legislators.

Key themes/topics to be included in the letter to State Legislators:

- Mike P. said we should tie PCB accumulation in fish tissue to public health.
- Cadie said to add a bullet point on affordability, or the TF serves the community by identifying and removing PCBs from the river but the TF cannot afford to do it without assistance from state legislators.
- Mike L. suggested adding a point about the economic impact of having an impaired river too.
- Doug said to keep in mind that TF members who go over to the hearing may have separate information they want to share besides this letter.
- Ben said this letter will represent the TF approved message to legislators but those going can share additional thoughts.
- Karl asked if it is more appropriate to identify a single voice who delivers a certain message on behalf of the TF at the hearing then allow others to go and represent their own interests and organizations?
- Ben said the letter would speak for the TF and it could be submitted then others who attend the hearing could share other additional thoughts.
- Karl will follow up with Adriane about having this coordination under the Funding work group.
- Doug said to those who want to go over, Melissa and others would likely also arrange other meetings with other legislators while over there. Doug asked, what if the TF does not get this funding?
- Without proper funding the TF existence is in jeopardy. Ben will add this point and the other points made above to the letter.

ACTION: WBC will follow up with Doug and TF members in WA about who would like to participate in preparations for the hearing. WBC will place an agenda item for discussion about redefining the bill language at upcoming TF meetings, starting with the April 24 meeting. (complete)

ACTION: TF members will give WBC additional suggestions for updates to the topics to be included on the letter through Monday, March 11. Ben will prepare a track changes version of the letter with updates and send out by Monday evening with two days to look it over. Approval by mid or end of next week and issue final version by Friday, March 15. (complete)

The next TF check in is a March 27th Funding Conference call at 11 am to discuss the public participation grants and an update on the amendment process in Ecology on the ACE agreement. The Lands Council has agreed to amend their existing grant to receive additional funding to support a portion of the data synthesis workshop and to fully fund the spring outreach campaign.

The next in-person TF meeting is April 24, 2019 at Liberty Lake Sewer & Water District, 8:30 am – noon