

**Draft Summary of the NEPSI Infrastructure Subgroup Conference Call
February 12, 2002
3:00 – 4:00 PM EST**

Members in Attendance:

Reggie Caudill, NJIT	Tony Hainault, MN OEA
Merry Rankin, Iowa DNR	Diana Bendz, IBM
Kevin McCarthy, Waste Management	Lynn Rubinstein, NERC
Lucy Stanfield, EPA Reg. 5	Patty Dillon, Tufts University
Heather Bowman, EIA	Chris Beling, EPA Reg. 1
Gordon Hui, EPA OSW	Julie Rhodes, ReDO
Lorraine Graves, EPA Reg. 2	Julie Rosenbach, EPA OSW
Scott Cassel, PSI	Wayne Rifer, WEPSI (facilitator)
	Ben Carlisle, ERG (note-taker)

The participants of the NEPSI Infrastructure Subgroup met via conference call on February 12, 2002, from 3:00 to 4:00 PM EST. This document briefly summarizes the major topics covered during the subgroup's discussions, and highlights agreements that were reached.

Update on the Matrix Tool

During the Tampa meeting, the subgroup had decided to form small teams to rate the correlations between key features and desired attributes for each existing model under consideration. The idea was that each team would work together to reach a consensus on the correlation ratings, and then send these consensus ratings to Reggie Caudill for entering into the matrix.

Reggie said that he had not yet received anything from the small teams. He asked the teams to get him the correlation ratings by February 14th, or as soon as reasonably possible.

Patty Dillon said that her team had completed the correlations for the Massachusetts model, but that there had been some confusion over one of the instructions Reggie had given. Reggie had told the teams to leave a matrix square blank if there was no relationship between a key feature and a desired attribute. Patty said that her team had instead entered a "1" under these circumstances. She asked if they should go back and use blank squares as originally instructed. Reggie said that they should go back. He said that a blank square should be used to indicate that there is no correlation, and a "1" should be used to indicate a low correlation.

Continued Discussion of Concept Proposal for Base Service Standards

The subgroup spent the bulk of the call discussing the concept proposal for base service standards. The proposal was developed by Sego Jackson of Snohomish County, Washington, and was subsequently revised based on comments received during the last subgroup conference call (2/5/02).

Wayne Rifer said that the proposal is a first crack at defining the minimum level of service that will be paid for under a NEPSI system. He explained that one use of this document is that the NEPSI Cost Subgroup needs information on the minimum level of service in order to estimate the real costs of a nationwide electronics stewardship system.

Wayne said that the Infrastructure Subgroup could do two things with the proposal: 1) talk it over until the subgroup is fairly comfortable with it, then send the proposal to the NEPSI Cost Subgroup so that they can work on determining the costs of the base level of service; 2) refine and revise the proposal to develop consensus base standards, which the Infrastructure Subgroup could then propose to the larger Stakeholder Group.

Wayne suggested that the second option would be more complex and time-consuming, and he proposed that the subgroup focus for now on reaching a basic level of comfort with the proposed standards and then passing them on to the Cost Subgroup so that they can begin their work.

The subgroup participants agreed with this suggestion, and they spent the rest of the call discussing their concerns about the proposed standards. These concerns are summarized below:

- Some participants felt that the proposal makes a leap of faith in specifying that retailers will offer ongoing collection in urban areas. One participant pointed out that this type of collection doesn't currently exist; another suggested that the retailer component should be cut for now from the proposed standards. Others disagreed, saying it was important that the Cost Subgroup consider retailer collection when estimating costs.
- Similar concerns were expressed about the idea of offering nationwide mail-back service as part of the base service standards, with consumers paying the shipping costs. One participant said that assigning shipping costs to consumers amounts to making a policy decision, since shipping costs are typically quite high.
- In general, the participants felt that there was a catch-22 at play. On the one hand, the Cost Subgroup needs information on the minimum level of service in order to estimate the costs of a national system. On the other hand, the Infrastructure Subgroup needs to have some cost data available in order to make enlightened decisions about what components should be included in the base service standards.
- Some participants also felt that the Infrastructure Subgroup should wait to make decisions on base service standards until the results from Reggie's matrix are available.
- Instead of presenting the Cost Subgroup with proposed base service standards at this point, some participants supported the idea of presenting that subgroup with an "a la carte" menu of options for collection service, transportation service, and processing/recycling/reuse service, and asking the Cost Subgroup to develop cost data for each option. This would avoid the catch-22 identified above. Once the cost data

became available, the Infrastructure Subgroup could use the data in developing recommendations for base service standards.

- Some participants who supported this “a la carte” proposal also felt that it was important to keep the specific costs of a national system separate and easily identifiable, so that each actor in the system can focus on cost reduction. However, another participant pointed out that it was hard to predict how costs would change as different service options are packaged together.
- There was some opposition to the “a la carte” proposal from participants who felt that the subgroup should go farther than simply listing a menu of service options and should shoot for at least a rough draft of the base service standards. Several participants backed the idea of presenting Segó’s proposal for base service standards pretty much as is, but adding a short preamble clarifying that the proposal is just a working draft and that an iterative process would be required for developing final standards for consideration by the whole Stakeholder Group.
- One participant pointed out that, along with cost considerations, the Infrastructure Subgroup would also have to address the performance of any proposed base service standards. In other words, the subgroup would have to evaluate whether the proposed standards will achieve high rates of collection and recycling. The participants discussed when this evaluation should take place. The consensus seemed to be that performance should be considered parallel to cost, rather than later. The participants agreed that performance data exist, and they discussed whether it would be most efficient for the Cost Subgroup to gather performance data at the same time that they gather cost data, especially if the data are contained in the same sources.
- The subgroup also talked about the general need to clarify some of the language in Segó’s proposal (e.g., “continuous, permanent public drop-off”).
- One participant suggested that cost considerations shouldn’t be factored in when deciding upon a base level of service. This participant felt it was the role of the Finance Subgroup to address issues of cost.

In the end, the subgroup decided to present the Cost Subgroup with a memo. Instead of proposing base service standards, the memo would list various service categories for which cost data are needed. The memo would also make clear that the Infrastructure Subgroup would use these cost data in an iterative process to develop actual base service standards for recommendation to the Stakeholder Group.

Wayne said that he would draft a version of this memo and circulate it. The subgroup participants agreed to send Wayne any comments on the memo by February 15th.

Next Conference Call

The next conference call for the Infrastructure Subgroup is scheduled for February 19th, between 2:00 and 3:00 PM EST (**note the early starting time**). The call-in number is 202-260-1015. The access code number is 8672#. The discussion will focus on the modeling tool currently being developed by the Polymer Alliance Zone and SAIC. Wayne said that he would contact PAZ and SAIC, and would invite an SAIC representative to participate in the call and explain the tool. (**Note that it was subsequently decided to focus that meeting on the Base Service document.**)

Assignments

- Wayne will draft a memo to the Cost Subgroup and circulate it within the Infrastructure Subgroup to get comments.
- The subgroup participants will send Wayne any comments on the memo by February 15th.
- Wayne will contact PAZ and SAIC and invite an SAIC representative to participate in the next conference call. **See note above.**
- Each small team will send their correlation values to Reggie by February 14th or as soon as reasonably possible.