

**Draft Summary of the NEPSI Infrastructure Subgroup Conference Call**  
**April 25, 2002**  
**3:30-4:30 PM EST**

**Members in Attendance:**

Wayne Rifer, WEPSI (facilitator)  
Julie Rhodes, ReDO  
Ed Nevins, JVC  
Butch Teglas, Philips  
Heather Bowman, EIA  
Jason Linnell, EIA  
[David White, Nokia, or David Stitzhal,  
WEPSI???)  
Chris Cloutier, e4 Partners

Reggie Caudill, NJIT-MERC  
Dana Silverberg, NJ DEP  
Guy Watson, NJ DEP  
Scott Klag, Metro/Portland, OR  
Butch Teglas, Philips  
Gordon Hui, EPA OSW  
Sego Jackson, Snohomish County  
Alyssa Kneller, ERG (notetaker)

The participants of the NEPSI Infrastructure Subgroup met via conference call on April 25, 2002, from 3:30 to 4:30 PM EST. This document briefly summarizes the major topics covered during the subgroup's discussions, and highlights the agreements that were reached.

**Call Agenda**

- Review the results from Reggie Caudill's matrix, a modeling tool developed to help subgroup members evaluate existing electronics reuse and recycling programs.
- Discuss plans for the May 20<sup>th</sup> Chicago meeting. The NEPSI Finance Subgroup is meeting in Chicago and Wayne Rifer felt that it might benefit the Infrastructure Subgroup to do the same.
- Finalize Base Service Document. This document lays out the base level of electronics recycling services that should be implemented nationwide.
- Discuss draft language for the new attribute. At the outset of the NEPSI process, the Stakeholder Group developed a list of desired attributes for the nationwide electronics recycling program. The Infrastructure Subgroup would like to add a new social benefit/contribution attribute. Because the discussion on the Base Service Document ran longer than expected, the subgroup did not get to this agenda item.

**Reggie's Matrix**

At the beginning of the call, Reggie Caudill spent a few minutes explaining his matrix and reviewing the history of its development. The purpose of the matrix is to help subgroup members think through the costs and benefits of five existing electronics reuse and recycling programs (SWICO, Best Buy, Massachusetts, Japanese, and Taiwanese). Each program is structured differently. For example, some programs place collection responsibility on retailers while others place it on local governments.

Reggie captured these differences by listing key program features across the top of the matrix. The list of NEPSI desired attributes (18, in all) runs down the left side of the matrix, and next to the list is an "importance rating" column, which is used to weight the attributes (on a scale of 1 to 5) in terms of their relative importance. The Infrastructure Subgroup members had assigned these importance ratings through an open vote.

Over the past few months, the subgroup members had worked in small teams to determine which key features apply to each of the five programs. The teams also scored the correlations between key features and desired attributes for the programs under consideration. These scores reflect how well each program meets the NEPSI desired attributes.

Reggie plugged this information into his matrix, meshing key features and attributes. Moving across the page, the total scores allow subgroup members to compare programs according to flexibility, consumer convenience, environmental efficiency, and the other desired attributes. Moving down the page, the total scores allow subgroup members to compare programs according to producer responsibility, flow of funds, and the other key features. They help members identify which key features achieve the most desired attributes. In summary, the total scores indicate which programs perform best and why. Wayne Rifer asked subgroup members to look through the matrix for big picture lessons. For example, all three collection systems perform about the same when it comes to meeting the desired attributes.

### **Chicago Meeting**

On May 20<sup>th</sup> the Finance Subgroup will meet in Chicago. Wayne proposed that the Infrastructure Subgroup do the same. He indicated that the group works faster at face-to-face meetings and invited comments.

Heather Bowman expressed concern that some people are part of more than one subgroup. If two subgroups meet at the same time, they may feel torn. Others indicated that they would not be able to attend due to resource limitations. Chris Cloutier urged Wayne to draft an agenda and provide a conference call option. Some subgroup members were afraid that the Chicago contingent would make decisions without talking to the rest of the group.

After further discussion, the subgroup members agreed that those present at the Chicago meeting will work on tasks in the morning and convey results and recommendations to the entire subgroup in an afternoon conference call. All decisions will still require subgroup consensus. Approximately eight members of the Infrastructure Subgroup will attend the meeting.

### **Base Service Document**

Wayne began the discussion of the Base Service Document by suggesting that the subgroup develop a basic consensus document with non-majority opinions drafted as additional documents. He indicated that other NEPSI subgroups are asking for the document. In particular, the Finance Subgroup cannot begin projecting costs until they know which services will be covered. Wayne pointed out that the Infrastructure Subgroup will not be able to solidify the document until the finance committee provides them with cost estimates. The Infrastructure Subgroup needs to get the process moving.

Subgroup members agreed to Wayne's suggestion. They used the remaining time to raise lingering concerns about the document (these are summarized below). At the end of the discussion, participants agreed to write short papers about any remaining concerns. These papers will accompany the basic consensus document.

### **Retailer Responsibilities**

Chris Cloutier pointed out that the retailer bullet point falls under the urban collection section. He suggested moving it to prevent specifying that only urban retailers should participate. Several subgroup members suggested alternatives. One person suggested including more information about the role of rural electronics retailers. Another suggested adding a new shared responsibility section that describes the role of each stakeholder. Several subgroup members pointed out that adding a new section would require too much time.

Several participants noted that the document is not prescriptive; it is intended to provide guidance. The "Role of Retailers" bullet point comes across as prescriptive. One subgroup member said that the language should suggest rather than demand that retailers play a role in the collection process. There was also concern that retailers were singled out because they are not represented in the subgroup. The document does not specifically address any other stakeholders.

### **Rural and Urban Collection Areas**

One participant asked what constitutes a “rural” area. Someone responded that the subgroup could use the U.S. Census Bureau’s classification system. In the end, subgroup members decided not to define rural. One participant asked whether it is still important to distinguish between urban and rural collection areas. Scott Klag and several others responded that it is critical to mention that there are differences. The subgroup decided to define a base service standard for all areas and explain how the standard might play out in urban and rural areas. The future implementation entity will work out collection system details.

### **Nonprofit Organizations**

Julie Rhodes said that the list of electronics drop-off sites should include both non-profit and for-profit organizations. Wayne agreed to change the document language accordingly.

### **Mail-Back Collection**

Heather Bowman expressed concern that mail-back collection centers will receive too much money under the current Base Standard Agreement. She said that they should not receive the same compensation as a public-access collection center. Wayne agreed to address Heather’s concern by altering the language in the mail-back center bullet.

### **Double Compensation at Reuse Facilities**

Heather also expressed concern about subsidizing electronics refurbishment. She feels that electronics reuse and recycling organizations will receive double compensation under the current Base Service Standard. She used computer reuse and recycling organizations to make her point. A computer reuse/recycling organization receives compensation to refurbish a computer that can be sold again. The computer ends up getting recycled in a few years. Another company is compensated, this time to recycle the computer. Another subgroup member pointed out that charging a front-end recycling fee on used electronics circumvents the problem. Wayne agreed that the double compensation issue warrants further investigation.