

## **Green Tier Advisors**

March 20, 2009

### Stakeholder Participation

**ISSUE SUMMARY:** The Green Tier law, Ch 299.83, WI Stats, describes a process for interested persons to participate in negotiations concerning a participation contract or charter. But there is less than a handful of Interested Persons Groups (IPG) in place. Initial thinking was that the problem was a lack of available funding for participation by non-government organizations (NGO). Although there is some recognition of the value of an IPG, this not widespread among NGO's nor Green Tier participants.

**EDITOR:** Carla Wright

**BACKGROUND:** The Advisors and the department have expressed interest in strengthening public and stakeholder participation in Green Tier local contracts and charters. Given that there are very few active IPG's an informal subcommittee (Rebecca Power, Lori Grant, River Alliance of WI., and Carla Wright) looked into this issue.

**DISCUSSION:** During the December 2008 Advisors meeting, there was consensus that some state funding should be pursued for grants to NGO's to participate in IPG's. Subsequently Senator Miller's office was contacted about this but given the current fluctuation of funding sources, i.e. Recycling, it is unknown what fund source could be tapped. Compounding this question is whether there is any possible fund source that NGO's would be in support of redirecting for Green Tier IPG's.

Although the population of Green Tier participants and NGO's with experience in IPG's is very limited, the perspective of those with experience regarding the value of IPG's is very positive. There are two stellar examples of active IPG's: Cook Composites & Polymers (CCP) and the Dairy Business Association (DBA) Charter. Cook has a long history of quarterly convening their IPG and engaging them in genuine dialogue about plant operations, etc. The DBA is in the midst of a formal (and professionally facilitated) process of identifying expectations and possible participants of an IPG and is enthused about the prospect of expanding their IPG for more outreach and engagement of the broader agriculture communities to accomplish their environmental targets.

One aspect of the issue of engaging NGO's more is concern that apathy is an over-riding mindset, until there is a specific incident or fear of such arises and then becomes the motivation for involvement. There is clearly a need to raise the awareness of both NGO's and Green Tier participants of the value an actively engaged IPG can provide. Another is

the whether to engage local versus statewide NGO's. A matrix that seems reasonable is:

<i>Green Tier</i>	<i>NGO Type</i>
Tier 1	Local
Tier 2	Statewide or Local
Charter	Statewide

The purpose of this Issue Paper is to present information for the Advisors regarding how to frame the topic of funding to strengthen public and stakeholder participation in Green Tier local contracts and charters when discussing Green Tier with legislators and others.