



Minutes
Small Business Environmental Council

October 16, 2014
DNR Central Office
101 S Webster Street, Madison, WI
Room 713
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Members Present: Amy Litscher, Richard Klinke, Rep. André Jacque

Absent: J.D. Tripoli, Vince Ruffolo, Shane Lauterbach

DNR Staff: Dave Siebert, Laurel Sukup, Kimberly Ake, Lisa Ashenbrenner Hunt, Jennifer Hamill, Bart Sponseller

Public Participants: Brian Dake

Conversation with Secretary Stepp

Secretary Cathy Stepp thanked the council members for all they do and engaged in an open discussion with them.

- Cathy acknowledged the need to communicate well with small businesses in an unthreatening manner, using plain language that is easy to understand, and to streamline the regulatory process.
- Small businesses drive the economy, and DNR plays an important role in helping them succeed.
- Getting face time with trade associations and business owners as well as partnering with other small business assistance providers such as SCORE will help get the word out. Council members may also want to attend events to promote the Small Business Program.
- Cathy emphasized the importance of having compliance be the primary objective, not just issuing violations.
- The council stressed the importance of being able to offer confidentiality and clarity to those who contact the program so they feel comfortable asking their questions and are able to understand what they need to do.
- Also important to stress the value of the small business programs to EPA.
- The council was asked how the success of the Small Business Program could be measured. Discussed survey options to solicit feedback from customers.
- Possibility of using Facebook and Twitter to get the message out.

There was some discussion around the variability of the permitting process in Wisconsin in comparison to other states. Information to provide more clarity regarding this issue is provided below.

Major source thresholds are set by federal regulations and are the same for every state. All of Wisconsin's neighboring states also do minor source permitting, though the programs differ greatly, making direct comparison difficult. Here are some statistics on how we do compare to our neighbors:

- Iowa issues about 40 minor source construction permits per year.
- Illinois on average has 45 minor source construction permit actions per month which would be 540 permits per year.
- Michigan approved 365 "permits to install" in 2012. Michigan does not indicate how many of these are minor source construction permits.
- Minnesota's permit program is a combined operation and construction permit program. In 2014 Minnesota issued a total of 50 individual air permits. Minnesota does not indicate how many of these permits were for minor construction or modification projects.
- Wisconsin currently issues approximately 50 minor source construction permits per year.

Wisconsin is proud of the steps taken to reduce the construction permitting requirements for small sources in the state, including:

- Establishing an exemption for facilities that emit less than 10 tons per year of each of the criteria air pollutants
- Facilities that operate under the above exemption are also exempt from construction permitting
- Establishing registration permits for facilities that emit less than 25 tons per year of criteria pollutants

212 facilities have formally notified the DNR of their intent to operate under the exemption and many others have likely taken advantage of the exemption without formally notifying the DNR. There are also 594 facilities currently operating under a registration permit in the state. Once covered under a registration permit, a facility is exempt from construction permitting.

Wisconsin doesn't keep statistics on how many of the facilities are taking advantage of the exemption from construction permitting. However, if only 10% in a given year do take advantage, that is about 80 small and medium facilities exempted from construction permitting requirements. DNR continues to work on ways to streamline regulations for our small businesses that help them understand and comply with the air requirements while keeping the regulatory burden low.

If a company does need a construction permit, the time it takes for the company to receive authorization from the department has been significantly reduced in recent years. During fiscal year 2013 (July 2012-June 2013), the average time it took to get a construction permit issued was 58 days (including the mandatory 30 day public comment period), which was a nearly 30% improvement over the average of 85 days just a couple years prior. This was done while maintaining the high quality of construction permits.

Action Item: Small Business Program will look into presenting at the December DLT meeting and the February All Supervisor’s meeting to generate high level support within the department.

Small Business Program updates

The fourth small business assistance position has posted.

The second round of interviews for the Office of Sustainability and Science Administrator position (formerly Al Shea) were conducted last week. We should know who it will be shortly. This person will be part of the Department Leadership Team (DLT) and will also serve as the department representative to the council.

Direction of the Small Business Program

- Website Survey – A draft survey for feedback on the small business website was shared with the council. Suggestions include:
 - Change county to “area of the state”.
 - Make last page the first page, since it is the most important.
 - Combine last two questions into one “comments” section.
 - Add a box at the end where they can enter contact info if they would like follow up.
 - Submit button on every page.
- Other suggestions on measurables:
 - Programs ask small businesses how they got to them. Did they come through the SBEAP?
 - How many rules has the council commented on?
 - Use web analytics to track web activity.
- Connections between Small Business Program and Green Tier/Sector Specialists:
 - Grain elevator rule change – sector specialist and SBEAP worked together to evaluate small business impacts.
 - Spent grain – involved collaboration between small business program, sector specialists and waste program.
 - Utilize sector expertise.
 - Green Tier Advisors – Amy attended their last meeting. Very interested in some sort of recognition program for small businesses that can’t take all of the steps required by Green Tier but do go beyond compliance.

Action Item: Potential future meeting topic/speaker: changes to the Green Tier program.

- Communication needs:
 - Face to face contact is the best.
 - Secretary’s Directors can carry the small business message, distribute brochures, use a PowerPoint.
 - Develop standard talking points for department leadership.

- Future Trends:
 - Need for further integration within the agency; get programs to come to us with projects or to request feedback from the council.
 - Site visits are a good way to learn about an industry and interact with businesses.
 - Seeing an increase in women-owned businesses – maybe target women and minority groups?
- Brian Dake
 - Brian works with trade associations and is happy to help get the small business message out. Picked up the article from the Green Bay Press Gazette and distributed to members.
 - Very difficult to get small business owners out of their office. The closer an event is to them, the more willing they are to attend. Best if they don't have to leave the office.

Meeting dates for next year

The next meeting will be Thursday, January 15, 2015 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm in Madison. A survey will be sent out to get input on which days work best for council members for the remainder of the 2015 meetings.

Public Comment