



Puerto Rico Recycling Partnership (PRRP) Meeting

Tuesday, September 9, 2014 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm (Atlantic Time)

Solid Waste Authority (ADS)

Sector el Cinco, Carretera Numero 8838, Km 6.3, Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, 4th Floor

Call in Number: 1-866-299-3188 Code: 2126375028

MINUTES

Opening Remarks - Each agency representative provided an update on the status of their role with the PRRP, their agency goals and initiatives, as well as updates on the following list of PRRP updates and accomplishments.

Judith Enck, Region 2 Administrator, EPA

José Font, Director, Caribbean Environmental Protection Division

Suzette Meléndez, Chair, Environmental Quality Board

Maritere Padilla, Solid Waste Authority

1. *ADS and EQB and work as a resource for PRRP Teams working on the following policy recommendations. ADS has also improved sustainable materials management practices over the past 4 years of the PRRP and has publicly committed to being a leader in Zero Waste.*
 - Law 18 – Electronics Team
 - Composting Legislation and Food Residuals Rule – Organics Team
 - Expedited C&D Permitting Process – C&D Team
 - Recycling Refund Options – Glass, Plastic and Metal Team
 - Connection with ADS & Municipal Recycling Coordinators, and assisted Rincón with educational activities related to plastics reduction – Education Team
2. *PRRP Integrated Solid Waste Management Strategy (aka “[Options Report](#)”) - This is a living document that is the basis for PRRP activities. This report continues to be edited. PRRP leaders are encouraged to send their recommendations for edits to this report to EFC staff.*
3. *PRRP Membership has grown to close to 300 members. This partnership has assisted in promoting grassroots organization and leadership as well as business development.*
4. *Expansion of the Sustainable Materials Management Internship Stewardship Program-*
 - This will be the **4th year** of the Stewardship Internship Program. In addition to training university student participants on Sustainable Materials Management, this year’s program will also include training on Green Infrastructure.
 - There have been more than 126 participants since the beginning of the program. There were 26 interns last year, 24 on the main island and two on Vieques, who worked in over 15 schools.
 - The program has expanded geographically throughout the main island, with a focus on rural municipalities, as well as Vieques.
 - University of Puerto Rico is collaborating on this program. Two professors from the UPR Arcibo and Utuado campuses have provided technical workshops on compost techniques, recycling in schools, and resources on school planning for environmental initiatives. Students are also participating in this program for university credit, an integrated part of their coursework.

Presentations

- *Successes and Future Plans for the Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) Stewardship Program*
Ana Verónica Arache y Laura Cardoso, EFC

Ana Arache and Laura Cardoso presented a summary of the SMM Stewardship Internship Program and the importance of integrating PRRP goals and lessons in schools. This year college students, or “Stewards” will be trained by Syracuse EFC staff and UPR partners on SMM and Green Infrastructure (GI) methods, and then they will share information and provide lessons in schools to teach K-12 students, teachers and staff. This year Stewards will be grouped into seven distinct regions of Puerto Rico to form a “GREEN-Puerto Rico” network of Stewards, as well as community groups and PRRP leaders with whom they will connect with in each region.

The call for applications is now open and available online at PRrecycles.org/Stewardship-Program. Anyone interested can also contact Ana Arache at avarache@syrr.edu.

- *Introduction to the National Trash Free Waters Program*
Noemi Mercado, EPA Headquarters, **EPA Regional Staff** and *Updates on Puerto Rico Trash Free Waters Workshop*, **Javier Laureano**, Director, San Juan Bay Estuary Program

Noemi Mercado of EPA Headquarters presented on the launch of a national Trash Free Waters campaign. Javier Laureano also presented on the follow-up of a SJ Bay Estuary Program led Trash Free Waters workshop held to kick-off main brainstorm ideas of how to approach these serious marine debris issues in Puerto Rico.

The PRRP will be developing a new Trash Free Waters Team. All PRRP members will receive information on how to join this team and are encouraged to participate!

Group Meetings, Reports and Development of an Action Plan - PRRP members broke out into three discussion groups to propose specific responses and action items for the following PRRP discussion questions:

1. ***Public Policy and Government Relations: What changes would improve sustainable economic development opportunities in Puerto Rico? (I.e. Recycling Refund Legislation)***
 - *Provide details on bottle bills and clarify the following:*
 - Define the logistics and responsibilities by sector (I.e. supermarkets)
 - Define plan for the generated funds
 - Designate government personnel to work with the PRRP
 - Share a draft of proposed legislation with PRRP members
 - *Lobbying-* Organize a group to attend public hearings and educating the public to lobby.
 - Demonstrate the benefits: economic development, funds created new jobs, and a good image of the politician. Present an analysis of costs and benefits.
 - *Develop a mechanism to prevent change of government from slowing economic developments.*
 - *With limited staff in regulatory agencies, develop a multisectoral working group*
 - *Paying for the service or management "waste" solid*
 - *Giving municipalities or "ordinances" to oversee the recycling industry*

2. ***Social Enterprise and Economic Development: How can we accelerate the development and implementation of public policy at the state level in Puerto Rico?***
 - *Effective development and implementation of public policy* - legislation, education, supervision
 - Enforce current regulations and develop legislation as necessary
 - Reduce the use of landfills and require or develop economic incentives for recycling
 - Work with agencies that promote economic development (I.e. PRIDCO)
 - Provide recycling containers
 - Increase tipping fees to increase the viability of recycling and composting businesses
 - Increase civic responsibility [education] and the social responsibility of industries
 - Extended Product Responsibility
 - *Develop companies / local cooperatives recycling-* View waste as an economic resource. Increased materials recovery = increased economic development opportunity
 - Work with local municipalities and businesses (eg. encourage food diversion in restaurants)
 - Promote successful models
 - Phases of development: 1st phase-Private Industry; 2nd phase - Municipality
 - Search for federal funding opportunities
 - Conduct an economic study of the recycling industry and account for the economic costs of poor management of materials

3. ***Outreach and Education: How can we educate and energize the general public in Puerto Rico?***
 - *Coordinate community outreach for groups outside of the recycling sector and adjust the message for different audiences.* (I.e. Bayamón had a multi-sector campaign that was industry-funded.)
 - *School Outreach:* Conduct chats and workshops in schools that are directed at both students and families.
 - *Institutional Outreach:* I.e. hospitals, news rooms, correction facilities, businesses, etc.
 - *Government Outreach:* Facilitate communication with municipalities.
 - *Social Media Outreach:* Develop online campaigns to reach a younger audience.
 - *Education, pilot projects, leading by example, and integration of the following topics into educational curriculum:*
 - Life cycle of materials - *Where do they go? What do they become?*
 - Microplastics
 - Negative impact on health
 - “Trash” = Treasure (a resource)
 - *Develop a Trash Free Waters Team* focused on the impact of marine debris on aquifers and surface water (and linked with these educational goals)
 - *Establish a transparent process and make updated statistics that will have an impact available.*
 - *Have a collection center open outside of normal business hours*
 - *Study barriers that impede behavior change*

Next Steps

The teams will continue to work on the aforementioned goals and activities, and develop a new PRRP Trash Free Waters Team.

Next Meeting to be held on Thursday, **November 13 at 2:00 – 5:00pm**

Meeting facilitated by: Mark Lichtenstein, Environmental Finance Center (EFC)