

## NEWMOA's 25th Anniversary Celebration

Remarks: Ira Leighton, U.S. EPA Region 1

September 25, 2011

- It's a pleasure to be here this evening to celebrate NEWMOA's 25th year anniversary. I have the honor of being the NEWMOA historian. If you stay around long enough you get to play this role.
- The first generation of waste practitioners was all men. Talk about needing a boost in the creativity department. And most of them were bad tennis players. The few women that were with us are still around - example Alicia Goode from RI.
- There were two EPA people who really had the dedication to get things started: Dennis Huebner and Mel Hohman.
- NEWMOA got started on the notion of building capacity to solve environmental problems. By bringing all the players to the table to create a common dialogue, states can coordinate their knowledge and collectively problem solve - an efficiency that is invaluable during tight budget times. Waste programs spend a lot of their time cleaning up other media program messes and trying to prevent the next generation of problems. Prevention and fixing is what we do. Problem is there aren't enough of us to keep up.
- We started out in Waterville Valley when it was just taking off. The Snowy Owl Inn was the place. Great guest speakers and lot of collective learning. Dick Valentinetti, Tom Sweeney, John O'Brien and many others would gather to play an annual tennis tournament. Winner would get the discretionary grant money. This predates the competition policy. This tradition has carried on and adapted to the times.
- From an EPA perspective, NEWMOA has provided invaluable leadership and coordination on a number of issues, including toxics (most notably, mercury), hazardous waste, pollution prevention, and solid waste.
- In the area of toxics, NEWMOA's mercury work has been path breaking. NEWMOA was instrumental in developing the regional mercury reduction program. In particular, the Interstate Mercury Education and Reduction Clearinghouse (IMERC), which that has developed a database on mercury-added products, has been vital to moving mercury-added product manufacturers towards eliminating mercury use in products, and reducing the amount of anthropogenic mercury disposed of or released into the environment. EPA uses this database for our own mercury analyses.
- NEWMOA played a central role in creating model mercury legislation that's been adopted by all of the NEWMOA states and beyond (to seven additional states), which now form IMERC.
- In the area of Hazardous Waste, the training NEWMOA provides is invaluable. NEWMOA is an organization that understands the importance of timely and relevant training through seminars, workshops, and webinars.
- We are in a time when budgets in states and at the federal level are being cut repeatedly, and training is often one of the first things to go.
- It is of increasing value that we have access to NEWMOA's training opportunities. For example, NEWMOA offers excellent training to help practitioners keep up with waste site characterization and remediation techniques. At its workshops, NEWMOA provides training on the most pressing and challenging issues to practitioners, such as contaminated sediments remediation, vapor intrusion, and in-situ bio-remediation. To paraphrase NEWMOA's most recent annual report, as fiscal pressures increase, both states and EPA have come to rely on NEWMOA's technical workshops to maintain and improve the capabilities of program staff.
- We also value our long term relationship w/ NEWMOA as a co-sponsor of our National Brownfields Conference.
- With EPA funding, NEWMOA initiated the Common Measures Project in 2006 as a multi-state effort to address the dual pressures on state agencies to oversee growing numbers of pollution sources with fewer resources, and to demonstrate that agency compliance assurance efforts are yielding measurable results. The Common Measures Projects addresses both these pressures by evaluating the performance of targeted business sectors through the use of common measures, and by using the results to identify particularly effective strategies. NEWMOA continues to be of critical importance to the success of the Common Measures Project.

- Similarly, in the area of Pollution Prevention (P2), NEWMOA is an invaluable partner with EPA. For example, NEWMOA is the Northeast P2 Center for the Pollution Prevention Resource Exchange (P2Rx), a national network of eight information clearinghouses dedicated to the dissemination of P2 information and sustainability practices. EPA is a funding partner for P2Rx, which is, in my humble opinion, one of the best and most dynamic of these centers.
- And finally, when it comes to solid waste reduction, NEWMOA has been at the forefront. For example, as the result of a two-year effort, NEWMOA identified ways that state programs could work together and increase recycling of construction and demolition waste. At present, the options that require individual state action have been implemented by many of the member states.
- Thank you NEWMOA, for your work over the last 25 years. You have been an invaluable partner, collaborator, coordinator, resource, and problem solver. We look forward to working with you for another 25 years and beyond.