

GROUND WATER TASK FORCE CONFERENCE CALL NOTES

Tuesday November 5, 2002

INTRODUCTION

Notice: It is very important to note that this meeting summary has been prepared by EPA staff and/or contractor for informational purposes only. This paper may contain summaries and discussions of EPA's statutory authorities and regulations. This paper, itself, however, does not constitute an EPA statute or regulation and does not substitute for such authorities. In addition, the statements in this summary have not been reviewed or endorsed by Agency management, and thus do not constitute official statements of EPA's views and are not binding on EPA or any party.

The Ground Water Task Force (GWTF) opened the call with a discussion of the group's mission, which is to identify and implement inherent flexibilities of regulatory programs in order to advance protective and efficient ground-water cleanups.

POTENTIAL APPROACHES

The GWTF will identify methods for encouraging state consistency in using program flexibility. For example, flexibilities available in voluntary cleanup programs and/or other state clean-up programs should be available under state CERCLA or RCRA authorities.

The GWTF also will determine a new set of milestones to demonstrate the success of ground-water cleanup. For example, the group may track completion of the active (engineered) clean-up phase of a remedy versus later phases involving only monitoring or institutional controls. Another example would be the use of "no further federal interest" as a milestone for completed cleanups.

POTENTIAL LONG-TERM TASKS

The GWTF will update information on state ground-water classifications and/or vulnerability areas and examine how these designations are used by clean-up programs within a state.

PROCESS FOR INPUT FROM OUTSIDE EPA HEADQUARTERS

For state participation, the GWTF needs to identify several states that represent the full spectrum of ground-water protection programs. Selected states would include those designating all ground water as drinking water and those designating some ground water as non-potable or using ground water management zones. Coordination with the Association of State and Territorial Solid Waste Management Officials (ASTSWMO) is a key method for beginning this process.

It is expected that the GWTF will develop policies recognizing the diversity of state programs that advocate protective and efficient ground-water cleanups. The group agreed that task force membership should include several representatives from EPA regions. It was suggested, however, that the EPA regional members not come from regions that have states represented in the GWTF. The group decided to limit the number of state and regional representatives to ensure the GWTF remains at a "workable" size.

Broader state and regional input will be solicited with wide distribution of the GWTF's draft products. The possibility of convening round tables or "listening sessions" may be considered in order to solicit input from industry and environmental groups. Coordination with the Agency's larger One Cleanup Program (OCP) or the National Advisory Council on Environmental Policy and Technology (NACEPT) process also will be considered.

NEXT STEPS

Headquarters will develop discussion notes on this and future GWTF conference calls or meetings. The group will convene in an additional meeting prior to opening the discussions to states and regional participation, possibly through conference calls. At the next meeting, the group will develop more specific goals and identify a process for gaining regional input through primary contacts in regional program offices or the Agency's Ground Water Forum.

Ken Lovelace (OERR) will work with other OERR representatives to prepare for the next meeting. Building on Headquarters' original invitation to the GWTF, Ken also will draft an invitation for ASTSWMO to delegate state representatives for the task force. The GWTF mission statement will accompany the invitation.

Steve Luftig will be contacted about input from other OCP and/or NACEPT stakeholders. ASTSWMO will be contacted to introduce the task force and it's need for state input. Any ideas on ground water issues proposed by OCP and/or NACEPT should be reviewed and discussed with outside stakeholders.

ATTENDEES

Headquarters:

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