

Creating Sustainable Businesses in New Jersey
July 28, 2011
1:30 pm
NJDEP Public Hearing Room
Meeting Notes

Welcome:

Michele Siekerka, Assistant Commissioner, of the DEP's Office of Economic Growth and Green Energy welcomed participants. Introductions were made around the table. [Please see AC Siekerka's presentation.](#)

Presentations:

Aaron Fichtner, Assistant Commissioner in the Department of Labor's Office of Labor Planning and Analysis gave a presentation entitled [New Jersey's Green Workforce: Demand, Training, and Education.](#)

Additional presentations were given on four different sustainable business type certifications being proposed or in place in New Jersey:

1. [Sustainable Jersey and Green Seal Proposal](#) -

Presented by Donna Drewes, Sustainable Jersey and Kate Probst, Green Seal

2. [Travel Green NJ Pilot Certification Program](#) (DRAFT WEB PAGE – UNDER DEVELOPMENT: www.travelgreennj.com) – Presented by Faith Taylor, Wyndham Worldwide

Points made by Faith Taylor:

This program will be accessible to small and medium sized businesses. There will be a menu of options. A tiered approach will be used where the first tier will include entry point actions that are low to no cost with a one year pay back. Educational opportunities will be made available in the form of on-line webinars. These will be affordable and pragmatic. The web page will also include case studies. It was noted that one benefit is that travel sites like Travelocity, AAA, Orbitz are including green ratings for hotels. Also, JD Powers study has indicated that guest satisfaction is higher in green hotels.

Faith noted that the certification program should use existing engine and platform.

3. [Green Automotive Repair Program \(GARP\)](#)

- Presented by Alex Yankaskas, NJGARP President

4. [Green Business Bureau's Green Certification Program](#)

- Presented by Allan Fliss, New Jersey Green Association

Questions to speakers:

The following questions were all directed to Alex Yankaska who presented the Green Automotive Repair Program.

Q: Are there fees for participating in the program?

A: Yes, the fees cover the base costs and vary depending with the number of bays.

Q: Are you finding alternative fuel vehicles at the facilities and how does this affect the structure of the program?

A: AFV are not incorporated into the program at this time. However feedback is incorporated into the program continuously – it is very fluid.

Q: Is the program subsidized?

A: No, the program was created by volunteers. Fees are meant to sustain the program however this is not happening.

Comment: One issue that must be addressed regarding a certification program is who pays for the program?

Q: During your presentation you mentioned that one benefit to the program for users is that their insurance premiums decrease? Is this unique to the automotive industry?

A: Not sure if this is unique to the industry. But one user found a policy extension for green facilities. For example if a facility is destroyed the insurance would pay for the facility to be rebuilt as a green facility.

Comments: Fireman's Fund offers discounts to green buildings, Verizon Health Insurance provides benefits to companies that reduce exposure to toxics for employees. Insurance issue is two fold: Workforce and Property & Casualty.

General Discussion / Comments:

- Certification program needs to be clear on the size of the businesses and types of industries.
- Need to figure out a way to leverage the industries in a non-competitive way. And need to identify how to get municipalities to drive businesses.
- Need to define "green jobs" clearer. Need to distinguish what we mean by education. Two types: basic environmental literacy and skill set.
- What is the ROI on sustainable outcomes – need to standardize and de-mystify what this means.
- How is a certification program monitored? Is this a big lift? Is it recurring? GARP monitors every two years. GARP is developing a training program for a "green captain" at each facility
- This needs to tie into green jobs. Auditing services sector will grow – provide training for this purpose.
- This is similar to the investment in quality inspectors in the 80s. We need to learn from this experience.

(Information shared after the meeting: Ultimately we learned that quality should be everyone's job, and not "inspected" into the product at the end. Many companies

adopted self-certification types of work groups. Two of the most commonly known quality programs in the US are the Malcolm Baldrige and ISO 9000/9001 standard. The ISO 9001 certification involves a 3rd party evaluation and audit of the management policy/program put in place according to the standards. Malcolm Baldrige award is based on a program/framework that a company implements and then applies for the award (administered by the National Institute of Standards & Technology, a unit of the US Chamber of Commerce). There are a lot of self-management concepts within both of these programs/standards. The ultimate success is when everyone in the system knows their role and their impact on quality. The point is that you can replace “quality” with “sustainability” in the first sentence.)

- Need to define what “certification” means so that we are all speaking the same language.
- In Montclair area, towns are requesting the development of a town wide green seal. Asking what does this mean – people have some understanding – need to prevent green washing.
- This all goes back to the need for education. Need to learn from ISO experience.
- Businesses are always looking at their ROI. FDU’s Institute for Sustainable Enterprise working with Morristown in pilot project and showing ROI. Small businesses do not know how to figure this out. They need some hand holding. FDU is using students to do this work. Education plus incentives are very important.

Discussion around Types of Incentives that are needed:

- If a business is certified & verified in a program, then DEP to consider reduced inspections.
- Marketing – these businesses should receive additional exposure – for example a green business registry should be created where they can be recognized.
- Certification programs should be promoted as well.
- It is hard to get information in easy platform – need to keep it simple!
- Create a clearinghouse of “green” resources.

Comments Related to Doing Business with the State:

- State approved vendor contract list – identify green certified companies.
- Work with Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development offices.
- State Procurement – give points for companies w/ green certification.

Next Steps – Four Committees Formed w/ EGGE staff lead – participants signed up for committees:

- Certification Committee, [Ky Asral](#)
- Education Committee, [Jaime Ewalt](#)
- Incentives Committee, [Jerri Weigand](#)
- Recognition Committee, [Athena Sarafides](#)

Contact EGGE staff person directly to sign up for committee.