

Nebraska Climate Pollution Reduction Plan Stakeholder Engagement Notes

Date/Time: Wednesday, December 13th, 2023; 2:00-3:30 PM (Central)

Sector: Industry & Waste (Round 2)

Welcome & Presentation of Measures:

- Introductions
- Overview & Ground Rules
- NDEE Presentation- EPA scoring criteria, program timeline, and list of measures from Session 1
- Q&A

Waste Breakout Room:

Poll Results:

- 18 participants responded to a poll ranking the measures (highest priority to lowest) as follows:
 - Incentives to redistribute unused food, reduce food waste, and increase recycling of organics.
 - Funding for anaerobic digester and biogas hubs.
 - Incentives for collecting and composting organics in cities.
 - Funding for energy efficiency practices at wastewater treatment plants.
 - Focus on reducing paper and cardboard waste.
 - Replace diesel refuse trucks with alternative fuel or electric trucks.
 - Tiered refuse pick charges based on the size of the container.
 - Funding for municipal wastewater plants to create methane from high-conc. Food processing wastewater.
 - Replace school buses with electric buses.

Discussion of Priority Measures:

- Recycling itself reduces greenhouse gas emissions
 - How do we do that?
 - Data shows underrepresented areas lacking recycling.
 - The Hub and Spoke system relies on surrounding communities to allow folks to voluntarily bring recycling.
 - Already exists in the state to use as a model for other regions. The issue starts when one community pays for recycling, and folks bring recycling to that community, but the dollar amount doesn't make it back to them.
 - Support in setting up structured hub and spoke systems would be really helpful.
- Trees brought into landfills are shredded. Woodchips are then put into farm ground as carbon sources to increase production.
- No organic waste in my community.

- Misinformation regarding what is going on: one thing called composting was actually a tree burning for carbon.
- Incentives for collecting compost and organics are broader for all recycling.

Industry Breakout Room:

Poll Results:

- 11 participants responded to a poll ranking the measures (highest priority to lowest) as follows:
 - Funding to utilities to expand energy efficiency incentive programs for industrial customers.
 - Funding for energy efficiency upgrades at food processing and livestock facilities.
 - Incentives (e.g., tax credits) for adopting more energy-efficient equipment.
 - Promote renewable natural gas.
 - Incentives for industrial heat pumps.
 - Further exploration of Nebraska hydrogen hub.
 - Program to remove and transport invasive red cedar from grazing lands to produce biochar.
 - Carbon capture and geologic sequestration, CO2 from ethanol plants.
 - Streamline regulations on pipeline right of way for CO2 pipelines.

Discussion of Priority Measures:

- NPPD has a program on energy savings, but it is a one-by-one process. Every facility is different.
- The US Department of Energy has an incentive program. The pluses of the program are that it matched money to industries to take something that was a 4-7 year payback down to a 2-3 year payback. If it's more than a 2-3 year payback, they won't implement it.
 - One negative is that it is a one-and-done sort of program
- The USDA Rural Energy for America program could be used as a guideline- specifically for the types of equipment activities that have been funded. State incentives could be matching funds for programs that require a match.

Discussion of NDEE's Preliminary Priority Categories:

- NDEE shared its preliminary priority categories, which are as follows:
 - High priority:
 - Funding to utilities to expand energy efficiency incentive programs for industrial customers.
 - Funding for energy efficiency at food processing and livestock facilities.
 - Incentives for industrial heat pumps.
 - Has Potential- Longer Term:
 - Program to remove and transport invasive red cedar from grazing lands to produce biochar.
 - Promote renewable natural gas.
 - Lower Impact/Higher Difficulty:
 - Incentives (e.g., tax credits) for adopting more energy-efficient equipment.

- Carbon capture and geologic sequestration, CO2 from ethanol plants.
 - Streamline regulations on a pipeline right of way for CO2 pipeline/
 - Further exploration of Nebraska Hydrogen hub.
- It's difficult to jump from streamlining regulations regarding pipeline right of way to actual CO2 reductions.
- It would be easier to talk about/focus on the idea of a hydrogen hub with a specific project.
- From a billing and proposal perspective, all the efficiency measures should be lumped together.
- Measurement is going to be a critical piece.
- When thinking about energy efficiency, it would be essential to collaborate when possible (e.g., with Blackhills). Collaboration would be valuable.
- Rural Development is now awarding technical assistance grants to several organizations in NE to provide advising and proposal assistance for REAP (called REAP TA Grants). Check with the state RD office for those contacts for your manufacturer.
- Any program created needs to provide technical assistance support.

Large Group Discussion:

Waste Summary:

- Discussion on recycling incentives for collecting and composting organics
- Funding for hub and spoke
- It was noted that NDEE overestimated the availability of recycling across the state, in particular with paper and cardboard
 - need more support for recycling in smaller communities, difficulties, and economics of that- how do you incentivize them to utilize recycling?
 - If we were to include those incentives in the grant- how would we guard against the falling off-the-cliff effect?
- Curious about the funding for municipal wastewater plants to create methane from high-conc food processing wastewater- it encouraged high concentration because several cities in this state have high per capita D loads. Those may be the ones with the fastest net gain - but they shouldn't be limited.
- Regarding how to keep recycling going after grants run out, use the grant to teach Nebraskans the full cost of relying on landfills, which should lead them to realize investments in recycling to pay for themselves.
- They are not getting the support they deserve from municipalities, but those municipalities have been supporting landfill costs

Industry Summary:

- Getting education, promotion, and technical assistance out there to help with adoption is important and should be built into the proposal
- People need to keep in mind the time frame of implementation. For example, tax credits would require leg. And it could take years for those to get adopted. Grant-funded incentives can be considered a high priority, but tax credits would be a lower priority because of the timeline and difficulty.
- What did the breakout group mean by promoting the renewal of natural gas? What context? How does that fit into an implementation grant?

- When we think of stuff that goes to the implementation phase, we need quantifiable benefits and costs.
- Look at Ash Grove, Which is responsible for 3% of industrial GHG emissions, and see if there is something that could be done to take advantage of this program for them. Similarly, Monolith-specifics with a hydrogen hub/ pilot project
 - Hydrogen is a long-term action

General Discussion:

- Biochar- put in the industrial group, potential in both groups
- Organic recycling – 2025 timeline, eastern red cedar goal is too high in the sky
 - Long-term vision than the actual project
 - Think on a community scale- copy what’s going on in Lincoln.
- How can we convert organic waste into valuable products?
 - Lincoln isn’t adding additional mobile emissions, following the waste to where it’s going (biochar by landfills)
 - Scalable
 - Compost is a fertilizer and soil carbon amendment. Biochar is just a soil carbon amendment.
 - Biochar is like a permanent compost, permanently adding carbon to the soil but not fertilizer, adding both compost and biochar together.
 - Biochar produces heat- a renewable form of energy or organic recycling
- Incentives of these things, like a composting facility, should become profitable and carry on beyond the grant.
- NRC gathered recycling stakeholder input for LR 163 that Sen Hughes introduced, and we also have municipal data from city clerks on how they manage their waste.