



## Event Recap: AWMA/EPA Colloquium – Waste Information Exchange

On May 14, 2015, the Air and Waste Management Association (AWMA) and U.S. EPA in partnership with The Horinko Group and Crowell & Moring hosted the inaugural Waste Information Exchange, a daylong event gathering 75 attendees in Washington, DC that facilitated robust dialogue around current trends and pressing topics on site cleanup, sustainable materials management, and emergency response.



The event kicked off with keynote remarks by Mathy Stanislaus, Assistant Administrator, Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response, U.S. EPA, who discussed ongoing initiatives within OSWER and his vision for the office's future. Given the explosive growth in new materials acquisition in the economy, OSWER is diligently focused on sustainable materials management, a conscious shift from “waste-as-waste” to “waste-as-resources/materials/commodities” viewed in a life cycle perspective. This concept applies across various sectors of the economy, and EPA has initiated challenges in industries such as food and electronics to more effectively manage materials and recover valuable resources. Mr. Stanislaus noted that a life cycle or “circular economy” approach is taking hold both domestically and internationally and has been a recent focus of G7 talks. Other ongoing initiatives within OSWER include: the Municipal Solid Waste



characterization report for 2013, an annual report which will be released soon; the Definition of Solid Waste rulemaking, which clarifies RCRA's application to many facets of manufacturing; efforts to optimize cleanups through Lean processes and green remediation; collaboration with other government agencies to align resources for economic development, housing, and transportation in the most effective way possible; and, facility training and community capacity building in response to the chemical facility and security Executive Order issued after the explosion in West, Texas.

The keynote was followed by the first of the day's panel presentations, entitled *Our Legacy Cleanups – Creating a Culture of Completion*. The panel of experts spoke on various topics related to cleanup completion and engaged in a lively discussion with the audience on topics including:

- U.S. EPA Region 3 and 7's efforts to improve the efficiency of RCRA cleanups by applying Lean principles to the RFI and CMS processes;
- State perspective on challenges to site cleanup completion including: disagreement on whether state regulations are ARARs; lack of clarity on who has the authority to deem a cleanup is complete at state-led sites; tightened budgets encouraging state resistance to NPL listings; and, the time-intensiveness of groundwater remediation that is causing federal and state leaders to consider alternative standards for site closeout;
- Sustainable remediation, or remediation done better, smarter, and more efficiently, in a way that balances the triple bottom line goals of environmental, economic, and societal progress and rethinks the end game for cleanup completion;
- Successes and future focus for EPA and state Brownfields programs, which are very much in demand by communities and regions that have a stake in how land is reused; and,
- Industry innovation in the remediation sector including efforts to use bioremediation techniques and consider conservation as an endpoint for remediation at appropriate sites, as well as methods to value nature (natural capital) so that ecosystem services may be monetarily recognized and integrated more effectively in a business context.



The luncheon keynote address was given by Stan Meiburg, Acting Deputy Administrator, U.S. EPA. Mr. Meiburg discussed EPA's priorities at the Agency-wide level such as ongoing work on the new Clean Water Act jurisdiction rule, the hydraulic fracturing report, the Clean Power Plan rules, the Definition of Solid Waste and Coal Combustion Residuals rules, the Chemical Safety Executive Order, and TSCA reform. The Agency also announced its new Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Finance Center, which will serve as a resource to communities to improve their water systems, particularly through innovative financing and increased resiliency to climate

change. Additionally, the Agency has been addressing drinking water advisories for toxic algal blooms and colony collapse disorder in pollinators. It has been updating ambient water quality criteria to incorporate more recent science and revising the ozone ambient air quality standard. Given the decline in staff numbers of the last few years, and the generational transition the agency is undergoing, Mr. Meiburg noted that efforts are ongoing to strengthen tools for collaboration and training.

The second panel of the day, entitled *Sustainable Materials Management – Rethinking Resources* discussed a number of initiatives aimed at rethinking and repurposing resources. The dialogue covered numerous topics including:

- DoD's efforts to better manage risk and resources through collecting chemical and material content information for all components of their supply chain and to incorporate life cycle thinking into the complex acquisition process;
- Potential barriers to recycling created by the definition of solid waste and the non-hazardous secondary materials rules as well as the federal and EPA versus state roles in encouraging use of secondary materials;
- Reuse and recycling in the electronics industry and the market trends and biggest challenges and opportunities ahead for the industry;
- EPA's influence and efforts on sustainable materials management and life cycle analysis, including its collaboration with many organizations and industries to achieve progress; and,
- The need for more detailed and more widely shared material management data to informing benchmarking and other studies.



The final panel, entitled *Hazardous Materials – Transportation Safety in the New Economy* focused on hazardous materials transportation and safety amidst the current crude oil surplus, with discussion on a range of emergency planning and response topics including:

- EPA's collaboration with DOT and others on the White House interagency group to address crude oil transportation by rail and interagency efforts to address the 2013 chemical facility safety Executive Order;
- PHMSA's ongoing work to address crude oil accidents and risks including the enhanced tank car standards rule that goes into effect on July 7, 2015;
- The regulatory landscape surrounding hazardous materials transportation and the progress agencies, states, and local governments have made in collaborating, such as the EPA Region 2 EO pilot project, to address growing threats;





- Legal considerations for crisis management preparedness and planning, immediate response actions, and longer term strategic management; and,
- The impact of shrinking state and local resources on incident response as responder organizations blend together to leverage resources.

The event wrapped up with remarks from Kirsten Nathanson, Partner, Environment & Natural Resources Group, Crowell & Moring, followed by a networking reception where participants carried the discussion forward.



To view the final event program, visit: <http://bit.ly/1LRBxTD>