

**State Energy Advisory Board  
Teleconference Minutes  
February 15, 2007 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. EST**

**Attendees:**

- William “Dub” Taylor, Director, State Energy Conservation Office, Texas (Chairman)
  - Dr. Patricia Sobrero, Professor, Agricultural and Extension Education Department, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (VA Tech) (Vice-Chair)
  - John Davies, Director, Division of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, Kentucky Office of Energy Policy
  - Duane Hauck, Director, Extension Service, North Dakota State University
  - Jim Ploger, Energy Manager, Kansas Energy Office
  - Elizabeth Robertson, Director, GEFA / Division of Energy Resources, Georgia
  - Harold Smedley, Ethanol Fuels Consultant, Colorado
  - David Terry, Executive Director, ASERTTI
  - Steve Vincent, Avista Utilities, Oregon
  - Dan Zaweski, Manager, Energy Efficiency and Distributed Generation Programs, Long Island Power Authority
  
  - Sunny Choi, TMS, Inc.
  - David Rathbun, TMS, Inc.
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**Agenda Items:**

- *Updates on STEAB Budget accepting the March (2007) Meeting*
- *Discussion of March Meeting Agenda Changes*
- *Discussion/Decision on How to Use Time in the Afternoon of the First Day – During Delegation Meeting with Congressman Walden*
- *Travel Reminders*
- *Open Forum*

**Updates on STEAB Budget accepting the March (2007) Meeting**

Dub Taylor began the meeting by welcoming those in attendance and by introducing the agenda. He explained that although the Board’s Designated Federal Officer (DFO), Gary Burch, would not be able to attend today’s meeting, he would, however, do his best to update the Board on the recent funding issues surrounding the STEAB budget and also provide details on the status of the upcoming March STEAB conference in Washington, D.C.

Dub Taylor explained that a newly approved bill in the House recently provided EERE (Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy) with a significant funding increase for the remainder of the current fiscal year, citing the recent “continuing resolution” that was – and can often be – enacted in lieu of the traditional budgetary process.<sup>1</sup> He also explained that since so much work was put towards planning the meeting, it would, in essence, be “too late” to cancel the meeting as it is only a few weeks away. He also commented that he is looking forward to the meeting as it will be a good opportunity for the new Board members to learn more about the Board’s recent focus, and that the

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<sup>1</sup> For more information please visit the EERE Network News Web site at:  
[http://www.eere.energy.gov/news/news\\_detail.cfm/news\\_id=10580](http://www.eere.energy.gov/news/news_detail.cfm/news_id=10580)

broad spectrum of speakers would also allow the Board to “freshen up” on the current activities and focuses of various offices within EERE.

### **Discussion of March Meeting Agenda Changes**

David Rathbun (TMS, Inc.) updated the Board on the recent changes to the March meeting agenda. He explained that the changes made to the agenda were closely based on the Board’s discussion during the January 18, 2007 conference call, and that the new agenda will allow for more discussion time for the Board to evaluate and develop strategies based on what they learned from the respective speakers that will be attending the meeting. The agenda’s more significant changes are detailed in the following:

Day 1:

*Discussion with David Rodgers, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Technology Development:*

- Mr. Rodgers’ discussion time was added to the agenda. It was decided that he should be the first speaker as he would be the best resource in regards to providing the Board with information, strategies, and ideas as to the Assistant Secretary’s current focus, as well as the direction that he wants the agency to follow during the his remaining two years in office.

*Discussion with Roger Meyer (Technology Advancement and Outreach (TAO)):*

- Due to the fact that much of the Board’s recent focus has been geared towards communication and outreach, it was decided that the discussion time for the TAO should be moved up to immediately follow Mr. Rodgers’ discussion.

*Discussion with Jacques Beaudry-Losique, Acting Program Manager, Biomass Program:*

- Mr. Beaudry-Losique’s discussion time was moved up slightly in order to accommodate more discussion time in the afternoon of the first day.

Day 2:

The most significant change to the second day was the increased scheduling of speakers for the morning hours. This was done in order to allow more time in the afternoon to hold discussions relating to the information that was presented during the course of the meeting, and to explore the possibility of developing appropriate interventions/resolutions, etc.

- During the call, Dub Taylor explained that Gary Burch recently attended a workshop that highlighted the “*Financing Basics On Renewable Energy Projects.*” He explained that Mr. Burch informed him that it was one of the most informative conferences that he has attended, and that he offered to provide the Board with a “similar briefing” if it was decided that it be something that the Board was interested in. Duane Hauck, Hal Smedley, and Jim Ploger all welcomed the idea, and Dub Taylor recommended that the agenda be amended to allow additional time for this discussion at some point during the afternoon of the conference’s second day.

## **Discussion/Decision on How to Use Time in the Afternoon of the First Day – During Delegation Meeting with Congressman Walden**

Dub Taylor explained that he is a big supporter of adjusting Board meeting agendas to allow members to have some time to address personal business matters back home, and recommended that the meeting adjourn at 4:00 p.m. on the first day (March 14). He also discussed the several scenarios that were brought up during the last conference call, and left it up to the Board to determine what they would like to do with the additional hour or so during the STEAB delegation's visit to Capitol Hill. Pat Sobrero recommended that since the time slot in question immediately follows the presentation for the Biomass program, that the Board should discuss what was "seen and heard" while the information is fresh, and also so that it can be summarized briefly the next morning when the STEAB delegation returns to the meeting – to "bring them up to speed" on what was presented/discussed.

### **Travel Reminders**

David Rathbun explained that although the deadline to reserve hotel rooms had passed, it appears that every Board member was able to secure their reservations prior to the deadline. He also explained that if they had not already done so, to contact the STEAB travel coordinator, Natalie Alexander (TMS, Inc.), to begin the process of securing their respective travel arrangements to and from Washington, D.C. Natalie Alexander can be reached at 202-554-4623, and her e-mail address is [nalexander@tms-hq.com](mailto:nalexander@tms-hq.com).

A few of the members had questions relating to the DOE's travel scheduling process. Dub Taylor and Elizabeth Robertson explained that their itinerary appeared to have some discrepancies, as did the itinerary of a few of the other Board members in attendance. The most prevalent concern was that the travel itineraries generated by the DOE travel system listed flights as being "reserved" and "booked," but not necessarily paid for – leading to further speculation of the tickets' overall reliability.

David Rathbun said that he would check with Natalie Alexander to see if she can address these concerns by putting together a small summary/written description of the DOE travel booking process, etc. That way, the Board can get a better idea of how the DOE travel booking process and procedures work. He also explained that for direct billing, budgeting, and tracking purposes, the DOE prefers to handle all of their travel authorizations internally through their own computerized system. However, he did recommend that for future travel-related questions, Board members would be better served by contacting Natalie Alexander directly as she is the most familiar with the DOE travel system and would be the best person to answer questions in this regard. It was also noted that even though discrepancies have appeared on past travel itinerary, no Board member has ever reported having an issue with a flight when arriving at the airport prior to departure.

### **Open Forum:**

Dub Taylor, who is also a member of the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO), informed the Board that he recently attended the NASEO Board's February Washington, D.C. conference where the Assistant Secretary for EERE, Alexander A. Karsner, was a guest speaker. He also mentioned that during his presentation, Mr. Karsner mentioned the STEAB and highlighted his recent communications with the Board. Dub Taylor explained that he felt that this recent exposure was very positive given that the Board has previously questioned the strength of their communication efforts with the Assistant Secretary and his office.

John Davies raised an interesting query, and explained that since Mr. Karsner has appeared very focused and goal-oriented during his first year in office, that it may be beneficial for the Board to

communicate with the Assistant Secretary to see if they could obtain a list of what he believes are his three biggest accomplishments thus far. Other members in attendance thought that this may be a good idea, and that it may also serve as another vehicle in which the Board could generate ideas for future direction and focus. Dub Taylor explained that Mr. Paul Dickerson, an aide to the Assistant Secretary, would probably be the best person to coordinate such an effort. Mr. Taylor also explained that this would be something good that the Board could “re-visit” during the upcoming March meeting

Dub Taylor also commented again on EERE budget issues, and informed the Board that the Senate recently passed a continuing resolution that would extend an additional \$300 million dollars to EERE, and that the agency now has approximately 30 days to send the Hill a spend plan. He also said that the DOE has the discretion as to how to spend the additional dollars, but is also is charged with informing Congress as to future funding/spending plans. He also explained, however, that if the funding is not directly in line with how the dollars were initially appropriated, then it could hamper the FY 2008 budget. He also explained that a fairly “flat” budget was already in place for FY 2008, and that the request for State Energy Program (SEP) funding was down from the year before. He also stated that the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) was also down considerably. In closing, Dub Taylor said that this topic would also be discussed during the March meeting.