

**SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE
HRPDC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 7, 2018**

1. Summary of the December 5, 2018 Meeting of the Hampton Roads Regional Environmental Committee.

There were no comments on the December meeting summary.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Changing Behavior Around Single-Use Plastics

Ms. Leslie Clements, Special Projects Coordinator at the Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center, briefed the Committee on her research on the public perception of single-use plastics and discussed changing human behaviors around this issue.

Ms. Clements began her presentation by talking about effective ways to communicate with people about this issue. She emphasized that using story-telling was better than overwhelming people with statistics. She also advised that it is important to acknowledge the extent of the problem but not to dwell on the problem. Focusing on solutions is important.

Ms. Clements then discussed how changing human behavior, while difficult, is the best way to reduce pollution from single-use plastics. There are different approaches to behavioral change; the “attitude-behavior approach”, the “economic self-interest approach”, and “community-based social marketing”. The “attitude-behavior approach” holds that if people are taught about a problem they will be interested in fixing it. The “economic self-interest approach” suggests that if people aren’t financially harmed by changing their behavior they will be more inclined to do so. “Community-based social marketing” provides a roadmap for changing behavior by selecting a particular behavior, identifying barriers and benefits to change, developing a strategy, piloting that strategy, and implementing and evaluating it.

In applying the “community-based social marketing” approach to changing behavior around single-use plastics, use of straws was the behavior selected because it is considered “low-hanging fruit”. There are real and perceived barriers regarding the convenience and value of using plastic straws. People don’t often make choices about plastic straws. Straws are usually just given to them. People also haven’t given much thought about why they use straws or their impact on the environment. When asked generally who they felt was most responsible for protecting the environment from plastic waste, survey respondents said the public followed by the government. Solutions must be convenient for people to take action.

Comments from Committee members addressed exchange of reusable containers by mail or in a store; problems with people throwing away reusable containers, and the pros and cons of regulatory action versus grass roots action.

4. 2018 Record Rainfall

Ms. Kimberly Peterson, HRSD Data Analysis Manager, discussed HRSD's rainfall monitoring program and rainfall data from 2018. She also provided an overview of HRSD's PI Vision tool and the data that is available to local governments.

Ms. Peterson explained that HRSD has an extensive rainfall monitoring network and rigorous processes for ensuring HRSD collects and reports quality rainfall data. She noted that rainfall can be difficult to measure because it can vary so much by location, and measurement instruments are subject to a variety of types of interference. In order to maintain accurate records, HRSD has both automated and manual processes to verify measurements.

HRSD aggregates, analyses, and checks data at both the monthly and yearly timeframes. They also produce reports for each 2-year storm and for sewer system overflows. HRSD can give localities validated data from any of its monitoring locations. Self-serve access to data is also available to local governments through HRSD's PI Vision tool. HRSD is interested in sharing as much data as possible with localities. Data will also soon be available to the public through HRSD's website.

Committee comments addressed whether 2018 was a particularly wet year and processes for validating data. It was suggested that using forecasting information could help validate data and that using machine learning could produce better information.

5. Legislative Update

HRPDC staff provided the committee with updates on bills under consideration in the 2019 General Assembly legislative session relevant to the Committee's work in the areas of environmental planning, land use, water quality, stormwater, and coastal zone management. Details on these bills can be found in the staff presentation available on the HRPDC [website](#).

6. Update on Coastal Barrier Resource Areas

HRPDC Senior Regional Planner, Ben McFarlane, briefed the Committee on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS) remapping project, and proposed changes to CBRS units located in Hampton Roads.

Mr. McFarlane provided background information on the Coastal Barrier Resources Act and the creation of the CBRS, which includes relatively undeveloped coastal barriers along the Atlantic, Gulf of Mexico, Great Lakes, U.S. Virginia Islands, and Puerto Rico coasts. The intent of the CBRA is to remove federal incentives to the development of areas that serve as barriers to coastal storms and habitat for aquatic species. The CBRA does not prevent property owners from developing or utilizing coastal areas, but does

prohibit most federal funding and financial assistance, including Federal flood insurance for new construction or substantially improved structures.

Following Hurricane Sandy, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began revising system boundaries in nine states: Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York (Long Island), Rhode Island, and Virginia. 5 Hampton Roads localities have CBRS System Units. New units are being proposed in Gloucester and York Counties. Alterations to existing units are proposed in Gloucester County and the Cities of Hampton, Poquoson, and Virginia Beach. The public comment period for the proposed changes ends on April 17, 2019.

7. Status Reports

DEQ – Mr. Matt Fanghella reported that DEQ is working on annual reports, ODU's MS4 permit, and there will be an upcoming audit of Suffolk's MS4 permit.