

RI Bays, Rivers, and Watersheds Coordination Team

October 5, 2004 Economic Monitoring Collaborative meeting

Economic Development Corporation Offices, Westin Hotel, Providence

In attendance were: Michael McMahon (EDC), Mike Walker (EDC), Kip Bergstrom (RIEPC), Ariana Johnson (RIEPC), Tim Tyrell (URI ENRE), Peg Parker (House Policy) and James Boyd (Coastal Institute).

1. The group discussed the legislation (H8359) creating the RI Bays, Rivers and Watersheds Coordination Team and the Economic Monitoring Collaborative (EMC). The legislation requires that the Governor appoint members to 2-year terms and that RIEPC and URI ENRE are requisite members. Other members may be appointed by the Governor as needed, and the Governor appoints a Chair. As of the date of the meeting, the Governor had not yet made appointments to the EMC.
2. The EMC is charged by the legislation to develop a strategy for an economic monitoring program that includes baselines, protocols, guidelines, and quantifiable indicators that assess economic health and performance of the water cluster. The initial strategy is due to be completed by January 2005. It was suggested that the EMC use readily available data for developing the monitoring program and that existing sources may provide about 80-90% of necessary data for a state-wide assessment. Moreover, the EMC efforts should not include data generation, as it is too expensive and time consumptive, rather it should examine existing data sets. The EMC should build upon existing data, identify gaps in the data sets, and make recommendations as to how those gaps can be filled.
3. An economic study of gross state product and direct and indirect employment originating from the water cluster conducted by G. Ciminero and C. Colgan may be useful to the EMC efforts. In addition, another study of the water cluster infrastructure investment by K. Payne and T. Goddard may also be helpful. Kip will arrange to have C. Colgan and Payne/Goddard give presentations at a future meeting of the EMC that will be held at the RIEPC office in Providence. The date and time will be announced when established. Groups that were part of the Payne/Goddard study will also be invited to attend.
4. It was noted that in the development of the economic monitoring strategy it will be important to have GIS capability to assist in the analysis of the data and demonstrate economic impacts on a land use map. Ultimately, there should be a spatial dimension to the indicators of economic health that are developed. John Stachelhaus at the DOA Division of Planning was mentioned as a possible GIS resource. It will also be important to put existing data into context by comparing it to the surrounding southern New England region.
5. A plan for action was developed: (1) Determine existing applicable data sets; (2) Analysis; (3) Identify the information gaps and make recommendations to fill them; and (4) What are the resources necessary to develop a monitoring strategy. National, regional or industry benchmarks should be adopted for the economic indicators along the lines that EPC currently follows.
6. It was determined that the initial economic monitoring strategy could be developed between Kip and Tim. It must be integrated with the systems-level plan that will be developed concurrently by the Coordination Team. Moreover, the Coordination Team will need to review the monitoring strategy prior to submitting it to the Governor and General Assembly in January 2005.