

Title: Tuesday, July 31 2007 Resources and Environment Committee

Date: 07/07/31

Time: 10:36 a.m.

[Mr. Ducharme in the chair]

The Chair: If I may, at this time I'd like to welcome all the members and the staff and also those members that are participating via teleconferencing. I'd like to call the meeting to order and ask that we introduce ourselves, starting with those of us inside the room, and then we'll ask for the introductions for those that are on the telephone.

[The following committee members introduced themselves: Mr. Ducharme, Mr. Eggen, Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Hinman, Mr. Lund, and Mr. R. Miller]

Mrs. Sawchuk: Karen Sawchuk, committee clerk, Legislative Assembly Office.

Ms Rempel: Jody Rempel, committee clerk with the Legislative Assembly Office.

Mr. Reynolds: Rob Reynolds, Senior Parliamentary Counsel.

Dr. Massolin: Philip Massolin, committee research co-ordinator with the Legislative Assembly Office.

Ms Sorensen: Rhonda Sorensen, manager of communications with the Legislative Assembly Office.

Mrs. Kamuchik: Louise Kamuchik, Clerk Assistant, director of House services, LAO.

The Chair: I'll now go on to those that are on the phone.

Mr. Graydon: Gord Graydon, Grande Prairie-Wapiti.

The Chair: Dr. Swann? Okay. We'll make attempts to reconnect with Dr. Swann.

Just a little housekeeping item. The meeting agenda and the supporting documents were posted online for printing and viewing as of last Friday. We've got a lot of ground to cover this morning, so basically I'd like to start if we can with the approval of the agenda. Mr. Griffiths. We don't need a seconder, so all in favour?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: At this time I'd ask if the members have had a chance to review the minutes from our first meeting of July 18. Are there any corrections or revisions to note?

Mr. Graydon: I'd move that the minutes be adopted as circulated.

The Chair: All in favour?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Opposed? Carried.

There was business arising from the minutes of the previous meeting, and that was the beverage container recycling regulation review briefing binder item. The binder that you've all received is prepared by Alberta Environment, and it provides information on the regulation itself as well as key issues referred to by the Hon. Rob Renner in his memo of July 11 to the committee. The binder was

delivered to the members' Legislature or Legislature Annex offices on Friday, July 20, and Karen has distributed updates to sections 2, 6, and 8, which were provided to the committee's offices yesterday. We will of course rely on Philip Massolin, the committee research co-ordinator, to undertake any further research and analysis requested by the committee. Is that clear and okay with everyone? Okay.

Draft Review Timeline. You should have all received a copy of the draft timeline. It was completed using October 15 as the reporting deadline. There are various issues which will require a further decision by the committee once we've adopted this timeline document as drafted and/or revised, and we'll address those items under number 6 of our agenda.

The key items on the timeline are proposed advertising, deadline for written submissions, a direct mail-out to those parties identified as stakeholders, inviting officials from Alberta Environment to appear before the committee, date for a public meeting or meetings, and additional meeting dates for the committee to complete its review.

Before I open up the floor to discussion, I'm aware that we do have one major conflict of a date – I'm aware of two of them; Mr. Miller has identified one other one for me – in that we show September 6 as being a day that we could meet all day in terms of hearing public submissions if there should be some that want to come forward. That happens to be part of the PC caucus budget deliberations. So that one we'll probably have to work at, and I'd like to make a suggestion, if we could look at our calendars, that that date be changed to Monday, September 10.

Mr. R. Miller: Mr. Chairman?

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Miller.

Mr. R. Miller: Speaking on behalf of the Official Opposition members of the committee, the 10th of September would work for us.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Eggen: Yeah, I'm good. It works for me for sure.

The Chair: Any concerns from those others that are on the phone or present or here from the PC caucus?

Mr. Hinman: It looks good for me as well. Thanks.

The Chair: Okay. If that's fine, we'll change that date, then, to revise it from September 6 to September 10. Do we need a motion on that?

Mrs. Sawchuk: Mr. Chairman, I believe that when we get to the final motion to adopt the timeline, we can make reference to it as revised.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Lund: For the August 28 meeting I've got a conflict in the afternoon. I'm okay in the morning.

The Chair: Okay. I also believe that's the same date that the Liberal caucus has concerns.

Mr. R. Miller: That's correct.

The Chair: If we were to look at that date and switch it over possibly to Monday the 27th, does that work with us here?

Mrs. Sawchuk: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think the only concern that might arise is that the advertising deadline is the 24th, and there may very well be quite a few submissions coming in on the Monday morning that were mailed in time. You know, there are still a lot of people who do it that way. It doesn't give staff any time at all to put together all of the submissions just to do an analysis of the issues so that the committee would at least know whether they want to proceed with the public meeting, but Philip, of course, will have to be doing most of that work.

Mr. Graydon: There's a CPC meeting scheduled for August 27 from 9 to 1.

The Chair: Which CPC is that?

Mr. Graydon: Resources and the Environment, I guess.

The Chair: Philip.

Dr. Massolin: Yes. I just wanted to sort of clarify the comment there. We just need to have a little bit of time so that committee members can review the submissions themselves. If the deadline is the 24th, the previous Friday, you only have really the weekend there, so it's a very tight time frame to go through a lot of different material.

The Chair: Okay. How about if we move the date a little bit further on in that week? I'll pick Thursday the 30th. Does that work with Leg. offices here?

Mrs. Sawchuk: Now, the only thing, Mr. Chair, that I would advise – and then we'll have to turn it over to Rhonda – is that the direction we had been given was that if we were having the public meeting the first week of September and advertising was going to occur on the long weekend, we would have to have our information into the communications branch by Wednesday the 29th. That's where that August 28 date came from, because that was the latest we could submit our information for advertising. If the committee goes ahead with moving the public hearing date, then maybe the advertising could follow later.

The Chair: Well, we have moved the public hearing date to September 10, so we've gained four days later there. How does the 30th work for members?

Mr. Hinman: You're talking August 30?

The Chair: Thursday, August 30.

Mr. Graydon: Fine for Graydon. I'm in Edmonton that week anyway.

The Chair: It's good for you. Okay. Then that will go to August 30, and that's the date that we had scheduled to meet with the Department of Environment.

Any other conflicting dates?

If there's no further discussion, at this time I'd ask for a motion to approve the timelines as revised. So the changes that we've made, just to say them verbally once again: the August 28 meeting has now been moved to August 30, and the September 6 meeting has now

been rescheduled to September 10. I'd entertain a motion to accept this timeline. Mr. Griffiths. All in favour? Carried. Thank you.

10:45

Decision items regarding public input, written submissions, public hearings. There was some discussion on this item during our last meeting. Based on that, the proposal has been put forward that the committee advertise its review, request written submissions, and that a public meeting or meetings be held. I guess we'll find out if we need to have more than one day, depending on how many of the submissions are requesting to come before and meet with the committee. If the committee is in agreement with this proposal, I'd ask that a member be prepared to move that

the Standing Committee on Resources and Environment advertise its review and invite written submissions from the public.

Mr. Lund: I would so move.

The Chair: Any discussion?

Mr. R. Miller: In the motion that has just been moved, it contemplates inviting written submissions but not the public meeting. Is that a separate issue, then?

The Chair: I'll pass that on to our advertising specialist.

Ms Sorensen: Perhaps we can cover that a little bit further under item (e), which actually details the specific strategy for advertising both for written submissions as well as the potential for public hearings.

Mr. R. Miller: Okay. If we do it under (e), I'm okay with that. We'll talk about the budget under (e) as well. Is that correct?

Ms Sorensen: Absolutely.

The Chair: So in favour of the motion that's been proposed by Mr. Lund? Any opposed? Carried.

The second motion relates to the public meeting which is suggested for now on Monday, September 10. This would, of course, as we spoke earlier, allow time for the staff to analyze the written and the oral presentations received by the committee and to report back to the committee by mid-September. As noted in the timeline, the public meeting would be scheduled for the day as well as the evening if required. If members are in agreement, I'd ask for a motion that

the Standing Committee on Resources and Environment schedule a public meeting for Monday, September 10, 2007.

Has everyone got shy on me? No one wants to move a motion?

Mr. Eggen: I'll move the motion.

The Chair: Mr. Eggen. Any discussion?

Mr. R. Miller: Just curious if it's been contemplated at this point where that meeting would take place.

The Chair: It would be back here on the fourth floor.

No other comments? In favour? I believe that's unanimous. Thank you.

The next item is Deadline for Written Submissions. As set out in the timeline, it is suggested that the deadline for submissions be August 24. I would like to note that the advertising will occur within the next week, but we'll get into that during the review of our

draft communications plan. It's a tight timeline, but it allows the committee to complete its work and report by mid-October.

Are members in agreement with the deadline as suggested? If so, if someone could pass a motion on that.

Mr. Eggen: I would just like to comment on that. Having not participated in this sort of committee before, is that a normal timeline? It seems like a short turnaround time for submissions. I don't know.

The Chair: We had that discussion at our first meeting that we had, that the timeline of being able to report back by October 15 does constrict us. As was mentioned, I believe, at our last meeting by Mr. Reynolds, there had been some signals that had gone out from the Minister of Environment during our last legislative session indicating that there was going to be a review. I've personally had some people already knocking at my door at home. They're very much aware that something is up, and they're ready to provide submissions, so I'm hoping that it will be sufficient time.

Mr. Eggen: Yeah. Okay.

Mr. Hinman: My understanding – and I might be incorrect on this – is that the Minister of Environment has already advertised and has gotten some submissions coming back to their ministry. Or is that not correct? I thought they've done some field reports and that they've looked at this stuff. I guess my question is: are people who have already made submissions to the minister going to be notified to say that this is going on for another committee?

The Chair: That's going to be our next item that we're going to be talking about: identification of the stakeholders and invitation to interested parties.

Mr. Hinman: Okay.

Mr. Eggen: I'd move that we go ahead.

The Chair: Okay. Mr. Eggen has made the motion that the deadline for written submissions to the Standing Committee on Resources and Environment be Friday, August 24, 2007. Any other discussion? In favour of the motion?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you. It's carried.

Identification of stakeholders and invitation to interested parties. You'll see that in your package the committee has the draft stakeholders list completed by Dr. Massolin for its review. I'll turn it over to Philip to review the list and answer any questions the committee might have pertaining to that list.

Dr. Massolin: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I don't have a lot to say about the list except to say that the core of the list is derived from the briefing binder that we received from the department. What we've done is to round out the list by making a few additions to it, including the manufacturers Coted, Coke, and Pepsi as three examples. We've also organized the list according to certain categories to make it a little bit more navigable. But other than that, we haven't done a whole lot of extra work on this. I'm ready to answer any questions, though, that committee members may have.

Mr. Lund: Well, was it the intent that we would send a notice of the review to all of these stakeholders and ask them for written submissions at this point?

Dr. Massolin: Yes. Definitely.

The Chair: Any other questions?

Mr. Hinman: I guess I'll ask mine again, then. If people have submitted to the Environment minister already, are we going to respond to them and say that there's another committee also running to make sure that we get their submissions, or will it be up to them to see the advertising and put in a new submission?

The Chair: There's a draft letter, and I see no reason, in terms of going forward, not to submit it to them. I hope that they're on the list that's been prepared.

Mr. Hinman: I haven't found it yet, but they could be.

The Chair: Dr. Massolin.

Dr. Massolin: Yes. I'm aware of one instance where one stakeholder had submitted a submission to the government, and that stakeholder is included here. We haven't included the names themselves, just the organizations. So as far as we have been notified, we've included the stakeholders in this list here. There may be others that we weren't notified about, and therefore they weren't included because of that.

The Chair: I'm hoping that the advertising will capture other interested parties that are there. I know that the buzz is out there by the fact that I had a visit at my home. There are some people interested.

Mr. R. Miller: Could we not consult with the department and see if they could confirm whether or not that was the only submission or if there are others that they have that we don't have on our list?

Dr. Massolin: Well, we've already done that to the extent that it's possible, but we can confirm that, yes.

Mr. R. Miller: Yeah. I think that's what Paul is after: just to make sure that we're talking to everybody.

Mr. Hinman: If someone has submitted once and they think that they've already done it, do we need to let them know that there's another committee up and running and that they should resubmit it? That is my concern.

Mr. Lund: But, Mr. Chairman, aren't we getting all of that information that was submitted to the department?

10:55

The Chair: Well, in the package that we received from the Department of Environment are some submissions that had been brought forward. From the fact that we're outside of government and we're a nonpolitical entity governmentwise, it would probably be due diligence on our part, I believe, to make sure that Dr. Massolin follow up with the department to make sure that they do receive another letter coming from this committee.

Mr. Lund: Oh, yes, and I agree with that. We need to make sure that they understand that this is another committee and that we're not just accepting the information from the department.

The Chair: Agreed.

Just a housekeeping item. There's something that I never mentioned. Once we're in committee here, it's mandatory that every member vote on every motion. We can't abstain. I might have been lenient in not seeing enough of a wave or a nod or a voice request. So I'd just put that on the record.

If we're fine with that, if I could ask for a motion that the Standing Committee on Resources and Environment approve the stakeholders list as distributed, with the notation that Dr. Massolin will be in contact with the Department of Environment to make sure that those others that have submitted are added to that list.

So with that revision could I have a mover, please?

Mr. Hinman: I so move.

The Chair: Mr. Hinman. Any other discussion? In favour of the motion?

Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Carried. Thank you.

Mr. R. Miller: I did get my hand up that time.

The Chair: You did, sir. Thank you. I think that comes with being a whip.

Mr. R. Miller: I think so.

The Chair: We'll now go on to the draft communications plan, and I'll turn it over to Rhonda Sorensen to address the communications plan she's prepared for us.

Ms Sorensen: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning, everyone. At your July 18 meeting it became apparent that you were wishing to advertise for written submissions as well as possibly hold public hearings should that be deemed necessary. As a result of that, we've come up with a number of strategies to help you achieve those objectives.

The first strategy I'll just touch on is the development of the key messages, which Dr. Massolin has also included in his stakeholder letter. Those messages would contain a little bit of key information about the beverage container collection system, exemption of milk containers, deposit levels, unredeemed deposits, service quality, and two common collection agents. The primary message, of course, would be how important it is to involve Albertans in this process. Again, those messages if accepted by this committee would be carried consistently throughout the stakeholders letter, the website, any advertising or media relations that we do.

The direct communications, which Dr. Massolin already outlined, would be a letter that goes directly to all the stakeholders that he has identified. The media relations would consist of three news releases that we can foresee, one being an initial release, which we are looking for approval of today so that we can send that out. Its intent is to create public awareness and to invite participation. A second release that we see might be necessary is if there are public hearings. We would want to send that out and let the public know. A third release would most likely be informing the people of the commit-

tee's findings. Again, we're looking for approval just on the first release today, which is attached as a part of your communications package.

The public website, which was also included in your package, again outlines all of the key messages, and if the committee approves, then we will put that up today.

The advertising. This is something I really wanted to get a little bit of direction from you on. Normally when we're doing something of such great public interest, my recommendation would be to do both a daily and a weekly campaign province-wide. We are working on some tight deadlines, so although it's not impossible to include the weeklies, you are looking at perhaps the advertisements not running until the week prior to the deadline, not giving a whole lot of time for public submissions. But, again, it's not impossible.

I just want to draw your attention to the costs. For a daily campaign, using the attached ad that was in your package, you're looking at a cost of \$15,624. If you were to include weekly publications in that, approximately 94 weekly newspapers, that would be an additional \$41,532. I guess what I'm looking for from the committee: the recommendation in the plan is to stick with the dailies; however, if the committee wishes to go into weeklies, we would also need to know that immediately.

In terms of the public hearings we haven't developed a specific strategy for this because we'll need a little bit more information. Once we decide where the public hearings are going to be and if there are in fact going to be public hearings, then we can develop an advertising strategy for that.

That, Mr. Chair, is the plan. If there are any questions, I'd be happy to answer.

The Chair: Any questions from the members?

Mr. Lund: Looking at the letter that was going to go out – and I see that it's also included somewhat similarly in some of the other communications – I think that we need to have one bullet that would allow for the capture of some other issues. I'm not sure in all of these that we're capturing everything. For example, there are exemptions in the beer bottles. BDL will be very anxious, I'm sure, to discuss that issue, yet I don't see here in the list of issues that that is covered. So I would recommend that we add another bullet that would simply say something to the effect of: or other issues that may be identified.

Ms Sorensen: I think that's an excellent idea.

The Chair: Thank you.
Mr. Miller.

Mr. R. Miller: I'm sorry; there may have been others ahead of me. Are you guys okay?

Mr. Eggen: Go ahead.

Mr. R. Miller: I guess my first question is around the dollar figures that we're discussing. We have a budget of \$20,000 or thereabouts, from what I understand, for advertising. The \$15,000 that's contemplated here for the dailies is a one-time shot, right? So, as an example, if we were to have a public hearing later and we wanted to advertise and invite the public, we'd be looking at that sort of cost again. I seem to recall when I reviewed the minutes from the last meeting, which, unfortunately, I wasn't able to attend, that there was some discussion of the possibility of going back to Members'

Services to look for more advertising budget. I think the number you said for the weeklies, as an example, is \$41,000, so suddenly the \$20,000 doesn't look like a lot of money. I guess my biggest concern is: is this the best way to use the limited resources we have in terms of advertising?

Then separately we have a budget which, I assume, goes until the end of March of next year, and we're spending it all right now. What if we have other things that come up down the road? I have concerns about the limited budget and the amount of money that we're spending here.

Mrs. Kamuchik: If I may speak, Mr. Chair. When the draft budgets were prepared for the policy field committees back in April, it was a best-guess situation. We couldn't anticipate all the activity that would take place, so we did put aside \$80,000 in the overall committee envelope, and of course we're going to use that up very quickly. We have three committees that are active, that are advertising. However, the same overall committee envelope still has funds in there to finance additional expenditures. Come next year, of course, we'll have a better idea to budget for, you know, all this advertising that may be taking place in the future, but there are funds available in the overall committee envelope without having to go back to Members' Services to ask for additional funds.

Mr. R. Miller: So I shouldn't be too panicked right now is what you're saying.

Mrs. Kamuchik: No. Of course, we're always very frugal. We try to save where we can, but this must be done, so of course we'll finance the advertising portion of this committee.

Mr. R. Miller: Thank you.

The Chair: If I could comment in regard to the second part of your question, in regard to readvertising if we were going to have public meetings. If I go by experience, by the other committee I'm sitting on, which is the personal information and privacy act review, the public submissions came forward. I guess that with the submissions that we got, the written submissions, they indicated if they wanted to come in, so it was just a matter of getting back to them. We didn't go back out and advertise across the province that the public hearings were going to be held.

To the staff: did I answer that in the correct way?

Any further questions on the draft communications plan?

Mr. Hinman: Yes. I have a concern on the \$15,000. I mean, I've got too many documents to get through all of them, so maybe I missed it, but I was looking for the actual ad that we're going to place in the different papers. I guess my question is: being that my area is served by weeklies, can't we have a smaller notification or something that would be less costly but at least still get out some little point that people would hear? Like I say, in all of my areas they're only weeklies, and to not put anything in there, I'm concerned a little bit, but I don't want a big \$41,000 ad either.

11:05

Ms Sorensen: Mr. Chair, if I can just respond to that. I guess that it would be difficult to put a different ad into the weeklies only because the ad is designed to contain the information that we want in it.

Now, the weekly campaign does hit 95 newspapers, so it's actually quite cost-effective in order to reach the rural communities. It breaks down to anywhere from \$300 to \$500 per community to

advertise in. You can also pick and choose communities to go into although I would caution against doing that.

The money is available, and we would be able to do the weekly campaign as well if the committee chooses. One of the benefits with weeklies is that they do have a longer shelf life. They do stay in the home for approximately a week whereas the dailies turn around quite quickly.

The Chair: Maybe for further discussion I could ask you, Mr. Hinman, if you'd like to make a motion that the communication advertising plan be approved with the addition of the weekly newspapers.

Mr. Hinman: Well, if I could, I appreciate what you're saying, but looking at this ad briefly, I just wonder, you know, if we can look at something different for the weeklies. Your Input Is Important, Beverage Container Recycling Regulation Inquiry: I mean, we're putting the ideas in front, and I feel that that's important, but for the weeklies if we were to cut down and just put that and then contact information. Is there a possibility of having a smaller ad? I know that you say that that's difficult, but just costwise to me it seems like a small ad like that top line in a weekly would – people read the weeklies, like you say, from cover to cover. You don't need near the extensive ad that you do in the daily to try and catch their eyes. But I guess I'd like to see other people's opinion on the committee on that, on whether or not we should be pursuing that.

Mr. Eggen: My feeling is that it's just quite expensive. I guess I'd put this back to you, then: is the coverage sufficient from the dailies to meet the needs of notifying the public of what we're trying to do here?

Ms Sorensen: You certainly do get quite a good saturation with the dailies. I think I have the numbers included in here. You're reaching just over a million people. Now, I'm not certain about rural areas such as Taber. I don't know if they get the Lethbridge paper as a daily.

Mr. Hinman: Well, they do. I mean, it's delivered to rural Alberta, but it's a limited number that get it.

Ms Sorensen: Yeah. You're not going to get the same kind of coverage that you would with the addition of the weeklies although you do get the saturation of the province's population.

Mr. Lund: Well, I'm having some difficulty with just going with dailies as well. I would suggest, as Mr. Hinman has suggested, that the ad be modified so that it doesn't take up as much space. That should reduce the cost. I've got a lot of areas in the Rocky Mountain House constituency where, yes, there are dailies that some people get, but I'm sure that the majority of the people, probably 70 per cent of them, do not get a daily.

Ms Sorensen: If I could just speak to that. It's certainly not impossible to redesign the ad. The only concern I'm having is that our timelines are very tight, and we would need to redesign it today and get it booked today. That doesn't leave a whole lot of room for me to be able to get back to you on what the actual cost will be or to give you a copy of the ad to approve the look of it beforehand. If the committee wishes to go that way, I would be looking, I guess, for a leap of faith to tell me that if I were able to reduce the costs and contain the appropriate information, the committee would approve a condensed version of the ad going into weeklies.

The Chair: Rhonda, could you tell us what the other committee has done? I'm certain that I saw the ad for the committee that's reviewing Bill 1 and Bill 2. I know that I saw it in the dailies, and I also believe I saw it in the weeklies. Am I correct with that statement?

Ms Sorensen: I believe that with Bill 1 and Bill 2 they just went with the dailies. Community Services, however, did do the province-wide weeklies and dailies. I could be wrong. Do you remember if they went with weeklies? I don't.

Ms Rempel: Yes. For Bill 31 and Bill 41 they did do dailies and weeklies. Bills 1 and 2 are just in the dailies.

The Chair: I guess it's to consider, with the stakeholder invitations that we're going to be submitting followed also with the daily newspapers: do we feel as a committee that we've got enough of a broad distribution advertising in the public? We might need a motion on the floor to include the weeklies if we feel strongly about it and then go from there. I think we've basically had the debate, and I'd certainly like to entertain a motion at this time to have that discussion.

Oh, Mr. Griffiths. Sorry. I had you on the list.

Mr. Griffiths: That's okay. I'm sure this isn't going to work, but I like the size of this ad, and I think it's important to get the message out. I mean, I'd like to see the weeklies done too. I have a lot in my constituency, and that's what most people read. Sorry for being political, but they don't like the dailies because it's full of headlines. It's all blood and guts. They go to the weeklies to get their day-to-day information and just the facts, you know, and the positive story.

If it costs that much to do an ad, isn't it possible to run a large ad like this for all four committees? Instead of going through the details of all the subject matter, say: "This committee is exploring beverage container recycling; we're doing an inquiry into that" and what each of the committees does. Then we could spend \$45,000 every three months just to run an update: "These are the things that are being explored. Go to the Internet. Go to your library. If you need information, call this number." Then people can get details from there.

Ms Sorensen: We actually have been asked by another committee to look into that possibility. There are a lot of logistics surrounding that that may not make it possible such as different deadlines, different timelines. For example, if your deadline was August 24 but another committee's was August 1, they're going to need to advertise a lot sooner than you are. So I'm not saying that it's impossible, but in most situations it probably would not be feasible.

The Chair: Probably something to consider as we go forward.

Ms Sorensen: Yes.

The Chair: The thing is that now we've got different timelines. I believe two committees have already advertised. I don't know if the fourth committee is doing anything at this point in time, so we're the only ones that are left on the block to get our message out.

Ms Sorensen: Yeah. There would need to be a lot more work done on the front end before we could get to that point where we're in a position to do that.

Mr. Griffiths: Mr. Chairman, you'd like a motion that the weeklies be advertised in?

The Chair: Well, we've heard around the table that there have been a few of the members that have shown interest that the weeklies should also be in. Let's put a motion on the floor, and then we can make that decision from there. We can vote on it.

Mr. Griffiths: He doesn't want to spend any money.

Mr. Hinman: Well, no. I don't know how long I want to discuss, but my point is that for my area I actually put something out in my weeklies last week. It's not as critical for me in my area because it went out. It was in all my weeklies, and I asked for submissions already. So to spend the money in mine, it goes back again to pick and choose. I guess it goes back to the old saying, you know: failing to plan on your part doesn't make an emergency on my part. We've thrown this together. We're going quickly. I go with Mr. Miller. All of a sudden we're spending a lot of money. I like your idea much better: every four months let's put everything out. You know, we should have been able to have this done already, but poor planning on our part doesn't make it necessary now to spend a whole bunch of money. And we're on a deadline. I mean, the minister has asked us to review it by October 15. We're under the gun.

But, no, I don't want to spend a lot of money in my area. They already put something in the paper, so I'm in a different situation, possibly, than the rest of Alberta, but I am concerned about rural Alberta. Like I say, I would just want, you know, a very brief ad. You take your top banner and then your bottom one, and you can leave out the middle to try and save money because people will get the idea. It's just a lot of money on short notice.

11:15

The Chair: If I could respond as the chair of the committee, there are a couple of comments that you just made that are rather disturbing to me. First of all, the comments in regard to poor planning. We met just a short time ago in regard to this request coming forward. I believe that the staff has worked very efficiently and as fast as they could in terms of getting this up and going. I don't sense that there's any poor planning.

I also have a concern with you going out and placing advertisements in advance of the committee. It's an all-party committee, it's a legislative committee, and basically we roll out together as a unit. I do have concerns that you preset the submissions before any decisions were made by this committee this morning. I just put that onto the record.

Thank you.

Mr. Hinman: Can I respond to that?

The Chair: You may.

Mr. Hinman: What I meant was that we're on a tight timeline, so I apologize if I said poor planning. I was just going with that, saying that when I go in to get parts as a farmer, they'd comment on that. We're on a tight timeline, we're trying to review it, and I appreciate it. I didn't advertise. I have an article that went out and just mentioned that, you know, this was coming up and that people think about it, review it, but it wasn't an advertisement that I put in in lieu of this. This was just different things that were happening.

The Chair: But, again, it was an assumption on your part that this was going to happen. We didn't make a decision that this was going

to happen until this meeting here today. We had received a request by the minister, but we had not acted upon it at this point in time.

Mr. Lund: Well, I would move that the ads be placed in weekly newspapers as well as the dailies.

The Chair: Any further comments to that?

Mr. Lund: If I could, Mr. Chairman. In the discussion part of it and having been responsible for this program, I think it's critical that this be advertised in the rural because, quite frankly, there was more interest shown about this whole recycling and bottle collection and how the system works. I got more comments from rural Alberta than I did from the urban centres. So I think it's really critical that they at least know that we're looking at this whole program.

The Chair: Mr. Miller.

Mr. R. Miller: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm fully in support of the idea of advertising in rural Alberta and spending the money to do so with the proviso that I understand that there is some serious concern about the timeline and, in particular, whether or not it allows enough time for people to make a written submission, given when they're likely to see the advertisement. If that's the case, then I wouldn't support the motion. Other than for that, I believe we should be advertising as broadly as possible.

Ms Sorensen: There certainly is less time than we would normally like but I think ample time for people to respond if it's an issue that they're interested in. Because of the long weekend some of the deadlines for the weekly publications might be altered a little bit, meaning that instead of running next week, the week of the 6th to the 10th, it could be running the 13th to the 17th in some of the weekly publications. If it runs on the 13th, you're allowing two weeks, but if it doesn't run until the 17th, you're allowing one week. I believe that if this is an issue that people are on top of, they're probably going to be looking at the website after the news release and whatnot anyway.

In terms of the weekly newspapers I just want to point out that I do realize that the overall dollar figure comes across as quite a bit, but if you break it down into the communities, you're looking at anywhere from \$200 to about \$400, I guess it is, per community. So it's not a lot of money for each community newspaper, but when you put it all together in 95 to a hundred communities, that's where it adds up.

Mr. Eggen: I would like to make a motion that we include the weekly newspapers.

The Chair: I've already got a motion on the floor that was made by Mr. Lund.

Mr. Eggen: Oh, you already do. Okay.

The Chair: Any other questions?

There were discussions that maybe the ads be changed. It was not in the motion; I just want to clarify that. I'd probably advise, so that we're not criticized that we've changed the ads from what we've had in the dailies compared to the weeklies, that we be consistent with the ads. I know that the ads that I did see in the weeklies pertaining to the other committees stood out, and I made comment to Rhonda on that. There was something of importance that was happening at

the Legislature, and I commend them on the layout. I think it's very, very well done.

Mr. R. Miller: Just a further question. I note that in the recommendations it does discuss the fact that the size of the ad would vary from publication to publication. Is that based on space that's available? I mean, is this what we're aiming to have out? Is that the idea?

Ms Sorensen: Yeah, that's the essential size. It's just because each of the publications might have a little bit different specification whether they're a broadsheet or a tabloid. So it might be a little bit wider or a little bit narrower, but that's the basic size.

Mr. R. Miller: We're not talking half this size?

Ms Sorensen: Not at all.

Mr. R. Miller: Right. I got you. Good. Thanks.

The Chair: Okay. So I've got a motion on the floor that the Standing Committee on Resources and Environment approve the communications plan as revised, which is adding the weekly newspapers.
In favour of the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you. It's carried.

Mr. R. Miller: You didn't ask.

The Chair: Oh, opposed?

Mr. R. Miller: I have to vote, you said.

The Chair: Yes. I thought you had.

Mr. R. Miller: I'm opposed.

The Chair: You're opposed. Okay. I'm sorry.

Mr. R. Miller: I still have concerns about the timeline.

The Chair: I've been informed that we've lost communication ties once again with our people on the telephones. I know that they've been trying to get them back up, but unfortunately it hasn't succeeded.

If I may, I'd like to go back to item (c). I have omitted one item that we had to discuss, and that was in regard to the draft letter which highlights the key issues under review to be sent out to identified stakeholders. We did have discussions with that. Also, add in the other issues that have been brought up by Mr. Lund. So at this time I'd ask: do we have any further questions in regard to the draft letter?

Mr. R. Miller: Mr. Chairman, as you know, I passed a letter to you this morning indicating concerns that have been expressed to me by some stakeholders regarding the BCMB, Beverage Container Management Board, and their handling of the handling fees. While I know that our mandate currently doesn't include that, I think that given the issues that have been raised by stakeholders, my preference at some point would be to move a motion that this committee's

mandate be expanded to include that. I'm wondering if it might not be appropriate to try to deal with that as soon as possible because if we're going to be sending letters out to stakeholders that might include an expanded mandate for the committee, that would probably want to be reflected in the letter that goes out to stakeholders.

I'm not sure how the mechanics of this works. I know that you and I discussed earlier the fact that you'd like some time to discuss with the minister whether or not it might be appropriate for us to expand our mandate at some point, but if that mandate gets expanded and then it's not included in the information that goes out to the stakeholders, then we're sending out incomplete information to the stakeholders. So I'm a little concerned about the mechanics of all of that.

The Chair: I just had a quick glance at the letter that you've given to me. However, when I look at the area of deposit levels, I would think that we'd have the mandate there in terms of being able to review that and having the opportunity to bring forward recommendations. As I indicated to you earlier, prior to the meeting, I want to have further time to review it. I would check with the minister, and then it's something that we could bring back to our next meeting when we meet with the Department of Environment, if that's fine with you and the committee. It's unfair in that the other committee members have not received a copy of it, but it's something that we can address at our next meeting.

Mr. R. Miller: Sure. Yeah. The timelines are just so compact that it makes all of that difficult.

The Chair: But I see your concerns as fitting into the deposit level area of our mandate.

Mr. R. Miller: Okay.

The Chair: Any further discussion on this item? If not, I'd look for a motion that would read that

the Standing Committee on Resources and Environment approve the letter to stakeholders as revised, adding the other point regarding other issues.

Mr. Lund: I would move that motion.

The Chair: Any further discussion on the motion? In favour of the motion? Opposed?

Mr. R. Miller: Oh, I'm voting in favour. Sorry.

11:25

The Chair: Okay. Thank you. I did not want to get my fingers slapped once again. It's carried.

The next item that we'll go to now is item (f), and that's the overview presentation on the beverage container recycling regulation. You've been provided with the binder from Alberta Environment containing various briefing materials. The suggestion is that an invitation be extended to officials from Environment to address those materials and answer any questions that the committee may have. As set out in the timeline, the committee is in agreement that we would invite Alberta Environment to our next meeting, which is August 30. I'd open up the floor to discussion.

If there's no discussion, I'd ask if someone could make a motion that

the Committee on Resources and Environment invite officials from Alberta Environment to attend the August 30, 2007, committee meeting.

Mr. Eggen: I'll move it as described.

The Chair: Any discussion? In favour of the motion? Opposed?

Mr. R. Miller: I'm in favour. Sorry.

The Chair: So it's unanimous. Thank you. Carried.

The other item is the analysis and background research materials required through the committee research co-ordinator. The materials, including the briefing binder from Environment, refer to key issues for review by this committee. There may be other issues that arise during our review of the beverage container recycling regulation, and we would rely on Philip to analyze the issues and to provide additional background materials for the committee's review. I think that this will become clearer once the written submissions and oral presentations have been received.

Philip, do you have anything more that you'd like to add at this point in time?

Dr. Massolin: No, not really. I think you hit it on the head, Mr. Chair, about when things will become apparent.

The Chair: Okay. I believe we've covered everything that's required at this point to allow staff to proceed with the advertising and the mail-out to stakeholders.

Mr. Miller.

Mr. R. Miller: Yeah. Just one question on the analysis and background material. I'm wondering about the impact of a 25-cent per container refund on milk containers and how that might affect fixed-income singles and families and low-income singles and families and whether or not that's the kind of research that you might be able to provide for us in advance or if we should be waiting for input from the stakeholders.

Dr. Massolin: I guess that's a decision for the committee. I mean, I certainly can undertake sort of the former of your comment there and provide research in advance, but the timing of that is up to the committee.

Mr. R. Miller: Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure that it's ever been completely decided how Philip is tasked with those sorts of things. I don't believe that I as an individual member can ask him to do that. I think that's something that the committee has to do. My concern is that for a single mom or dad on a fixed income with three or four little kids at home a 25-cent per container environmental charge might be a dramatic impact on that family. If it was possible to have some research done into how that might impact families, that is what I would hope to see. I don't know if it's appropriate to move a motion at this point.

The Chair: That would probably be the process, but I'd suggest that maybe for the time being, as I'm sure that we're going to be hearing from the milk industry and probably from various other groups, it might be premature to ask to get that research done. The research may very well get done as we receive submissions, but once we receive submissions, by all means that would be probably the more appropriate time in terms of asking for that information to be delved into.

Mr. R. Miller: Okay. Again, my only concern is just the really short timelines. If I'm asking for that research, you know, three weeks from now, then it just makes it that much more difficult to get

that if it isn't already forthcoming from one of the stakeholders. I suspect that you're right, that we'll probably hear a lot about it.

Thank you.

The Chair: Are there any other issues for discussion today? If not, then our next meeting is going to be on Thursday, August 30, 2007. We'll advise you of the times, et cetera. Karen will be doing that and will be polling you in regard to that issue.

At this time I'd ask for a motion for adjournment.

Mr. Griffiths: I'll do that.

The Chair: In favour of adjournment? Mr. Miller, you want to stay a little longer?

Mr. R. Miller: I have to vote on that too? I'm in favour of adjournment.

The Chair: Okay. Carried.

Thank you very much, everyone.

[The committee adjourned at 11:30 a.m.]

