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**National Radon Dialogue
Check In Call
May 18, 2012
12:00 – 1:30 pm EST**

Draft Meeting Summary

Participants:

AARST: Peter Hendrick, Phil Jenkins

AARST Standards Consortium: Gary Hodgden, Shawn Price

CRCPD/States: Clark Eldridge (Florida), Jim McNees (Alabama), Sara Morgan (Nebraska), Chrys Kelley (Colorado)

EPA: Peggy Bagnoli, Bill Long

NEHA/NRPP: Angel Price

Other: Stacie Smith (CBI – *Facilitator*), Mert Oktem and Beth Anne Purvis (Cadmus)

12:00 Welcome and Overview of Agenda. Stacie welcomed the group, asked all to introduce themselves, and reviewed the agenda.

12:05 Check-in on communication, coordination, and conflict resolution. There were no issues raised by participants regarding communication or misunderstanding among the stakeholders. One participant asked for an update on the status of the budget, and was told that this would be coming in the next section.

12:20 Update on Standards (Gary and others). Participants gave the following updates on the current standards development processes.

- RRNC 2.0 has been going for two years, and is currently in its 4th public review. Each time, the number of comments is reducing, sooner-or-later will come to a close.
- Home measurement standard committee is having monthly meetings, making good process.
- E2121 Harmonization process is on-going but slow, as it has been difficult for participants to find the time.
- Multifamily mitigation was one of the 4 standards prioritized by the NRD for EPA assistance. The standard process launched on March 22, and is meeting every two weeks, moving thru difficult questions. A good committee, includes DOE and mitigation people with a lot of experience in large buildings. Aid through Cadmus on administrative announcements, coordinating, has been very helpful. Expect a few more months before releasing a first draft, which might be released in provisional form, to respond to the urgency for this standard.

Participants were asked if they knew of any concerns about any of the Standards processes. Participants from states made the following comments:

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- We have staff on two of the committees and have commented actively on the RRNC 2.0 process
- I am participating in one committee and information about public comment opportunities are well advertised, so I feel in the loop.
- The only one I've followed is RRNC, and feel that my comments were considered and discussed. Some were adopted, and clear reasons were offered if not. I feel that is the best we can do.
- I've followed the process for RRNC 2.0. In one case, the turn-around for comments was short, but other than that, the process has been reasonable. Whether or not there is agreement on technical decisions is a different issue, but that is up to the committee.

Gary and others continued the update on standards:

- Schools and Large Buildings measurement & Schools and Large Buildings mitigation – the Consortium is working to convene these now. We have outreached to volunteers, made an extension, and now have enough people, including several state people, but are a little short on regulated states. The plan is to finalize these committees in early June, and draft a starting document for the group to work through on measurement. There is overlap of people with multi-family/large building experience, making it harder to get the right people. The Consortium coordinated through CRCPD. It is important for states to feel they have the people they need.
 - A participant asked whether the committee member from the State is SIRG funded, and whether State participation would cease without SURG? Gary wasn't sure. Several state participants clarified that their states would be unable to participate without SIRG funding.
- Device Standard – they are currently working on securing funding for a good technical writer, Melinda Ronca-Battista, as well as some funding to support Phil Jenkins. Once this is secured, we will re-establish the working group, starting with a straw man document, and hope for decent draft at end of fiscal year.
- QA standard – this can start after the device standard is completed. There is a committee already established, which might require some replacements, and a good draft to start from.

12:40 Updates on Legislation and Advocacy

EPA provided an update on the proposed SIRG grants budget elimination, with additional updates by AARST. It was explained that the President's budget submitted in February made significant cuts to FY13 budget to the SIRG program, as well as other categories. In Congress, appropriations committees consider it and offer alternatives. There were hearings at the end of March. Now committees are doing their work in the House and Senate. It is likely that Congress won't pass the president's budget, but there is pressure on every agency for cuts. We can expect some discussions over the summer, but probably no action on the budget until after the elections in November. Instead, we expect Congress to pass a continuing resolution.

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Participants offered the following questions and comments:

- In the case of a continuing resolution, will EPA distribute the FY13 SIRG money to states? EPA: Probably not. The usual practice is to take out the known cuts. Probably money will not be allocated for SIRG in the Continuing Resolution. However, if they do, we'll give it out as fast as possible.
- If States have carry over funds, can we keep it? EPA: Yes, get it committed/obligated as soon as possible. EPA might go back to get uncommitted funds from regional coffers, but anything given out to States is safe.
- EPA leadership encourages states and others to send our their message on the hill. As an agency, EPA has to support the administration's position and budget. EPA noted that the testimony offered by stakeholders at the hearing was breathtaking and impactful, captivated the audience, and delayed a vote.
- There was a statement reported from EPA that States will carry on without SIRG. However, many States won't be able to maintain their programs without SIRG. Where did that statement come from? EPA: I don't know, but at every turn, when they ask us to write narrative about the impact, we describe it as accurately and dire as we know it is. They have to have basis to argue the reduction, and the only one is, we've been giving grants for 23 years, based on an initial 3 year authorization when the law was passed. During that time, people should have been building capacity. In some capacity, radon programs should be able to continue. A participant stated that it would have been helpful if we had more time to secure state money.
- Are there any other funding sources for radon outreach work. Any other agencies or programs - Healthy Homes, DOE, etc... - to help replace lost SIRG funds and keep State programs running? EPA: Cuts are occurring in every program. Healthy Homes was zeroed out. Lead budget was cut even while lowering childhood lead recommendations. Everyone hurting, so we're not sure how feasible it will be to find funds. We are trying to embed radon into all other relevant programs, but it is an uphill battle. Maybe the best opportunity is to turn to the philanthropic community.
- If I can't handle calls from the public in my State, who will? We are looking for grants to save the State program, but grants to local programs will go away for sure. EPA: We are worried about that, too. We will be meeting with our partners who run the national 800 # hotline to ask, what will we do if state offices can't take calls, and regional staff programs are zeroed out in FY13? Can we ramp up the hotline?
- Was there ever a FY12 budget? EPA: Yes, a kind of budget with spending targets, and we got an operating plan and passed SIRG money to regions.
- Different regions do this differently. Some have said, this is all you're ever going to get, and different states will run out of money at different times. EPA: Yes, in Region 4, for example, they moved ahead the funding for the year the budget is in. Other regions spend the previous year's money. Some regions will let you stretch out your funding as long as you can until you spend it. Get your region to give you the flexibility.
- Are these cuts across the whole indoor air division? EPA: Yes, it is widespread in EPA. Schools money was eliminated, Energy Star was hit, the Mobile Lab cut.

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Basically anything without court-ordered deadlines or regulatory has been hit.

AARST spoke about advocacy work, Hill visits and legislation. They stated that they don't have a DC presence for radon, their outreach has made some gains in the House, but that it will come down to fast and furious outreach at the end of the year. All of the efforts stakeholders have spent submitting impact statements are helpful, and we encourage all continue to do so. Competition for limited funds is the message we hear from Congress. Many traditional environmentalists say, from what other EPA programs do we take the money you want for radon work? A key and compelling message is the fact that this is not a lot of money and it produces significant results. In weekly contact with key legislative aides, impressed with CANSAR members, heroic work. We need to keep getting the information from States into the hands of the committee chairs.

We are also continuing efforts at the National Conference of State Legislatures, pushing hard on radon awareness for State Legislatures. In Chicago, we presented to 20,000-30,000 state legislators. We are seeding radon awareness and model programs draft legislation. This year, we are pushing for the need for strong state radon programs. We are working with Ruth McBurney at CRCPD.

State members reported that they and CRCPD are also doing advocacy work and pushing state legislation and support. A participant asked whether CRCPD will co-host the Radon Conference this year. CRCPD answered, yes, though they are cancelling the night out.

12:50 Updates on Federal Radon Action Plan (EPA)

EPA reported that they are continuing to press forward with other agencies, engaging in a round of conversations with individual agencies to encourage them to follow up on their commitments and press them to do more. The EPA Radon program at Headquarters is still being funded. We are now 11 months into the launch of the Federal Radon Action Plan, which we plan to celebrate and place a stake in the ground for next year. There will be a conference this summer for CDC on cancer prevention, I hope our leadership join with other senior leaders to take note of year passed and note successes in ramping up radon prevention, and set a charge including more commitments from existing partners and bring in other agencies. We are pushing CDC on that now, and are cautiously optimistic. Our Assistant Administrator is continuing to push for it with her counterparts, which is a big help. DOE might agree to allow radon mitigation to be covered under their weatherization program, narrowly defined, but still great. AARST is helping. In philanthropy, we are trying to find likely funders for radon mitigation, assembling a pitch team and value proposition, and might call on this group to go talk to them. It is a great ask, especially in weatherization, because they don't know what to do with homes with high radon.

Participants offered the following questions and comments:

- Our state gave sub-grants to weatherization groups to do radon testing and mitigation through funds from fines.
- Is there a responsible party for each agency and sub-agency? EPA: Yes, this is an

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idea to run past AARST. Needs to be someone responsive.

- This is all great, but it targets low-income populations. State programs generally help middle-income families who will be left with no help. This doesn't substitute for what SIRG funds do, and doesn't come near replacing it.
- How many partners contact states for assistance? Can we get HUD to move to meaningful radon statements, up and down not just low-income? EPA: HUD is key, most exciting is a possibility of a new radon policy in their loan program for new/re-hab multi-family, requiring RRNC or test and fix, tied to the map (high zones). We are trying to get them to say yes to this. Currently, the testing requirements are insufficient - this is why multi-family measurement and mitigation standards are so key!
- For GSA work with day-care, what standards do we use to measure and fix? We don't have standards set.
- HUD can draw on state standards in states that have them. Florida has a published a standard to test ½ the building. But it is not required, and there is no enforcement.

1:00 Radon Integration in Codes, Protocols, and Programs (EPA and others) –

EPA and others gave an update on efforts to embed radon into Codes, Protocols and other Programs.

- Healthy Indoor Environment Protocols for Home Energy Upgrades was launched last year. It highlights things to do when making homes more energy efficient, and has a nice radon protocol in it. Minimum action, fix anything above 4 or if what you did raised it. Guidance for weatherization, it is not regulatory but still is welcome.
- Indoor Air Plus: EPA's labeling program, existing guidelines call for RRNC in zone 1, test-kits in zones 1 and 2. This is being updated, and likely to call for RRNC in zones 1 and 2.
- LEED: current version has a prerequisite for RRNC in zone 1, and gives points for RRNC in zones 2-3. Upgrading the standard might ramp up requirements.
- Energy Star Homes has no radon requirement
- International Building Code: A coalition of stakeholders took another run at ICC for radon for IBC earlier this month in Texas, presented proposals before the Committee. Salutes to team! Jane Malone, Gloria, George B, Dave K, others. They put forward 2 proposals – 1 on prevention and design in schools and another large buildings (RRNC in schools). They pointed to the NJ State code, and the Large Building proposal pointed to the ASTM standard. Both got 2 votes (9-2), which is an improvement from last time, and provides encouragement to go to the next level. There were some statements in opposition, including NAHB, and a code official. We hope to put in a proposal at the next level, in October in Portland. We are trying to assemble a team to speak. Jane is reaching out, including Federal partners.
- International Residential Code: We are considering proposals to offer for next year, holistic Indoor Air Quality focused, working with Cadmus and Jane. We are hoping to clarify some options this summer and will reaching out to you to help put these together and get the best person to submit in January.
- CRCPD mentioned having BTC cover a State person to go to a hearing in Oregon.

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Participants said it was a good idea, and that it would benefit all stakeholders.

1:20 Coalition for Action (AARST and CRCPD):

AARST described a meeting in January this year to recruit social service organizations to broaden the network for radon inside the beltway, particularly those involved with healthy homes and energy. They were scheduled to meet again in May, but got preoccupied with budget issues. This is an effort we want to continue, though the challenge is pressure on every agency and program. We need to broaden the network to complement the Federal Radon Action Plan. There are no new meeting dates set yet, because this is a busy time for the major partners, also for ALA and NCHH, who have their own issues with Federal budgets. CRCPD is playing a major role in providing outreach to other NGOs. This effort is not stopping, but taking a breath to regroup given budget attention.

1:25 Update on EPA Lab Status:

EPA provided an update on the Radon Lab in Las Vegas. The lab was temporarily shut down to improve quality practices and should reopen soon, perhaps by the end of month. The Radon part of lab was solid, and nothing was compromised in past results. EPA will hopefully offer a webinar to let stakeholders know about the lab, status, services, and improvements after QA. They received a lot of questions about why the lab was shut down, and what it meant. There was some fear that the shut down would be permanent based on budget cuts, so Headquarters is pushing the lab to have a webinar to be transparent and open.

Participants asked if there was a date set for the Webinar. EPA answered that this was still being determined.

Phil Jenkins told the group that there was a thorough uncertainty analysis of all radon measurements from the lab. He expressed appreciation for funding a technical writer to do this analysis of the lab. He stated that he was a reviewer and that the writer did an excellent job, providing a significant first step! Publication should happen before the end of the calendar year.

The meeting concluded at 1:30.