

**VERMONT AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND MARKETS (AAFM)  
VERMONT PESTICIDE ADVISORY COUNCIL (VPAC)**

APRIL 27, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

Virtual Meeting

<b>Members in Attendance</b>	<b>Members Absent</b>	<b>Guests</b>
Ballard, Katie Bosworth, Sid Decker, Kathy Giguere, Cary Hazelrigg, Ann Levey, Rick Palmer, Eric Shively, Andy Vose, Sarah Royer, Liz		Bocuzzo, Linda Cummings, Erica Gandhi, Kanika Wilcox, Jarod Disorda, Jeff Packer, Sara Carlson, Scott Rigby, Mariclaire George, Eric

**Meeting Called to Order:** 9:10 AM EST

**Meeting Adjourned:** 10:30 AM EST

**Announcements:**

This is the second virtual VPAC meeting via Microsoft Teams and the meeting audio is being recorded.

**Public Comment:**

None

**Business:**

***2020 ROW Treatment Applications***

Green Mountain Power (GMP) -Transmission

Green Mountain Power (GMP) -Distribution

Vermont Electric Power Company (VELCO)

National Grid

Vermont Electric Coop (VEC)

## Additional agenda items

Jarod Wilcox from Green Mountain Power (GMP) provided an overview of herbicide usage for 2019, noting that there was a slight increase in usage for the transmission (T) applications. He also went through their customer interactions and advertising campaign. The 2020 GMP-T permit application is for Rodeo, Polaris, Escort XP and Garlon 4, all of which were used in 2019. They expect to cover around 1,040 acres. They have notified customers through direct mail, and newspaper/radio.

Ann Hazelrigg asked why there was a small increase in usage in 2019. Jarod suggested that the uptick was due to the condition of the right of way area.

Rick Levey asked if the customer inquiries in 2019 were lower than previous years. He said that they still receive constant customer inquiries because there is public concern around the use of glyphosate. GMP is looking into using different products to address those concerns.

Sid Bosworth asked if GMP had a fact sheet for the cost differential of weeding by hand instead of using any herbicides. Jarod explained that they do not have a cost fact sheet specifically, they try to educate customers on safety aspects of products as opposed to the cost associated with product usage.

The council shifted to discuss GMP's distribution (D) permit. GMP explained that they are struggling to find qualified contractors for their distribution system. They did not apply any herbicides to their distribution right of way last year but continue to get the permit in case they do find someone qualified. Their permit this year would remain the same, using Garlon 4 Ultra, Krenite, and Polaris.

Cary Giguere asked if GMP has cycled through their legacy properties. GMP said they have gone through and cycled everything once in terms of transmission. They are in the process of cycling back through the properties.

Rick Levey asked if there was preemptive cutting of the emerald ash borer (EAB). GMP explained that they have secured funds for ash tree mitigation along the rights of way. Jared further outlined an extensive program they have implemented pertaining to ash trees.

Ann Hazelrigg motioned to approve both GMP applications (T & D). Sidney Bosworth seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Ann Hazelrigg – Yes

Kathy Decker – Yes

Cary Giguere – Yes

Katie Ballard – Yes

Rick Levey – Yes

Liz Boyer – Yes

Eric Palmer – Yes

Sydney Bosworth – Yes

Sarah Vose - Yes

The council then proceeded to review the VELCO application. Scott Carlson, representing VELCO, explained that they are applying to treat 1250 acres on 115kV and 345kV right of ways. VELCO has reduced usage of Rodeo in 2019. In 2020 they expect an increase in usage due to the lines they are spraying. VELCO has sent out publications regarding the treatment application. They have three contractors working with them this year and they expect to use the same herbicides that GMP asked for which are Rodeo at 7%, Polaris at 1% and Escort at .03%, and Garlon 4 Ultra at 20%. They also explained that switching from herbicides to manual treatment would increase costs from \$1.5 million to \$2.3 million. Manual tends to be about twice the cost of herbicide treatment. VELCO also explained that they receive minimal inquiries for landowners on the use of glyphosate and other herbicides.

Rick Levey asked if VELCO was distributing any fact sheets for glyphosate for land owners. VELCO explained that the only fact sheet they have used is the one provided by the Agency of Agriculture.

Rick Levey asked if VELCO was involved in the EAB program. VELCO explained that they are in the process of removing ash trees from their rights of way. They removed about 1600 trees in 2019 and expect the same for 2020.

Rick also asked if VELCO has had to use Method 240 SL in their treatment. VELCO explained that they have not had to use this product yet. The test plot conducted several years ago was the only one.

Katie Ballard motioned to approve the application. Kathy Decker seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Ann Hazelrigg – Yes

Kathy Decker – Yes

Cary Giguere – Yes

Katie Ballard – Yes

Rick Levey – Yes

Liz Boyer – Yes

Eric Palmer – Yes

Sidney Bosworth – Yes

Sarah Vose - Yes

Sarah Vose commented that the Department of Health is interested in providing input on the factsheet mentioned in earlier discussion.

*9:55 –10:00 five-minute break*

The council continued to discuss the application from National Grid. National Grid explained that they are applying for treatment of 843.35 acres, with all application specifications from 2019 staying the same. They plan to use Rodeo and Garlon 4 Ultra. They are using the same two contractors as in previous years. They have published newspaper advertisements and will be sending direct mail instead of hanging information on customer doors.

Cary Giguere asked how much acreage was treated last year. National Grid explained that due to vendor issues they did not apply any herbicides in Vermont.

Katie Ballard motioned to accept National Grid's application proposal. Ann Hazelrigg seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Ann Hazelrigg – Yes

Kathy Decker – Yes

Cary Giguere – Yes

Katie Ballard – Yes

Rick Levey – Yes

Liz Boyer – Yes

Eric Palmer – Yes

Sidney Bosworth – Yes

Sarah Vose - Yes

The council continued to discuss Vermont Electric Co-op's application. Sarah Packer from VEC explained that the application is very similar to that of 2019. VEC is looking to treat both transmission and distribution using the same chemicals as last year. The major difference this year is the total acreage they are looking to treat is reduced from 3,000 last year to about 1,610 acres this year because they no longer have unfinished acreage carrying over from previous years. VEC explained that the other big difference is that TTS is the applicator they will be using for the distribution lines. New England Tree Experts will continue to treat transmission lines. Sarah Packer noted that it is difficult to find qualified contractors in Vermont.

Sarah Packer also mentioned that they receive some customer complaints about Glyphosate usage and that their customer advertisements about treatment will go out in May and June.

Rick Level asked if VEC has an EAB program as well. Parker explained that they have an ash tree mitigation plan but they do not have a funded program like the other utilities described.

Andy Shively motioned to approve the permit application. Sidney Bosworth seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Ann Hazelrigg – Yes

Kathy Decker – Yes

Cary Giguere – Yes

Katie Ballard – Yes

Rick Levey – Yes

Liz Boyer – Yes

Eric Palmer – Yes

Sidney Bosworth – Yes

Sarah Vose - Yes

The council continued to discuss how operations for utilities will have to change due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. They also had a brief discussion on skilled labor shortages for applicators, recognizing that this issue was not a state-specific issue and that this is happening throughout the country. The council also discussed that this was Sid Bosworth's last meeting as a member of the council. Sid moved to adjourn and Andy Shively seconded, the council then voted unanimously to adjourn after congratulating Sid.