

Workshop on State and Local Planning

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STATUS OF STATE AND LOCAL ENERGY CONTINGENCY PLANS

The status of state and local energy contingency plans is mixed. Some plans have been updated, others are gradually being developed, and many seem to be in a state of limbo. Of those that have been or are being updated, some do not fully reflect the impact of decontrol. The California plan is a good example.

Among the problems encountered in updating energy contingency plans were the following:

- Confusion or turf concerns among governmental entities--an institutional problem.
- Lack of funding--a priority problem.
- Lack of personnel--a priority problem.
- Lack of direction from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) as to what should be covered in the updated plans. For example, should they include community fuel uses such as utilities?
- Lack of urgency due to a perceived fuel surplus and lower prices.

Among the pertinent new issues that should be recognized in updated contingency plans are the following:

1. Income recycling. The question of equity in a free market is of primary concern. Recommendations for identifying need and enabling distribution should be a part of the plan.
2. Private sector. A greater role for business and industry is essential. The private sector should be fully involved in the energy contingency planning process from the outset.
3. Failure of the free market. In the event that the free market fails to work, backup strategies such as allocation should be thought out and recommended for implementation. The Wisconsin plan is a good example.
4. Border problems. States should recognize the political issues associated with possibly different policies in neighboring states.

MECHANISMS FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Workshop participants were concerned about mechanisms for implementing contingency plans and at-

tempted to focus on mechanisms that lend themselves to the free-market approach. Among these are:

- A clear assignment of responsibility to the entity engaged in contingency planning.
- An advisory task force with heavy private sector representation.
- Funds for staff and operations such as printing. Funding could be obtained through legislation or from such sources as an initial charge levied on rideshare participants.
- Use of existing neighborhood groups, clubs, and associations to make arrangements for disseminating information and for ridesharing activities.
- Provide the opportunity for people to make good decisions concerning fuel conservation that help them maintain adequate mobility.
- Use of neighborhood gathering places (e.g., grocery stores) for disseminating information. Florida printed hurricane information on grocery bags. The same medium could be used in an emergency situation.
- Reserve the use of mandates for preserving order (e.g., odd-even gasoline sales).

Private Sector Role

The most important concern is that private sector business and industry be involved in energy contingency planning immediately through such mechanisms as task forces and steering committees to ensure maximum participation. Goals should be clearly stated and the benefit and self-interest aspects of participating should be stressed. Where union organizations are well structured they also should participate.

The private sector should have a large role in planning at the local level. Local government has a significant interest in keeping industry moving and maximum cooperation should result at this level.

Throughout the workshop the issue of societal structural changes due to economic hardship continuously recurred. The participants believed that, at some point as the cost of fuel rose during a shortage, mobility would become less important than economic dislocation. This should be recognized when contingency plans are being developed.