

Illegal Tobacco Task Force Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, December 10, 2015

Meeting Time: 10:00 AM

Meeting Location: 100 Cambridge Street, 2nd Floor, Conference Room D – Boston, MA

Board Members Present: Kajal Chattopadhyay (Co-Chair), Steve Fennessy (Co-Chair), Thomas Bocian, Amber Villa, David Solet, Michael Sweeney, Lea Susan Ojamaa, Shawn Collins.

Others: Christy Fedor, Victor Solorzano, Peter French, Josh Brabazen, Evan Garcia, Brenda McConville, Casey Harvell, Molly Parks, Tom Nowicki, Kevin Brown, Lisa Dellanno, Maryann Merigan, Nicole St. Peter-MacDermott.

Call to Order:

- Meeting was called to order at 10:10 AM by Co-Chair Kajal Chattopadhyay.
- Meeting was first official session for 2015 Illegal Tobacco Task Force. Mr. Chattopadhyay made initial introduction to the group and gave historical background of the creation of the Task Force. Provided in everyone's folder was language from FY2016 Budget Outside Sections 71 and 184, the general laws outlining the establishment of the Task Force.
- Mr. Chattopadhyay discussed the statutory provisions establishing the Task Force and emphasized that each member agency would have one vote on voting items, including those member agencies with two designees serving on the Task Force. Each member of the Task Force agreed.
- Prior to following the agenda items, Mr. Chattopadhyay informed the Task Force that it is subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law and asked all Task Members to submit a Certificate of Receipt of Open Meeting Law Materials (included in the folder).

Altria Client Services Presentation:

- Meredith Miles, Bart McEntire and John Connolly of Altria Client Services introduced themselves to the Task Force and attendees on behalf of their firm, Altria Client Services. Their team specializes in Brand & Trade Channel Integrity, working with companies such as Phillip Morris to support law enforcement agencies with illegal tobacco crimes. A full scope of their work and assistance with illicit tobacco sales prevention in numerous jurisdictions across the country was given. Task Force members were provided a copy of the presentation and given an opportunity to ask questions.
- The Altria Client Services group further outlined the work of other jurisdictions, such as the Cook County Cigarette Enforcement Unit in Chicago, Ill., and the Cigarette Strike Force in New York.

- Ms. Ojamaa suggested to the board that multiple perspectives would be key to making informed decisions. She made mention of a recent Institute of Medicine Illicit Tobacco Report that would be interesting for the Task Force to read. At Mr. Chattopadhyay's request, she will be forwarding a copy of the report to him for distribution to Task Force members.

Legislative Changes:

- Kevin Brown, DOR's General Counsel, outlined the draft proposed legislation his office is working on involving statutory updates and revisions to the tobacco statutes.
- Currently, a package of proposed legislative changes is at ANF for review. After the review is completed, the package will be distributed to the Task Force for input and discussion.
- According to Mr. Brown, a number of statutes and regulations are out of date and need reworking. Those include definitions in the tobacco tax statute, criminal penalties, and civil and forfeiture provisions.

Other Business:

- Discussed was the \$1 Million appropriation for the Illegal Tobacco Task Force in FY2016. Ongoing needs were brought to the board's attention for vote.
- Mr. Brown, along with DOR's Molly Parks, petitioned the board for disbursement of \$12,500 to assist in a joint illegal tobacco investigation. Monies would be used to supply equipment and software needed for DOR and State Police.
- Mr. Sweeney questioned whether this request should be moved into an executive session for further discussion or handled as an emergency measure. He then made a motion to approve the asked \$12,500 as an emergency measure, but would like more time to review requests in the future.
- A unanimous vote in support of the transfer of \$12,500 was approved.
- Sweeney asked to be given background and updated information of the purchase of the equipment and software in the future.
- Next meetings are planned for January 13 and February 9. Two upcoming report deadlines of March 1st and July 1st will be discussed.

Meeting adjourned at 12:01 PM by Mr. Chattopadhyay