

## **State and Local Government Sweatfree Consortium Interim Steering Committee**

September 15, 2008 - 2:00pm – 3:00pm EST

**Present:** Bama Athreya, Bjorn Claeson, Eric Dirnbach, Chip Gavin, Roxana Dietz, Carmen Herrera, Liz Long, Jeff Mandel, Julie Su, Farshid Yazdi.

**Minutes:** Eric Dirnbach

- New committee members: Jeff Mandel, Roxana Dietz, Julie Su, Liz Long

The new committee members Jeff, Roxana, Liz and Julie introduced themselves.

- July minutes

The minutes were approved.

- Set regular meeting time

The third Monday of each month at 2pm EST, 11am PDT is established as our regular time.

- Update: New York, Maryland, Ohio – Eric, Bama, Bjorn

New York – the state sweatfree procurement law has expired and the Dept of Labor is about to release a report recommending next steps for the state to take, which may include participation in the Consortium.

Maryland – advocates met with state officials recently to discuss a possible executive order for MD to join the Consortium.

Ohio – staff in the Governor's office are working on an executive order on participation in the Consortium.

- Update/discussion: independent monitoring cooperative contract – Jeff/Roxana

The NASPO conference was last week. The states of PA, OR, OH and ME are moving forward with the cooperative monitoring contract. It should be posted in about 30 days, with the award probably in Jan/Feb 2009. Other states are interested but do not yet have a sweatfree purchasing law in place that allows participation. The funding for the monitoring should come from the administrative fees attached to the NASPO cooperative apparel contract, which may come next year. Some states may fund the monitoring in other ways, and the contract will reflect that.

- Discussion: Consortium status & next steps – Bjorn, Chip

Chip and Bjorn wrote a memo to the city of Portland, OR answering some questions they had about the Consortium. The memo outlines ideas and possible timeline for the consortium formation and governance. The current idea is to reach \$100 million in total procurement by consortium members, with the consortium forming as we approach that amount.

How would a vendor certification system work? The Consortium could perform a feasibility study to determine how to set up a certification program. The process will generate a list of approved factories and vendors, and will work with the ongoing monitoring program. The history of factory monitoring (from the WRC and others) shows that monitoring, while crucial to this effort, is not sufficient by itself in ensuring that factories have decent conditions. Several large apparel brands are also taking a new look at their sourcing practices that have generated bad working conditions. How would this certification program be different from other systems like the FLA and SA8000? A feasibility study would analyze the root causes of the problem, help us determine the best way to move forward, and what improvements might need to be made over other systems. It's possible that the Consortium could start sooner than we have discussed so that we can start the process of determining this certification process sooner. A written proposal will be sent out soon for discussion next month.

- Announcement: Thursday, September 25, 2pm EST/11am PDT – call with Ros Harvey, Better Works Program, International Labor Organization – Bjorn
- Next Call – Monday, October 20, 2pm EST, 11am PDT.