Developing Recommendations

Mosquito Control for the Twenty-First Century Task Force

October 21, 2021

Task Force Charge

"The task force shall study the commonwealth's mosquito control process established under chapter 252 of the General Laws and this act and <u>recommend comprehensive reforms of the commonwealth's mosquito control system</u>"

Section 3 of Chapter 120 of the Acts of 2020

Developing Effective Recommendations

- Task Force Recommendations will be delivered to the legislature
  - Good recommendations will be actionable by the legislature.

Four Components of a Recommendation

Background – summarize the status quo and need for changes

Recommendation – be SMART

Rationale – explain why this is the recommended action

Legislative language (optional) – note what specific legislation should be changed and provide suggested legislative language

1. Background

- In 2-4 sentences, explain the status quo and problems
- Already understood in most cases – be brief

Example:

- In 2014 the Massachusetts State Legislature amended the M.G.L. Ch. 61A program by allowing an exception for cranberry producers to still remain in the program even if they are not producing a crop. The 61A program stipulates that a minimum of $500 must be produced each year to remain eligible. With many cranberry growers not producing a crop, this eligibility cannot be achieved. The law was amended to enable growers to stay in the program through 2017, even with no income generated from the sale of a crop.

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2. SMART Recommendations

- **S**pecific (recommendation articulates exactly what action(s) needs to be taken)

- **M**eaningful (rationale explains how recommendations will make a positive difference)

- **A**uthority (recommendation identifies who has the authority to make changes)

- **R**ealistic (recommendation can be implemented)

- **T**ime bound (not controlled by MCTF)

Specific

- Recommendation articulates exactly what action(s) needs to be taken

- Be explicit – not everyone shares the same background knowledge or assumptions

  – Instead of: "This policy should be implemented in areas of high arbovirus risk."
  – Try: "This policy should be implemented in areas with high risk for the current mosquito season, as determined by …"

Meaningful

- **Rationale** explains how recommendation will make a positive difference

- Support the recommendation by describing how this will change on-the-ground practices or decisions, and expected benefits

    - Instead of: "Adopting this recommendation would fix a long-standing problem."
    - Try: "Implementing this recommendation will solve [specify problems] by increasing timely information available to the Commonwealth to use in its decisions if and when to apply pesticides."

Authority

- Recommendation identifies who has the authority to make changes

- Remember that the primary audience is the legislature.

- For policy and program recommendations, identify organizations, policies, and programs that would be involved in carrying out the recommendation.

  - Instead of: "The state should…"
  - Try: "The SRB should…"

Realistic

- Recommendations are clear and accompanied by a road-map describing how changes fit into Massachusetts's legal framework

- Realistic recommendations are more likely to be adopted.

  - Instead of: "Add members to all decision-making bodies"
  - Try: "Include representatives of [group] and [group] in these decisions"

Time bound

- As recommendations require further action by the legislature, establishing timelines in recommendations may not be needed in every case

- For recommendations associated with recurring events, specific, recurring deadlines could be beneficial
  - Instead of: "each year"
  - Try: "by the end of each fiscal year," or "within six months after the final spray event each year"
- Consider whether recommended changes should be permanent or temporary
  - If temporary – what triggers return to the status quo, or what triggers continuing with the new approach?

3. Rationale

- Explain why this action is recommended

- Make the case for this action

Rationale for extending cranberry farmer support

- With the dire near term financial outlook for many growers, there will be cranberry farmers not growing a crop beyond the 2017 harvest.

4. Legislative or Regulatory Language

- Provide appropriate legislative language changes needed to carry out recommendation
- EEA/MDAR may be able to provide expertise/assistance

Example

The Task Force recommends that Ch 61A section 12 be amended to insure no conveyance or rollback tax shall be assessed if the land involved, or a lesser interest in that land, is acquired for a natural resource purpose by a federal agency