

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH THOMAS GRANITO, U.S. COAST GUARD  
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SUBJECT: COAST GUARD GREEN INITIATIVES TIME:  
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LIEUTENANT JENNIFER CRAGG (Office of the Secretary of Defense for  
Public Affairs): This is Bloggers Roundtable for Tuesday, April 21st, 2009. My  
name is Lieutenant Jennifer Cragg, and I'll be the host today -- I'll be  
moderating the call, rather. I'm with the Office of the Secretary of Defense  
for Public Affairs.

A note to the two bloggers on the line: please clearly state your name  
and organization you're with prior to asking your question for our guest today,  
who is Mr. Thomas Granito. He is the Coast Guard Office of Environmental  
Management -- he's with them. And he will discuss the Coast Guard's green  
initiatives. The projects include the Coast Guard's first green -- (inaudible)  
-- the Coast Guard's Academy Award-winning recycling program, and an electronic  
systems detachment cell that harbors wind and solar energy systems. That's a  
lot, sir.

So with that, can I turn it over to you, so you probably speak better  
about it than I could? The floor is yours. MR. GRANITO: Okay. Well, I thank  
you.

Yeah, D.J. Granito. And yeah, been with the Coast Guard for about --  
well, longer than 25 years. And Coast Guard is becoming much greener, as is  
much of the rest of the world these days.

And in the past, I guess 15 to 20 years ago, we were more concerned  
about maintaining compliance with the federal regulations and cleaning up or  
remediating older sites.

Also, in the past, you know, the environmental guys -- it was always  
the environmental guys' job to do the cleanups and everything else. And -- but  
in -- but today, it's a -- sort of a different world, and "environmental" has  
taken a whole new meaning, and environmental is part of everybody's job.

And that's one of the things that we're trying to let everybody know,  
and spread that through the Coast Guard, you know, both military and civilian --  
you know, from the guy who gasses up and drives the boat to the gal who plans  
the mission, cook, painter, engineers, contract officers, safety, budget,  
property folks. They're all getting involved. And -- course, we can't forget  
the attorneys. They're always involved in one way or another. So environmental  
plays a pivotal role in most everybody's day-to-day activities.

Like I said, I've been with the Coast Guard for about -- more than 25 years, and I've seen the changes in both management and organization styles. And currently, the Coast Guard is in the process of a major revamping -- basically the modernization of the Coast Guard. We're restructuring, centralizing and becoming more responsive and flexible, I guess somewhat similar to what DOD had done previous years.

But the current Coast Guard is shifting from compliance to sustainability -- basically, greening of the Coast Guard. And 15 years ago, Coast Guard was mostly a reactive agency, you know, looking at the compliance of facilities and clean-up of contaminated sites. One of our biggest problems was the navigation batteries. We had those strewn all over the place, from rivers to the oceans. And wherever we had an ATN, aid to navigation, that was lit by -- used batteries, they ended up being dumped in the water somewhere or another. So we had a major clean-up effort with that. And also, like everybody else, had the underground storage tanks.

So as, you know, time went on, they started to look at doing other things, such as the recycling program, where we had to -- we were lucky enough to have a QRP program similar to DOD's, but since at the time we were not part of the DOD and we didn't have the authority to sell, we had to go and get a special dispensation to have direct sales so we could use the proceeds for recycling. So slowly but surely, the recycling programs started to catch on.

So in, basically, the last 10 years, we have become a lot more proactive, mostly because the Executive Orders 13148 and 13423, which required us to -- it enabled EMS's, and we began to increase the lead program, construction with the Green Building Council.

We're also looking at seeking alternative and renewable fuels, eventually developing a good carbon footprint by assessing our impact from fuel usage and emissions.

We're also looking at closing the loop on the recycling with green procurement and training programs and right now, we have about 171 units that are designated as QRPs and 40 percent of those are cutters.

A number of our facilities are looking at greening themselves. A couple of examples would be the academy -- developed sustainability initiatives network for recycling and using electronics and things like that. They also won a White House award for reducing electronics also and they were the first military academy to participate in a thing called recycle-mania, where a bunch of colleges get together to come up with recycling and this was the first one I ever heard of that one, but it's a new thing that they're doing.

Also, we have a station at Emerald Isle, North Carolina and they've been using some innovative things for renovation, using mostly recycled products, gypsum boards, things like that and they've incorporated some geothermal HVAC systems versus the traditional AC systems and they also -- have a deal where they purchased the electricity that they're purchasing is 100 percent bio-mass generated and up in Kodiak, Alaska, we've got integrated supports that -- developed some new pollution prevention maintenance procedures and that has eliminated hazardous waste by about 40 percent and they've had some great recycling programs going on up in Alaska where it's harder to recycle some things because of the location. They recycle quite a bit, both non-hazardous and hazardous material.

Let's see. The green station that they talked about was station Southwest Harbor where they had installed a centralized renewable energy, uninterrupted power supply or re-ups as they call it and they used both wind and solar to create or generate electricity and they've also reduced their dependence on commercial energy by about 43 percent.

LT. CRAGG: Sir?

MR. GRANITO: Yes.

LT. CRAGG: When you're ready, I don't mean to interrupt you, but I wanted to find out who also called in and when you're ready, we'll turn it over to the bloggers so they can ask you some questions.

MR. GRANITO: Okay.

LT. CRAGG: Who dialed in, please? Q This is Lieutenant Dorson (sp), Social and Media Coast Guard Public Affairs.

LT. CRAGG: Thank you. Thank you so much for calling in. Do you want to be called on for questions?

Q I only questions about social media, so I don't know much about the green stuff.

LT. CRAGG: Okay. Great. I just wanted to make sure. I didn't want to be rude. And sir, when you are ready, we'll turn it over to Chuck and then to Andrew, okay?

MR. GRANITO: Okay. Yeah. Basically, what we're looking at in the future is looking at trying to develop more alternative energy uses, wind farms. We've got two right now that are being put together in Cape May and actually Cape May, the training facility in New Jersey. Their project -- looking at combined energy management initiative saving about \$850,000 a year and at Cape Cod, they're starting to put together a wind turbine system also and one other thing, like I said, the side of the Coast Guard that I'm dealing with is the facility side. We've got folks dealing with the vessels and the fuel and there's a whole different stovepipe that deals with our fuelings and things like that, which I'm really not that familiar with.

Guessing the future, we're just looking at increasing our lead sustainable designs, the EMS programs, things like that. So that's basically it in a nutshell.

Do you have any questions? I'll see what I can do.

LT. CRAGG: Okay. Thank you very much, sir. Let's go over to Chuck. Chuck, you're first and Andrew, you can go ahead.

Chuck?

Q Okay. Chuck Simmons from America's North Shore Journal.

Can you give us an idea of roughly how many facilities and maybe how many buildings the Coast Guard is responsible for so that we get an idea of how big their program could potentially be?

MR. GRANITO: Well, there's approximately 600 facilities. I could not give you a number of buildings. I would have to get that from real property folks.

Q Okay. Let me ask you this then. At this particular moment, is solar or wind in use, been in use for a number of years at any of the facilities or are we talking all new stuff? MR. GRANITO: This is mostly all new stuff that I'm aware of. Yeah. There could be some facilities out there that have been doing it, but I'm not really familiar with them.

Q Okay. The aid to navigation that you mentioned before, you're talking about buoys and lights on piers.

MR. GRANITO: Yeah. These are mostly floating aids, navigational aids.

Q Are any of those solar-powered?

MR. GRANITO: Well, actually, they are. They have been solar-powered for a long time. It's sort of a business decision that turned out to be an environmental success where they realized that using solar power and basically, I think, not much in the percentage, but almost all of them that were out there, they've been solarized.

Q All right. And how about -- have you heard of any, I know you're not at sea part of the Coast Guard, but have you heard about any solar on ships at all, ships or boats?

MR. GRANITO: Not really, but I know they're looking at the whole side of the vessel program to see where there are green initiatives. Do you know of any -- is the Navy doing that or anybody else?

Q I don't know if the Navy is doing that, but it leads to my next question. The diesel used with the Coast Guard -- I know you said Emerald Isle -- using electricity that's 100 percent biomass generated. Diesel can be mixed with bio-products to be a little bit greener.

Are you aware of any projects in the Coast Guard to use bio-diesel in any way?

MR. GRANITO: I've heard of -- one of the vessels had been using it or tried it and they were having some problems with it and they're trying to work that out now to see, I don't know, if it's temperatures or what, but it was causing some engine blocking or whatever.

Q Okay. Are you aware of motor vehicles or equipment, land-based equipment like cranes or whatever that may be either electrically powered or bio-diesel powered?

MR. GRANITO: I know that they're going to some of the ground equipment to be propane or electric. I know one facility -- (inaudible) -- they had a bio-fuel, some bio-fuel vehicles that they were using.

Q All right. I'll let Andrew take a few questions.

Q Thanks very much, and hi, Mr. Granito. MR. GRANITO: How are you doing?

Q Appreciate your time. Very well. My name is Andy Bachman, I write the DOD energy blog and I'm based in Boston and spent a lot of time going back and forth between MIT and D.C.

MR. GRANITO: Okay.

Q I'll say what my questions are right up front, I guess, and allow you to cherry pick which ones you feel you want to answer and you can ignore the others. I think there's just three general ones, can you go down one more level of detail on alternative fuels research?

My second question is does the Coast Guard follow any other agency's lead, either directly or at least as it learns from and watch what some other agencies are doing to inform what it does and -- by those -- I would imagine DHS or other DHS components, perhaps, the Navy or anybody else, is the second question.

And the last one is, I think, already answered by you. I was going to drill down more on fuel use on the surface ships. And if that's not your department, I'd appreciate it, either as a follow-on later, if you can identify who we should talk to in that department -- in area.

MR. GRANITO: Oh, sure. Okay.

Q All right, thank you.

MR. GRANITO: Yeah, as far as the alternative fuels research, there is a working group now looking at some of the fuels. We've got -- I would say it's like their first group, folks from the R&D center, the vessel community, aviation community, the fleet vehicles, and our energy guru. And they're all sort of -- they just started meeting recently to look at the alternative fuels.

Q Can you identify the energy guru?

MR. GRANITO: Yeah. Her name is Phyllis Spanek (sp).

Q Phyllis Spanek (sp).

MR. GRANITO: Yeah. And she just recently came on board, about -- let's see -- maybe six months ago or something like that.

Q Okay.

MR. GRANITO: And she's short-staffed, but she is the staff. (Laughs.) We're very short-staffed. (Laughs.)

Q I understand.

MR. GRANITO: I think she's got a contractor that's helping her right now, but indeed, she's doing quite a bit of work.

As far as following what some of the other agencies are doing, we've always got an eye out to see what they're doing. I know the vessel folks are usually keyed in to what the Navy is doing -- (inaudible) -- quite different sizes and things like that. And I guess the aviation folks are always clued in

to Air Force and what they're doing, the different meetings that they're always going to.

In DHS, they're sort of a parent agency. Since they are so new, they actually looked at the Coast Guard like we looked at DOD, for guidance sometimes or direction.

Q Thanks. That sounds good.

MR. GRANITO: And for the -- for the surface ships, I think I can give you a couple of names of folks -- Lieutenant Commander Jerry Slater. And if you want, I can try to get a phone number for you too if you need it.

Q It doesn't have to be in real time. I know we can do it as a follow-up.

MR. GRANITO: Okay.

LT. CRAGG: I'll follow that up. I'll work with Nadine after the call.

MR. GRANITO: Okay, great.

Q All right, sir, thanks very much.

MR. GRANITO: Sure.

LT. CRAGG: Another question and a follow-up for Chuck and for Andrew, if either one of them have any follow-up questions.

Q Yeah. Are there institutional goals for the Coast Guard in what you hope to achieve with these greener initiatives?

MR. GRANITO: Most of the (goals ?) that we're looking at now are sort of following the executive order requirements.

Q Okay.

MR. GRANITO: However, internally we may have other goals. Like I said, we're right in the midst of a reorganization that's quite a major reorganization where we're centralizing the East Coast, West Coast, things like that. And right now we don't have, I want to say, these goals set up. But they're things that we're going to be looking at. And we'll be looking at -- (inaudible) -- develop a good footprint and reducing, you know, emissions, things like that.

Q And this is Andy, and my follow-up question is to say thanks to Chuck for asking that question. So you have goals primarily, as with the DOD services, to follow the executive order to reduce energy usage year over year. My follow-on question is, are you meeting the goals? Are you finding that you can demonstrate that the activities the Coast Guard is doing is generating a net reduction in energy demand?

MR. GRANITO: Yeah. Well, actually, tomorrow we're going up to the -- in fact, one of the projects I didn't mention was the gas landfill project of the Coast Guard yard where they tapped into the landfill across the highway for methane. And I'm not sure of the figure, but I've heard that just the amount of

savings that they're going to get from that will meet our goals from the executive order.

Q Where is the yard located, sir?

MR. GRANITO: Up in Baltimore.

Q Baltimore?

MR. GRANITO: Yeah.

Q Are you saying that that's going to produce so much that it's going to matter Coast Guard-wide?

MR. GRANITO: That's -- well, I can't confirm it, but that's what I heard. (Laughs.) I was like, "What?" But I think that is one question I need to ask when I get up there tomorrow, because we're just going to go up for the ceremony. They're supposed to kick it off tomorrow.

Q If you have any revelations after you see it with your own eyes or meet those people that you could pass back through Jennifer, that would be much appreciated.

MR. GRANITO: Sure, sure. You know, when they told me it would be -- I don't know what the figure was, but they said it will meet the goal. (Inaudible) -- I said, "Huh?"

Q Well, if I recall the executive orders correctly, you weren't directed to reduce energy use by, for example, on the cutters and things like that so much as in your land-based activities. And the Coast Guard doesn't have -- you've got 600 sites, but the one here in Rochester, for example, is smaller than the house I live in. So it may be that your natural footprint on land is small enough that something like this could take a big dent out of it.

MR. GRANITO: Well, I wanted to find exactly what goal they were talking about. (Laughs.) But that was just, you know, one of the bullets I saw on something. I was like, "Huh?" And I know the executive order says, like, there's two different ones, 3 percent per year or 30 percent over 10 years, something like that. But, yeah, I'm not sure what it is, but I will find out and get back to you.

Q I had one more question. You mentioned the Cape Cod station looking at using a wind turbine? MR. GRANITO: Yeah. They were talking about putting one up -- I want to say that they recently took over the air strip. It was supposed to -- at least, last I heard, they were planning on putting one up there. I don't know if --

Q Okay, but this is not the wind turbine farm that the senators from Massachusetts were talking about.

MR. GRANITO: Oh, no, no. The one that they're complaining about is out in the water, and it would be a private sector, something like that.

Q Okay.

MR. GRANITO: Yeah, this would just be one to be used for the facility itself, and it would be on land.

Q Okay.

LT. CRAGG: Okay. Andrew, any follow-up questions before I turn it over to Mr. Granito?

Q No, I'm all set. Thank you, Jennifer.

LT. CRAGG: Okay, Chuck, anything?

Q All set, thanks.

LT. CRAGG: Okay. Sir, the floor is yours if you'd like to end with a closing thought or thoughts.

MR. GRANITO: Well, like I'm said, I'm just one part of the Coast Guard. There's various other parts of the Coast Guard that are dealing with the energy sector side. We've got the engineering side and the resources side that's dealing with the fuel. So you've got a -- I tried to pull in things that I knew from other areas and put it into this little brief. But there is quite a bit going on.

And one of the other areas that we get involved with, and I think that will become more visible as time goes on, is things going on in the Arctic that's going to be, I think, dealing with regulations and international (air ?) and things like that. But for right now, the Coast Guard is a presence up there just because, ever since the Russians dropped their flag, August a year ago or whatever, everybody's looking to the Arctic, where vessel traffic is going to be a big thing, not to mention the resources issues. But the Coast Guard will be playing a role in that. And there is an energy component to that also.

That's about what I've got. LT. CRAGG: Well, I thank you, sir. And there's a couple of things that we'll coordinate after the call, like we said. I'll get with Nadine and the bloggers as well after.

But with that, I'd just like to say thank you very much, sir, for joining us today, and to the bloggers online, to everybody -- (inaudible) -- this audiophile, the transcript, and the story about today's call. If you go to the defense link on the bloggers' link, you'll find all those (products ?).

Again, thank you, sir, for calling in. And this ends today's roundtable.

END.