

Case Number: 397185

The mandate of the Fairness and Transparency Advisor (FTA) is to ensure that various processes associated with the Core Area Sewage Water Treatment project are fair, transparent, impartial and objective. In this capacity, the FTA is an observer of, and commentator on, process. The FTA has no power to impose remedies.

BACKGROUND

The Issues as Raised in the Complaint:

The complaint takes issue with the gasification expertise of Urban Systems (Carallo Associates). It is argued that they do not have expertise in this area and as a result, the cost estimates are faulty (over-inflated).

At the heart of the complaint is a concern that the technical information about gasification is not based on technical expertise and it is argued that this lack of expertise will result in a breach of public trust. It is suggested that Urban Systems does not appear to have a gasification expert on the project and that the opinions and views of the TOP panel member who does have gasification expertise have been suppressed and rendered ineffective through a voting procedure which overrules his professional views.

The remedy sought is a retraction of all public information related to cost estimates of gasification and that the public directly hear from the TOP expert on gasification so that these views can be given full voice.

Specific issues raised in the complaint:

The complainant asks the following three questions:

1. Do the consultants, Urban Systems and Carollo Engineers, have expertise in gasification?
2. Has the TOP, within its procedures, "suppressed" expert opinion on gasification with respect to project options and cost estimates?
3. Has the CRD breached the public's trust by stating they have gasification expertise?

FINDINGS

Qualifications

First, I will deal with the issue of qualifications. At the outset it is not clear that Urban Systems, the consultant leading the costing analysis, is required to have significant expertise in each and every aspect of the potential technologies and processes (including gasification) that may form the options under consideration by the various technical and decision making committees. The Request for Proposals used to hire the costing consultants asked proponents to describe their experience in the following areas:

- *municipal infrastructure design, construction and operation*
- *wastewater and residual solids management*
- *costing and financial analysis of similar projects including life cycle costs*
- *evaluation and comparison of different emerging and proven technologies, including those that might allow for integration of other waste streams*
- *optimization of sites, technology and resource recovery*
- *assessment of net environmental gain from applicable technologies*
- *understanding provincial and federal sewage regulations*
- *alternative project procurement models*

The role of Urban Systems is to generate cost estimates and analysis, while the TOP provides input and oversight to the analysis (see the [Terms of Reference](#) for the TOP). Therefore the consultants and TOP are working together to ensure the cost estimates reflect the underlying technologies and processes as accurately as possible.

The FTA requested a biography of the gasification expert retained by Urban Systems for this project. An edited version of the bio is provided below.

Rudy Kilian works for Carollo Associates as the National Director of Biosolids. His work has focused on maximizing the value of products generated by the processing of solids in wastewater treatment. He is a process/sanitary engineer and has worked on numerous projects involving many aspects of wastewater, water, solids handling, and disposal with an emphasis on advanced digestion and resource recovery processes. Rudy has recently completed several projects for large utilities looking at maximizing the recovery of carbon and energy through advanced digestion and thermal processing of biosolids (**gasification**/pyrolysis/thermal oxidation). Mr. Kilian has been responsible for charting the course for the biosolids management practices for large and regional agencies ranging in size from 1-600 mgd. As part of his work, he has recommended the implementation of multiple technologies including advanced digestion, thermal oxidation **and gasification** for complete carbon mineralization and energy recovery. Rudy will be responsible for leading the resource recovery aspects of this project. [emphasis added]

In addition, the TOP also includes an expert in gasification. The professional biography available on the CRD's website is as follows:

Jeffrey Scott Snyder Jeff has over 25 years of experience in Water and Waste Water Management. His diverse skills set include everything from environmental compliance, regional sales and development efforts, contract negotiations to system repair and maintenance. Jeff has worked with a number of waste disposal and utility companies which include Parkson Corporation, Synagro Technologies, American Water Services, AquaSource Utility and Culligan Operating Services. Jeff was instrumental in the development of a Fluidized Bed Gasification System that processed Biosolids from Wastewater Treatment Plants as the sole feedstock to the gasifier. Jeff was responsible for the installation of the fluidized bed gasifier that was installed in Sanford FL. Jeff also led the commissioning and operation of the gasifier. The Sanford operation also included sludge dewatering and drying as components of the gasification operations that Jeff was responsible for. In December 2013 Jeff was directly responsible for securing a Determination for USEPA that a Gasifier Operating on sewage sludge was not an incinerator.

Conclusion

I cannot concur with the complainant that Urban Systems or the TOP lack gasification expertise. I cannot comment on the adequacy of such expertise as that would require expert knowledge of the professional area; which I do not possess. I cannot find then, that the CRD has breached the public's trust.

Suppression of Expert Views

I find that the gasification expert on the TOP has had opportunity to voice views in a public setting through TOP meetings which are all open to the public (unless otherwise subject to confidentiality provisions).

I further understand that the deliberations of the TOP do not require voting and all members are permitted to participate as they believe they should. It is my understanding from the Chair of the TOP that the gasification expert on the panel, while at times has been relatively quiet, does in fact voice issues and concerns as appropriate. There have been no complaints received by the FTA nor is there any record in the public domain which would indicate that the panel member in question has raised any concerns. The FTA has confirmed with the panel member that there are no concerns with respect to his views having been suppressed.

Conclusion

The next step in the costing of options is a public engagement process where questions related to costing can be asked. If there are concerns with the qualifications and analysis as it relates to gasification, there is a process to accommodate that.

The upcoming consultation will shed light on the expertise, perspectives, and views on the various options under consideration. The consultation may identify practical problems and as such, is a credible tool for providing a quality check on the assessment of costs. Any discrepancies would be subject to a public process. And so, procedurally, I cannot find fault with the process and do not find reason to recommend the remedy sought.