The Northern Oxford County Coalition:
An Analysis of Representation and Communication

by

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ABSTRACT

The Northern Oxford County Coalition (NOCC), is a case study to explore how stakeholder
group representatives perceive their responsibilities as representatives in a public dispute.
Understanding how stakeholder representatives see their roles both as representatives and as
communicators can help facilitators assist the participants of the consensus building process.
Representation is carried out differently by different stakeholder group representatives,
depending on who they represent, the resources they have available, and their available time.
NOCC members saw themselves as fitting into one or more representation categories, including:
speaking like their stakeholder group; speaking on their stakeholder group members' behalf;
speaking for the NOCC, or; as bringing skills and resources to the negotiating table. Each of the
representation categories is discussed in terms of accountability, alignment of interests, and
communication with stakeholder group members. Suggestions for facilitators are also included.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Sometimes it is difficult to make decisions. What do you want to do with your life? Where do you want to go to school? Where do you want to live? What do you want to eat, to wear, to do? Sometimes it hard to make decisions for yourself, ones that seem to affect no one but you.

Parents, school boards, mayors, state and federal legislators, and the President all make decisions that affect other people's lives. In all of these instances, the decision makers are acting in someone else's behalf. Parents make decisions for children, school boards make decisions for both parents and children, and elected officials make decisions for their constituents. All of these people are representing others in decision-making situations.

One method of decision making that utilizes representatives is consensus building. Consensus building brings together people who will be affected by a decision to participate on their behalf and on behalf of others. The people who join such processes are called stakeholder representatives. The people who manage consensus building processes may not understand how stakeholder representatives understand their role as representatives of other people. My research seeks to answers the questions: How do stakeholder representatives perceive their responsibilities as representatives of others in a consensus building process? And, do their views about their representational responsibilities influence the way they communicate with their stakeholder groups they are supposed to be representing? In this case, my focus is the Northern Oxford County Coalition -- a 24 member group in Rumford, Maine that has worked for over two years to address the community's concerns about air pollution and public health.

Consensus Building Theory

Consensus building is a method of structuring the dialogue among parties from various backgrounds, organizations, with different concerns and values for the purpose of solving one or more problems. Using consensus building can help "avoid stalemate, reduce the need for litigation, and restore the credibility of government [and] to generate agreement on how to handle the problems that confront us," (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987, p. 13).

Consensus building dialogues allow stakeholder groups (people with similar interests likely to be affected by a decision) to negotiate a way to proceed that is acceptable to all parties. Such dialogues are usually lead by a "neutral" mediator or facilitator. Consensus building permits all groups with an interest in an issue to come together to talk, share information, discuss concerns and viewpoints, and make joint decisions. There is no voting in a consensus building processes. Instead, members seek to reach agreements that are acceptable to all participating stakeholder groups. This does not mean that in all cases all parties satisfy all of their needs, but that they satisfy their most important interests and can live with the options or decisions (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987). So, consensus building processes are unlike town meetings or other public forums in which debate is followed by voting and decisions made by simple majority.

Although the overarching goal of consensus building is to resolve conflicts, there are other goals as well. It is not enough to merely reach agreement. Fisher and Ury (1981) believe that "The goal is a wise outcome reached efficiently and amicably," (p. 13). Susskind and Cruikshank (1987) take the goal of consensus building to reach "voluntary agreements that offer the wisest, fairest, most efficient, and most stable outcomes possible," (p. 13).

Susskind and Cruikshank (1987) describe three phases of the consensus building process: pre-negotiation, negotiation, and implementation. They state that the pre-negotiation stage consists of getting the stakeholder to agree to negotiate, ensuring representation of stakeholder groups, drafting protocols and agenda setting, and joint fact finding. The negotiation phase includes inventing options for mutual gains, or identifying options that meet stakeholders' most important interests. Stakeholders construct agreements by trading across options in a package of issues. The stakeholders then produce a written agreement, bind each other to their commitments, and ensure that their "members" ratify the decision (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987). In some instances, the "final" product is a recommendation that must still be acted upon by elected or appointed officials.

When "neutrals" are hired to facilitate such a process, they begin by conducting a stakeholder analysis, also called a conflict assessment (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987). The stakeholder analysis should be a written document that identifies and describes all of the groups with a stake in the decisions that have to be made. Once stakeholder groups are identified, representatives must be selected who are empowered to speak for their "constituents." Groups involved are polled for suggestions regarding still others who should be contacted. All suggested groups are then contacted, asked to participate, and asked for additional suggestions. After several iterations, the group usually reflects the widest possible range of interests.

Because all individuals and organizations with an interest in a dispute should be represented in a dialogue, consensus building provides a method for unorganized and un-empowered individuals to obtain a voice along with organizations that obviously have more power. Usually, in public consensus building processes there are stakeholder groups called "citizens." Citizens are generally people who live in an area where a conflict is occurring but are representing only the general interests of residents (rather than more specific geographic or ideological interests). Citizens may have other interests, for example as environmentalists, as business owners, or health care providers. But for the purposes of consensus building, citizens represent the general interests of their neighbors. "The object of collaboration is to create a richer, more comprehensive appreciation of the problem among the stakeholders than any one of them could construct alone," (Gray, 1989, p. 112). When more options are created because more parties with different views are included in the discussion, the result will be "solutions that maximize mutual gain and improve long-term relationships," (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987, p. 11).

The role of stakeholder group representatives
Stakeholder group representatives (SGRs), are faced with a number of difficult tasks. They must attend meetings, gather relevant information, determine what information is missing, read background materials, explain their "group's" concerns to others, listen to other viewpoints, invent solutions to problems that satisfy all parties' major concerns, and communicate all of this to their stakeholders. In short, SGRs have two fundamental roles. They must determine the priorities of their stakeholder group and communicate these to other SGRs. Second, SGRs must help construct proposals or solutions that satisfy both the needs of their stakeholder group as well as others, and explain all of these options to their stakeholder group.

The need to both negotiate and communicate places SGRs in what is typically called a boundary role position. Because they operate in a position that connects two groups (i.e. their constituents and the group of SGRs. The SGRs must "maintain a 'dual membership,' both within his [or her] 'parent' group of constituents and in the boundary interaction system with 'outsiders' that spans the two groups for the purpose of intergroup relations." (Wall, 1974).

Communication is an essential aspect of the consensus building process. Discussions among many stakeholder groups, or inter-stakeholder communication, are usually necessary to reach an agreement. Communication is needed to express and understand interests behind stakeholders' positions. Ensuring productive, clear inter-stakeholder communication is why consensus building often employs neutrals trained in managing conversations among diverse parties.

Techniques for understanding and improving stakeholder communication has been widely studied in the fields of negotiation, group decision making, and communication. "The vast majority of research in bargaining and negotiation focuses on the two negotiators at the bargaining table, specifically, their actions and interactions and their outcomes. However, negotiators usually act as representatives who are influenced not only by the negotiating situation but also by their constituents (Druckman, 1977; Roloff and Campion, 1987; Putnam & Roloff, 1992, p. 233). The interaction between a representative and constituents change the dynamics of the negotiation, because there is an additional level of negotiation. "Since negotiation at the table often hinge on communication activities in caucus sessions, research should focus on bargainer-constituent interactions (Putnam and Jones, 1982; Putnam & Roloff, 1992, p. 233).

In consensus building, stakeholder group representatives who are at the table negotiating, are charged with keeping other members of their stakeholder groups informed. This means that stakeholder representatives are given the responsibility for initiating and maintaining intra-stakeholder communication. Intra-stakeholder communication is imperative if the members of the stakeholder group are to understand the issues and options, trust their representative and the information the representative transmits, and to feel their concerns are being represented at the table. "Much of what occurs in caucuses includes the process of reaching internal consensus between the negotiator and his or her constituents on what is an acceptable agreement with the other party. ... No matter where the parties begin and no matter how diverse the ideas are within a party, negotiators and their constituents must come to an agreement before bargaining can be successfully completed," (Putnam & Roloff, 1992, p. 234). Understanding, trust and representation are also necessary, but not sufficient for the members of the stakeholder group to agree with decisions made during consensus building processes, and for implementation to be successful.

> "One reason the solutions are unsatisfactory is that they are often not accepted by the public. ... This problem occurs because parties who gave input do not know if or how their interests were considered during decision making, (Delecq, 1974; Wondolleck, 1985). Because parties are not privy to the process by which their interests and those of others are evaluated, those who gave input initially often feel betrayed when the final solution does not satisfy their requests (Carpenter and Kennedy, 1988), The problem of acceptance increases if the decision threatens basic values or creates a situation of high perceived risks for some stakeholders (Klein, 1976)." (Gray, 1989, p. 111).

Involving people and honestly caring about their concerns can build trust and credibility, and improve the relationship between the public and decision makers (Hance, 1988). Improving the transparency of the consensus building process can increase the level of trusts in the consensus solution, especially if the solution requires action or behavior change by the stakeholder groups. Improving trust in decision making will make the implementation of decisions easier, because there will be less conflict.

For stakeholder groups to trust and accept consensus solutions, they must understand the issues under discussion, they must feel their inputs are welcome and being heard (i.e., that their concerns are being addressed), and that they can trust the information that the consensus building process generates. The consensus building process can ensure that negotiators at the table understand the issues under discussion by employing well-trained facilitators. Facilitators manage the dialogue so that all stakeholders at the negotiating table have the opportunity to voice their opinions and have the attentions of other stakeholders. Facilitators can also stop the discussion if they notice someone appears to not understand the issues under discussion, and have someone clarify the issues. Ensuring intra-stakeholder communication is far more difficult. I interviewed members of one consensus building process to help facilitators understand how SGRs represented their constituencies and executed intra-stakeholder communication, called the Northern Oxford County Coalition (NOCC).

Chapter 2: The NOCC Case

The Conflict

Some residents were concerned that the major business and employer in the Rumford, ME was causing air quality and health problems. For many decades, Boise Cascade, owned a paper mill that has complied with all relevant environmental laws. Yet some residents expressed fears that emissions from the plant have caused elevated cancer rates in the Androscoggin valley. Still other residents were worried that unsubstantiated charges of elevated cancer rates cast the region in a negative light, hindering economic development and threatening the valley's quality of life.

Residents took advantage of the only avenue they could use to express their concerns, a re-licensing hearing for the paper mill's permits. Seeing the obvious rift in the community, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) initiated a public involvement effort and formed a coalition, known as the Northern Oxford County Coalition (NOCC), to investigate the claims of poor local air quality and fear of cancer.

The initial version of the NOCC formally began meeting in September 1993 and was facilitated by Steven Howards of Environmental Strategies in Colorado (Meeting Summary, July 13, 1995).[1] Because of the distance between Colorado and Maine, and the expense of travel for the facilitator, it was not feasible for Mr. Howards to continue facilitating the NOCC (Agency Interview, 1997). In April of 1995, the Consensus Building Institute, a non-profit dispute resolution firm specializing in environmental issues, was hired to facilitate the NOCC. I have worked with CBI and the NOCC since September of 1995.

The NOCC is an ad hoc partnership of local residents, businesses, health care providers, and local government officials from the four towns of Rumford, Mexico, Peru, and Dixfield. State and federal government agencies are also represented on the NOCC. More specifically, the NOCC consists of key stakeholders in the valley, including representatives from town government, state elected officials, schools, business interests, the local paper workers union, the pulp and paper mill, local physicians and registered nurses, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (BOH), and the US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1 (EPA).

The NOCC's Consensus Building Process

The NOCC works by consensus, assisted by a team of facilitators. Consensus building means that all groups with an interest in air quality and public health (in this case) came together to talk, share information, discuss concerns and viewpoints, and make joint decisions. There is no voting in the consensus building processes. Instead, members of the group reach agreements that meet the interests of all participating stakeholder groups. Consensus on specific issues was tentative, pending an agreement on all issues being considered.

Although the NOCC had no power to make decisions like setting the plant's emission levels, the NOCC is not without influence. The NOCC was involved in joint fact finding. The NOCC's objective was to decide what information was available, how to use the available information, and how to get information that was not available. After data was collected, the NOCC made recommendations to local, state, and regional decision makers about what should be done based on information the NOCC accumulated. The NOCC also organized programs to improve the

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[1] All documents produced by the NOCC are considered drafts until consensus is reached on all decisions at the end of the process.

general health of the valley residents as well as to inform the public about the results of data gathering. Basically, the NOCC decided what decisions they made, and the facilitators provided a process to help them make decisions.

Choosing information to be used in decision making was not an easy task. There are many confounding factors to consider. There was too much information available about air quality and public health for the NOCC to look at all of it. Each stakeholder group wanted to use the information that best supported their position. Considering that over the years there were from six to eight stakeholder groups, there was a great deal of conflict about whose information to use. Much of the information was very technical, and the NOCC wanted to conduct its own scientific studies. To do this, the NOCC enlisted the help of technical experts. Again, all stakeholder groups wanted to use technical experts who favor their position. And again, there was conflict over whose advice to take. Each stakeholder did not trust the expert that other stakeholder recommended. The consensus building process needed to help the stakeholders make decisions about information and technical experts that all parties could trust.

There are two levels of trust that need to be considered for the NOCC to achieve its objectives. One is trust within NOCC, so that the group could gather information needed to make recommendations to residents and decision makers. The other level of trust was external to the group. The residents and decision makers need to trust the NOCC for the NOCC's recommendations to initiate further action to improve air quality and public health. For residents and decision makers to trust the NOCC's decisions, community members must feel that their concerns were being voiced by a stakeholder group.

Trust, once lost, is not easily restored. The residents of Rumford, Maine are concerned about air quality and public health. They receive bits and pieces of information from many places: the news; local businesses; friends and neighbors; health care providers; government agencies; and community organizations. To the residents, some of these sources of information seem more trustworthy than others. There was no agreement as to which sources are trustworthy and which ones were not. Different sources were trustworthy to different people. This was no surprise. What was surprising was that the residents of this town, with their opposing views, came together to talk and to decide how they could obtain trustworthy and reliable information.

Stakeholder Analysis
To ensure that concerns from all segments of the community and decision makers were represented on the NOCC, the facilitators performed a stakeholder analysis. A stakeholder analysis was a summary of concerns of people who care about air quality and public health in the valley. The facilitators conducted over 48 interviews to determine the range of concerns in the community. The interviews ranged from 35 to 60 minutes in length (Stakeholder Analysis, 1995).

The facilitators interviewed all NOCC members, anyone who had attended a NOCC meeting, all people NOCC members recommended, and anyone that an interviewee recommended. Interviewing was an iterative process that continued until the facilitators were recommended names of people they has already interviewed. Concerns were summarized in the stakeholder analysis without attribution. People with similar concerns were identified as a stakeholder group. Ideally, the NOCC would contain representatives for all stakeholder groups, so that all segments of the population would feel represented.

The NOCC's stakeholder analysis seemed to capture the concerns that I heard at NOCC meetings. NOCC members seemed to agree: "One participant stressed that most of what was in the stakeholder analysis had been said and heard already, but that the analysis did 'get what was out there.' Another stated that there did not seem to be any objections from members around the table about the report. Still others stated that it 'captured the disparity of views and put them down on paper,'" (Meeting Summary, June 6, 1995, p. 4). In this respect, the interviewing process was effective.

Since the NOCC was already meeting when CBI became involved, the analysis could be reflecting concerns of members who were continuing their membership on the NOCC, and not accurately reflecting the concerns of most valley residents. Because of this, it is difficult to tell if the NOCC is representative of and trusted by the residents and decision makers. It is difficult to determine if the NOCC represents the residents of the valley, for two reasons. The process was not finished at the time this research was conducted. To this point, no group had claimed that they were left out. The NOCC had released updates on NOCC activities, but did not issue its final recommendations. The other problem determining if the stakeholder analysis was effective was that many community members were not willing to express their opinions. There was a concern in the community that anyone who spoke out against the paper mill would suffer repercussions: "It is difficult to tell whether there is apathy in the community or a fear of speaking out," (Stakeholder Analysis, 1995, p. 9). Therefore, it is difficult to tell if these people's concerns were being represented in the NOCC.

The stakeholder analysis identified eight stakeholder groups. The groups identified in the analysis were: state and federal government officials; state and local elected officials; business; labor unions; citizens; health care providers; environmental advocates, and; non-governmental organizations. There were representatives for six stakeholder groups represented on the NOCC. Environmental advocates and non-governmental organizations were not official stakeholder groups.

This may or may not present a problem for the stability of the NOCC's recommendations when issued. If a group who feels un-represented dislikes the NOCC's final recommendations, then the recommendations may be challenged. Or, the valley residents may feel represented, because the concerns of the two un-represented groups were represented by another stakeholder group. It was stated in the stakeholder analysis that several of the people interviewed fit into two and even three of the identified stakeholder groups. Again, it is too early to tell if the NOCC's representation is sufficient to yield a stable outcome.

Mission Statement and Groundrules
Before the NOCC could address substantive issues of air quality and public health, the members agreed on groundrules, a mission statement, and a work plan. Members attended a full day retreat to discuss goals, representation, and process. Members were introduced to the process of consensus building, the mutual gains approach, and the perception, assessment, and management of risk.

By consensus, the NOCC determined its mission to be, "to improve the quality of life in the valley by protecting and promoting public health and enhancing air quality," (Mission Statement and Goals, 1995). The NOCC planned to fulfill its mission by reaching many smaller goals. Some of the goals were: to document current levels of air quality and the state of public health; to inform and educate members of the coalition and the public about air quality and its

relationship to public health; to identify and recommend actions that government and local stakeholders might take to reduce risks, and; to recommend monitoring strategies if appropriate.

Groundrules were established to help the group work together at the negotiation table. The groundrules are also adopted by consensus agreement among stakeholder representatives. The groundrules included: not interrupting while someone else was speaking; expressing one's own views, not the views of others at the table; no one making personal attacks; and allowing everyone at the table an opportunity to speak, by no one person dominating the discussions. The groundrules were not static. (See attached).

To fulfill their mission, NOCC members must collect and interpret scientific information. The first task the NOCC undertook was to gather available data. The NOCC accumulated information about the operations of pulp and paper mills, epidemiological studies of workers of paper mills and communities where plants are located, and news reports of similar communities. They also found a 1990 Hazard Evaluation and Technical Assistance Report prepared by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) that concluded a probable health hazard existed within the Boise Cascade mill (September Draft Meeting Summary, 1995). And a 1993 report by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services concluded that "health based guidelines" pertaining to long term exposures, primarily cancer, were exceeded for at least three air toxics in Rumford (September Draft Meeting Summary, 1995). The same department also provided data from the Chronic Disease Surveillance Study and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Study. In addition, evidence was found that indicated there are high levels of radon in the Rumford. The NOCC is grappling with interrelated issues of cancer rates, air toxics, and radon.

The Role of Sub-committees
The NOCC used sub-committees to delve into more detail on specific issues. Sub-committees were smaller groups of members who will carry out tasks, perform administrative functions, and discuss complex or technical facets of issues. The sub-committees met in addition to regular NOCC meetings. NOCC members would join a sub-committee if they had an interest in the issue the sub-committee was formed to address, if they possessed a skill or resource the sub-committee needed, or to ensure representation of a broader range of interests. Throughout the course of the NOCC's work, several sub-committees were utilized, including: a Steering Committee; the Technical Sub-committee (TSC); the Public Health Sub-committee (PHS); the Air Quality Sub-committee (AQS), and; the Radon Group.

The NOCC sub-committees undertook a variety of assignments. The Steering Committee's job was to oversee administration of the NOCC and approve spending. The Technical Sub-committee was formed to look at scientific data, like epidemiological studies, cancer information, and the design of further cancer inquiry. The Public Health Sub-committee was responsible for a variety of health related tasks including finding ways to improve community health and designing additional health studies. Investigating air quality, finding ways to promote pollution prevention, and determining ambient levels of suspect pollutants were tasks handled by the Air Quality Sub-committee. And, increasing public awareness about indoor air pollution was the goal of the Radon Group. The accomplishments of these sub-committees are described in more detail under discussion of specific projects.

Results from the Cancer Report

Most NOCC members agreed early in the process that they were concerned about cancer rates, which were heightened with a TV news story that called the Androscoggin River Valley "Cancer Valley," (Goad, 1995). After reviewing the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) study, valley residents felt their concern was confirmed. The NIOSH study found that people who worked at the Boise Cascade plant were at greater risk for blood, lymphatic, stomach, lung and bladder cancers. The NOCC decided they wanted to determine if there were higher rates of cancer in the valley and what cancers were of special concern.

After collecting relevant data, the NOCC formed a Technical Sub-Committee (TSC). The TSC consisted of NOCC members who had experience or training in technical fields. The facilitators tried to assure a balance of stakeholder interests on the TSC, so that the NOCC and the community would feel their interests are reflected in the activities of the TSC. The TSC was charged with reviewing previous studies, identifying technical experts, designing a study of cancer rates, and helping to educate NOCC members.

On April 9, 1996, the "Draft" Cancer Report was presented to the NOCC. The Cancer Report's goals were to: "1) describe the patterns of cancer incidence; 2) determine if there are excess rates of one or more cancers; 3) use these data in the design of further studies to understand these patterns, if necessary; and 4) recommend strategies for improving the health of residents," (A Report on Cancer Incidence in the Rumford, Maine Area (or the Cancer Report), 1996, page 4). The Cancer Report compared the rates of cancers in the valley to rates in the state of Maine, to US rates, and to the US Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results' rates (or SEER).

Some cancers were found to be elevated in the Rumford area. The Cancer Report found that respiratory, male genital system, and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma were elevated in males. Endocrine system and colon cancers were found to be elevated in females. Other cancers were found to be elevated, but were not statistically significant.

The publishing of the Cancer Report raised concerns about the validity of the results. Many members of the NOCC raised concerns about under-reporting to the Cancer Registry, (the data base the cancer report was derived from) because of reporting problems in the early years of data collection. Some members expressed a desire to verify the Cancer Report's results by reviewing other sources of cancer information such as death certificates or hospital discharge data. Other members felt that a community health survey or a survey of local health care providers would be more productive. Future health studies could be done to verify the Cancer Report's results. The NOCC may recommend that additional studies be undertaken by government agencies or the NOCC may perform additional studies.

Public Outreach: Distribution of the NOCC Brochure
In February of 1997, the NOCC mailed an informational brochure to all residents in the Rumford area. Raising public awareness and education were goals that NOCC members reached consensus on early in the process. The brochure was seen as one way to publicize the work of the NOCC, and to educate area residents about the issues NOCC was addressing.

The brochure summarized the work of the NOCC. The results of the Cancer Incidence Report were presented. The report also explained the NOCC's efforts at monitoring air quality by measuring forty-one pollutants. The three air toxics found to be higher than the state guidelines. The report noted possible sources of the toxics.

The brochure also highlighted the NOCC's plans for future work. At the time the brochure was published, the NOCC was starting to look into the feasibility of pollution prevention at the mill, and at conducting a radon study. (The pollution prevention effort and the radon study are discussed in more detail following.) Also presented were options for future actions that the NOCC was considering undertaking.

The brochure provided residents with access to additional information. After the summaries of current and future projects, the brochure included names and phone numbers that residents could call for additional information about the projects of interest. In addition, all stakeholder groups were listed with the names of the representatives of the stakeholder groups so that any member of a stakeholder group would know who was representing their interests on the NOCC. Finally, the brochure indicated how residents could participate on the NOCC, and who to contact if they wanted to join.

Air Quality Monitoring and Modeling
The NOCC monitored three air toxics from 1991. Three hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) were found to be above the state guideline, chloroform, benzene, and 1,3 butadiene. Additional monitoring was being planned at the time of this report to confirm the preliminary findings of the earlier air monitoring study.

The Air Quality Sub-committee discussed a program for hazardous air pollutant monitoring and modeling plan in the Rumford area. The EPA, the DEP, and the BOH worked with the NOCC to identify goals and to monitor 40 hazardous air pollutants. Additional monitoring could be used to record a baseline level of pollutants, from which future comparisons could be measured. Establishing a baseline is important for the area, because the paper mill is installing a new chlorine free bleaching process. With a baseline measurement, the NOCC would be able to track improvements in air quality from changes in mill processes.

The NOCC discussed HAPs modeling to assess the location of the three air monitoring sites and to suggest alternative sites if they are found to be more appropriate. The DEP and the EPA were interested in conducting HAPs modeling, because it would provide them an opportunity to validate modeling in a complex environment. The air modeling program was a controversial subject for the NOCC, because the combination of HAPs monitoring and modeling will provide information for use in human exposure assessment and health risk assessments. The paper mill was concerned modeling would provide the EPA and the ME DEP with information that could be used to require further emission control measures.

Pollution Prevention (P2)
The NOCC discussed how to initiate pollution prevention practices for industry, small businesses, and residents in the four town area. The mill worked with the DEP and the EPA to find places where pollution prevention is feasible. The mill agreed to reduce air pollution by eliminating its chlorine bleaching process.

The Air Quality Sub-committee sponsored an educational breakfast called, "Eggs and Issues Small Business P2." The local Chamber of Commerce and appropriate town officials were invited to the breakfast to learn about what P2 options were available and how P2 can result in cost savings. The Peru town garage underwent a P2 audit with the ME DEP pollution prevention specialists. This audit was also discussed. In addition to the P2 breakfast, the AQS considered options for household P2 and a household hazardous waste pick up day.

Radon Project
The Radon Group, a NOCC subcommittee, organized a public education and home radon testing project. With resource and technical assistance for the EPA and the BOH, the radon group distributed almost 500 free radon test kits to single-family homeowners in the four towns. The radon test kits were given to homeowners with instructions and a short survey. After using the one week test, homeowners were instructed to mail the postage-paid kits to the EPA laboratory for analysis. Confidential radon results were sent homeowners, as well as information about radon mitigation.

The Radon Group also received the radon results coded only by zip code. Homeowners' radon results were aggregated by town to determine the percentage of homes found to have radon levels above the EPA action level of 4 picocuries per liter air (4 pc/l). Of the 406 radon test kits analyzed, 110 (or 27%) were found to exceed the EPA action level. The aggregated results were reported in local news papers and on television news in Portland, ME.

As a follow-up to the publication of the radon results, the Radon Group organized a public education meeting that focused on radon mitigation. A representative from the EPA reviewed the results from the Radon Project. The BOH discussed the information collected from the survey included in the test kits, and methods and costs of radon mitigation techniques. In addition, ME state certified radon mitigation specialists, and loan officers from local banks attended the meeting to provide information about the services they offered. A lengthy question and answer session gave the Radon Group feedback about what was missing from the project. A fact sheet was developed and distributed to respond the additional questions and concerns expressed at the public meeting.

Healthy Communities: Planning for Improved Public Health
The NOCC's Public Health Sub-committee (PHS) searched for ways to improve the health of residents of the four towns. In addition to collecting data on the status of health, and proposing further epidemiological studies, the PHS recommended that the communities organize a Healthy Communities program.

In February of 1997, the PHS sponsored a meeting of community leaders in the Rumford area to learn more about ME's Healthy Communities Program. The Healthy Communities model suggests that communities organize themselves to address local problems. Local groups concerned about the health of their community, such as local health organizations, schools, town government officials, and concerned citizens form a board to plan ways to improve the health and welfare of residents. An early step of the Health Communities model is to conduct a community health needs survey to determine residents' opinions about what problems their community has, and what health services are needed.

Over forty community members expressed their support at the introductory meeting. The mill pledged $5,000 in start-up funding, and a local hospital and a home health care facility both committed staff time and office space for the program. The NOCC also pledged funding of $10,000 for start-up funds, work on respiratory illness, and a meeting to educate local health care providers about asthma diagnosis and treatment.

The Final Product: The Outcome of Consensus

March 1997, the NOCC began planning for its final project, a document that explains NOCC accomplishments and the recommendations for future action in the Rumford area. The report will explain who the NOCC was and what its goals were. NOCC activities will be described, including: the Radon Project, the Cancer Incidence Report, health promotion activities and data collected; the air monitoring efforts and data; the status of pollution prevention efforts, and; possibly information about dioxin.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Research Question

How did stakeholder group participants in the NOCC's consensus building process perceive their role as representatives? And, did their views about their representational responsibilities influence the way they communicated with their stakeholder groups?

Method

I invited all 24 currently active NOCC members to participate in my research and interviewed all who agreed. I conducted interviews with 12 NOCC members. These include five of the six stakeholder groups. NOCC members were sent letters describing the research and the topics the questions would cover. The letter was followed with phone calls. Thus, participation in the research was completely voluntary. Members were assured anonymity.

All interviews were conducted over the phone, and lasted from twenty to seventy minutes. These were all individuals who I had previously met in person. An interview protocol was developed to guide interviews, but all questions were open-ended (See attached). Each interview was taped, summarized, and analyzed. Interviewees were asked to give their opinions about the responsibilities of stakeholder group representatives, their views on how they acted as representatives, their goals as a NOCC member, and to describe instances of intra-stakeholder communication.

SGRs were also asked for the name of a stakeholder group member who did not serve on the NOCC. I asked NOCC members to select a stakeholder member with whom they discussed the work of the NOCC. I conducted phone interviews with one stakeholder group member from each of the stakeholder groups: a citizen; a town official; a health care provider, and; a labor union member. Stakeholder group members were asked: what they expected from SGRs; what responsibilities stakeholder members have, and; how information is transmitted. Interviews lasted ten to twenty minutes.

My research strategy may have introduced various kinds of bias. My sampling method, for instance, was neither random nor stratified. It was "opportunistic," in that I interviewed all those who agreed to participate. If there are some systematic difference between NOCC members who agreed to be interviewed and those who refused, this may decrease the validity of my results. Although I can say on this point, given my knowledge of all the participants, that I do not see any serious differences among those who agreed and those who did not participate. Only current NOCC members were asked to respond. The membership of the NOCC has changed throughout the two and a half year process. Past NOCC members who left the process were not included. In addition, due to the fact that only one stakeholder member from each stakeholder group was interviewed, I cannot say if opinions of those interviewed are widely held in the stakeholder group.

The NOCC's efforts have gone on for a long time, and the interviews were conducted toward the end of the process. The data reflect only what participants remembered at the time of the interviews. Therefore, members' answers probably reflected their most recent opinions and communications, and not what occurred earlier. And, if asked the questions again, the answers might be different. What the interviews did produce is stories about how participants in a consensus building process saw their roles as representatives of various publics and how the participants attempted to send and received information.

Conducting the interviews close to the end of the NOCC's formal process seemed appropriate. NOCC members may have increased communication with their stakeholder group members as the issuance of the NOCC's final recommendations drew near. Interviews may yield more accurate reflections of stakeholder communication, but may tend to overestimate the level of communication that occurred.

Finally, I make suggestions about how facilitators of consensus building processes can help stakeholder representatives improve communication with their stakeholder groups. Suggestions are based, in part, on comments from SGRs, and on personal observations of the consensus process.

Chapter 4 - Representation Categories

From the interviews, I identified four categories of representation. These were: speaking like one of them; speaking on their behalf; speaking for the NOCC, and; bringing skills or resources to the table. Most NOCC members described themselves as representatives in more than one way. That is, throughout the process they represented their stakeholder group using different modes of representation. Thus these categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, SGRs could see themselves as both speaking like their stakeholder group and speaking for their stakeholder group. The categories of representation types was inclusive, in that all NOCC members interviewed could be sorted into at least one of the categories.

Speaking Like One of Them

SGRs saw themselves as being representatives of their stakeholder group because they saw themselves as not significantly different from other members. SGRs may act as individuals, but feel justified in doing so because their view of the issues was similar to the views of their stakeholder group. In this case, SGRs viewed themselves as being just like others in the stakeholder group because they had similar experiences, or lived or worked in the same area for a long time. Some SGRs speak for "others" like those who cannot be at the discussion, such as future generations or environmental interests.

Speaking on Their Behalf

This category consisted of SGRs who recognized that their personal view may or may not agree with what they saw as the desires of their stakeholder group's views on issues. They represented both their own views and the possibly conflicting views of members of their stakeholder group. Also included were SGRs who believed that they were speaking for individuals in their group who could not speak for themselves. In some cases, SGRs spoke for people who may suffer repercussions if they were to speak for themselves.

Speaking for the NOCC

SGRs who felt that they were informing, educating, or influencing the opinions of their stakeholder group members. SGRs who saw representation as opinion leaders were at the table gathering information for use by their stakeholder group. These NOCC members saw their job as representing the view of the NOCC to their stakeholder group. This was a kind of reverse representation in that instead of representing the views of the stakeholder group to the NOCC, these SGRs represented the views and findings of the NOCC to their stakeholder group.

Bringing Knowledge and Resources to the Table

Some SGRs were at the table representing their stakeholder group, because they possessed special skills or resources that they brought to the NOCC. In some cases, the organization that the SGR was associated with possessed the resources or skill. In other cases, the NOCC members themselves had special skills that they felt were important for the NOCC's work. For some SGRs, representing by bringing skills or resources was stated as being part of the SGR's job description, although not all were paid for being a NOCC member. Many of the SGRs in this category were responsible for representing their stakeholder group in other forums.

Elements of Representation
Although there were many ways one could act as a representative, key elements describe the differences among the types of representation. In my analysis of representation in the NOCC, I considered the relationship among SGRs and constituents in their stakeholder groups in terms of: accountability; similarity of interests, and communication.

Accountability
Most types of representation include some form of accountability. Elected government officials are held accountable by voters of the next election. Legislative institutions are held accountable to the voters by checks and balances designed to ensure that no single branch controls too much power. Stakeholder group representatives also were accountable to the members of their stakeholder group. Most literature on negotiation dealt with the need for representatives at the bargaining table to be held accountable to their constituents. Unfortunately what is often left unsaid is how this should to be accomplished.

In consensus building, accountability comes in many forms. Some SGRs were working for an organization, like a business or a government agency. Being a representative of the organization was considered a part of these SGRs jobs. The organization held the SGRs accountable for their actions during the negotiation by forming an agreement about how the SGR would perform, how performance would be evaluated, and the flexibility the SGR would be afforded. In some cases, SGR performance was evaluated by direct observation, or surveillance by stakeholder members, who may be supervisors. In other instances, oversight was achieved by formal communications or debriefings after a negotiation session. For these SGRs, accountability was tied to job performance, promotions, or even salary advances.

There were also stakeholder groups that did not have institutionalized norms and practices that guide how spokespeople represent their constituents. Often the "public" or the community was represented by an ad hoc group of citizens. The individuals who became self-selected representatives of the community often did not have a clear role, or a sense of who they were accountable. "Unlike elected officials with statutory authority, ad hoc representatives are rarely empowered to commit their members to anything. They should, however, be in a good position to shuttle back and forth between the negotiating group and the people they represent. Their task is not to speak for their constituents, but to speak with them." (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987, p. 105).

In my interviews, I considered only what NOCC members told me about their stakeholder groups and how they were held accountable, if at all. In some cases, members noted that they were elected to their positions, and other NOCC members were assigned to represent their organizations as a part of their jobs. Some NOCC members did not mention any form of accountability. This either means that they did not feel accountable to anyone, their stakeholder group trusts the NOCC member to represent without a formal agreement, or that the NOCC members just did not discuss accountability during the interview.

Similarity Of Interests
In some instances, a representative should believe and support the same things as their constituents. A representative with similar goals in a negotiation as her or his constituents has a better understanding of why the constituents have taken a position. Some constituents may feel more comfortable with a representative who shares their own views because it is assumed that the representative will work harder or more passionately to obtain the goal.

For example, voters who think that taxes are too high vote for a legislator who proposes a major tax cut. The idea is that there is a better chance that voters are more likely to get lower taxes from a legislator who proclaims to have similar views. Problems arise when the legislator is voted into office and proposes a major tax increase. When representatives work to satisfy their own interests instead of the interests of their constituents, it is termed a principle / agent problem (Arrow, et al., 1995; Bamberg & Spremann, 1987; Zeckhauser, 1991).

In some cases, divergence of interests may not pose a problem. Problems caused by mis-alignment of interests can be minimized by providing incentives to persuade the representative to align with the constituent group, or to monitor the representative to assure alignment (Zeckhauser, 1991). For example, for representatives who are employees of the organization they are representing, promotions or salary increases may provide enough incentive to persuade the representative to act as though their interests are aligned with the interests of the organization. Or, if a supervisor attends meetings with the representative, this too may ensure alignment of interests. In other cases, as with lawyers, there are agreements made with an oversight organization, like the Bar Association, that are intended to ensure that professionals act in the best interest of their client. If the professional does not act in the interest of their client, clients have formal channels to file grievances.

In my research, I am unable to determine whether or not the interests of the SGRs were the same as the interests of the stakeholder group. I looked for statements of whether the SGR believed that their views were aligned with the interests of their stakeholder group, and why they believed it.

Communication
Communication between representatives and constituents is essential. One of the many problems with the US form of representative democracy is that it is difficult to keep informed about political debates, even issues about which we care. Unless, you make it a daily habit to read the Federal Register, you may not know a debate or a vote is happening until it is over. To provide input to a representative, you must know the issue is being discussed, know who your representative is, know how to contact the representative, and have a representative that is actively listening to your concerns. Therefore, interaction between representatives and constituents is an important aspect of representation.

In consensus building, a SGRs' role is "primarily to amplify the concerns of larger groups, to carry messages and information to them, and to return with a sense of the group's willingness to commit to whatever consensus emerges." (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987, p. 105). If communication occurs between the SGR and every person in the stakeholder group, then it is more likely that the consensus decision will be accepted by a larger portion of the stakeholder group. On the other hand, if the communication occurs only between the SGR and a few members of the stakeholder group, problems with the consensus decision may occur.

> "During the negotiation phase, make sure that your group and its spokesperson stay in close communication. It is extremely important that representatives not get too far ahead of their membership. Education and progress at the table must be matched by a growing understanding of the process on the part of all constituent stakeholders. If parallel progress does not occur, ratification will be difficult." (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987, p. 209).

Not only is it important for representatives to communicate with as many constituents as possible, it is imperative that the communication occurs throughout the process. Continuous communication is important, because "priorities are likely to change during a negotiation because initial priorities and positions are nearly always based on incomplete, often false, information. ... Therefore, each representative must continuously confront constituents about what is attainable and what trade-offs and compromises they must make to achieve their most important objectives." (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987, p. 28). Communication is undoubtedly an important aspect of representation, but knowing with whom, and when communication among a stakeholder group is occurring is also important.

To analyze communication in the NOCC process, I looked at the interaction between SGR and members of their stakeholder group. I considered two aspects of the interactions between SGRs and their stakeholder groups, breadth and intensity. I discuss the direction of communication, or whether information was sent out to the stakeholder group or information was sent to the SGR. By breadth of interactions, I looked at how widely information about the NOCC was transmitted. I also considered to or from whom information was sent or received, if position within the stakeholder group was important. Because the NOCC's efforts continued for over two years, it was impossible to count the number of times SGRs interacted with stakeholder members. Therefore, intensity of interactions looked at when interactions among stakeholder members and the SGR occur throughout the process.

Chapter 5 - Speaking Like One of Them

Some NOCC members believed that their roles as a representative were to "speak like" one of the people they were supposed to represent. In other words, the SGRs I interviewed thought that their view was like the views of other members of their stakeholder group. I placed people in the "speak like one of them," or "likeness" category when they made statements about characteristics they shared with other stakeholder group members. All SGRs in the "likeness" group were long-standing members of the Rumford area community. SGRs interviewed lived in the Rumford area from 12 to 68 years, with an average of almost 34 years. SGRs lived and worked in the area, so they believed that they knew what others in the community were thinking.

Members of the Citizen SG,[2] considered themselves to be like other citizens, because they all resided and worked in the same area. A Citizen SGR stated, "I lived here all my life. My mother died of cancer. I don't know what caused it. But anyway, I worked in the mill for 29 years. I've been out of the mill for 20 years." Another Citizen SGR said, "My family has been in this town many, many years, since 1922. And my father's worked in the mill, and I know everyone, and I think I know their attitudes about as good as anybody."

Another Citizen SGR noted she felt she was both like and unlike other citizens, "We have lived here for 38 years and my husband taught in both Rumford and Mexico, and I have been involved in a laundry list of community things." This Citizen representative also saw her role as a representative extending farther than just citizens to include interests represented in other stakeholder groups. She recognized that citizens were affected not only because of their proximity to the mill, but also as employees, business owners, environmental interests, doctors, school teachers, etc.

Other SGRs in the "likeness" category were also residents of the area, but were not representing Citizens. These SGRs expressed how they felt a duel affiliation to their stated SG as well as to citizens. An Elected Official felt that she represented the members of a town government board, "I feel very comfortable in terms of how I relate to my board. I feel that that those people share my views." But as an Elected Official, this SGR also felt as if she was representing the citizens of the town who elected her as well as the Elected Officials.

The Labor group believed they were representing the views of the members of the labor union. These SGRs were not only members of the labor union, but worked at the same mill and faced similar issues. One Labor SGR stated, "We have worked, since as long as I can remember, as a local which represents the vast majority of people that work at the mill and their families that live in the community toward the idea that we are going to have continuous improvement within the mill."

Another Labor SGR felt that she was a representative of Labor, because she was a union member and a worker who was affected by the issues that the NOCC was discussing. "Our goal is to improve our working conditions, life expectancy, and safety, because we have a lot of occupational diseases and pulp and paper workers live lower than average life expectancy." This Labor representative was also interested in health and safety improvements in the workplace, "in many cases we can substitute toxics, reduce, and use better engineering methods to contain the

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[2] When referring to a SGR from a particular stakeholder group, the names of NOCC stakeholder groups are capitalized.

various materials, toxics and otherwise, that are used and by-produced in the paper making process."

Both SGRs of the Health Care Providers SG saw themselves as representing both their stakeholder group and other citizens of the community. One SGR stated that her interest in the NOCC started as part of her job, but that she was also participating because she was a long-standing member of the Rumford community. Being a member of the NOCC enabled her "to meet other people who wanted to be actively involved in doing something in their community. ... As time went on, I saw myself not just as a representative of the [Health Care Providers], but as a citizen to some extent."

The other representative of Health Care expressed similar thought, "I have been in this community for about 25 years, and been in health care for about 25 years. Working in an agency that provides health care, we work a lot with people in the community. I was very interested in being part of it, because my initial understanding was, basically what we are doing is looking at health in the area. There has always been a lot talk about the mill and how they affect health in the area. It really looked like an opportunity to gather some good facts. And, I wanted to be a part of that. So I saw my part as representing a segment of the Health Care Providers, but also as a citizen to learn more about what is happening."

The interesting characteristic of the "likeness" designation was that in some way all the SGRs felt they were representing citizens, even if this was not their formal stakeholder group with the NOCC. Even Labor believed they represented the families of union members, who were citizens. Since all of the SGRs lived in the area over decade, and the community was relatively small, it was likely that they would know if they were substantially different from other citizens -- as one SGR noted.

Accountability of SGRs to SG Members
Only three of the eight people in the "likeness" group mentioned that they had a formal agreement about how they were accountable to their constituencies, but no SGRs were elected to serve on the NOCC. Two SGRs were elected to their job positions, which included the task of serving on the NOCC. One other SGR was appointed to serve on the NOCC, because of the position she held in the labor union.

The other five SGRs, who felt that they represented citizens of the Rumford area because they were like other citizens, made no mention of how they were accountable to Citizens. I know that members were not formally elected, nominated, nor appointed by residents. Thus, I feel comfortable saying that NOCC members representing citizens had no formal agreement of accountability.

Although I have no data to support this, it may be that social ties act as an unspoken accountability agreement. Because the SGRs resided in the area for so long and do not seem to be interested in leaving, they would not commit their stakeholder group to a consensus solution that did not satisfy their SGs' interests. If they did agree to a poor consensus solution, they would have to face their friends and neighbors and explain their actions.

For the NOCC, social ties may work well as a form of accountability. Three SGRs mentioned that they believed they heard most comments and concerns of their SG members, because they live in small towns. In the four towns, there are less than 15,000 people. And because the SGRs

in this category lived in the area for an average of thirty-four years, the SGRs believed they knew most residents. In small towns with long-term residents it is more likely that SGRs will feel strong social ties with other residents. For the NOCC's process, social ties may be strong enough to serve as a means of accountability. In larger towns or cities, it is less likely that SG members will personally know their SGR, and additional methods of accountability may be needed.

Alignment of SGRs' Interests with SG Members
NOCC members stated their opinions on the issues, but none stated where they felt stakeholder group members were on the issues. Two members stated that they were environmentalist, but did not explain if they believed that others were too. One Citizen SGR did state that her views were somewhat different from other SG members, "I am kind of a maverick. ... But I think I am probably more liberal, more interested in change than a lot of people." Although this member sees herself as more liberal, the statement does not speak to whether or not their views on the NOCC issues were the same.

SGRs may not have mentioned alignment of interests either because they know that their interests were the same. As many of the SGRs told me, Rumford is a small community. It is not inconceivable that SGRs spoke to a large percentage of the members of their stakeholder group, either directly or indirectly (through hearsay). As will be show in the next two sections, much of the intra-stakeholder communication occurred "on the street." SGRs may not have discussed alignment of interests because it is not an issue for them, because they know they are representing their SGs' views.

The other explanation may be that SGRs assumed that their interests were the same as the interests of other members. These SGRs believed that they were like other members in their stakeholder group. This was evidenced by the statement by a Citizen SGR who thought the role of the SGR was to "just sit and listen and come up with your opinions." She did not mention aligning her interests with the interests of other stakeholder members. The SGRs may believe that since they were not significantly different from their stakeholder group, that their priorities on NOCC issues were also the same. The perception of likeness could extend beyond the physicalities of living and working in the same area, to having a similar view on community issues.

An Elected Official stakeholder group member noted that he believed two NOCC members represented him, because he shared characteristics with each of the SGRs. When asked who he felt represented his views and concerns on the NOCC, the SG members stated, "As a community person, probably [the Elected Official SGR]." The SG member felt represented by the Elected Official SGR, because they both served on the same board. In addition, both the SGR and the SG member expressed that the environment, or the outdoors were very important.

The SG member continued by saying, "I also work in the paper mill, I'm supervisor of the effluent treatment plant. So I have some exposure on the industrial side as well." As a mill employee, the SG member stated that he was represented by the two Business SGRs. "[The Elected Official] is very concerned about the environment. ... But I would go along with her concerns, and the recognition that something needs to be done. And enforcement needs to be made to encourage people and industry to be responsible citizens as far as how they treat the environment. On the other hand, people need to recognize that there are livelihoods at stake, and you just can't do everything over night."

SGRs assumed that SG members were aligned with their interests because SG members shared like characteristics. Where interests diverged, SG members aligned with different SGRs with whom they shared the other interests. As a fellow elected official, the Elected Official SGR represented the interests of the SG members. But as a mill employee, this person was also a member of the Business stakeholder group, and felt represented by the Business SGRs.

Breadth of SGRs' Interaction with SG Members
The communication that occurred among SGRs in the "likeness" group and their stakeholder groups ranged from little interaction to updates to small groups. Three of the eight SGRs did not consider intra-stakeholder communications part of their role as a NOCC member. Most of the interactions were initiated by members of the stakeholder group, or SGRs were receiving information. Even though SGRs were receiving information, most of the communication was a two-way exchange of information.

The two of the three SGRs who did not see communication with members of their SG as part of their role of a representative joined the NOCC after the Stakeholder Retreat. At the retreat, the facilitators from CBI explained the consensus building process and defined the roles of SGRs. But, SGRs who joined the NOCC after the retreat received no training about the consensus building process and the role of SGRs. One Citizen SGR stated that no one discussed with her the need to communicate with other citizens, her stakeholder group. She did not know that communicating with her stakeholder group was a task of a SGR. "I thought that the Healthy Communities was going to take over and more or less work in that capacity."

Another SGR did not know that there was a training other NOCC members attended. This SGR stated, "I don't remember getting a global view of the history of the committee. I wasn't clear about where the funding for the committee came from, who is paying CBI. I am not sure of a lot of that and I really don't care as long as we are focused on a particular project or goal -- I am willing to work forward." She also stated that she did not feel that missing the training hindered her performance as a SGR.

The other SGR who did not consider intra-stakeholder communication part of SGRs' responsibility did attend the Stakeholder Retreat. When asked for her thoughts on the retreat and intra-stakeholder communication, she stated, "I am not sure that message came across clearly. And if it did, maybe it needed to be reinforced." This Health Care Provider, who was placed in the "likeness" group because she stated that she represents other citizens too, did not mention any occasion when she spoke to another citizen who was not a member of the Health Care Provider SG.

Three SGRs, who did communicate with their SGs, may be additional proof that the message about intra-stakeholder communication was unclear. These three SGRs believed that intra-stakeholder communication meant talking to other individuals (regardless of which stakeholder group the people were a part of) and persuading them to join the NOCC as a representative. A Labor SGR thought that it was important to maximize alliances on the committee with people who have the same or similar position as you, or to stack the process toward your SG's view. "Well that meant, in my opinion, is that you have got to get more people involved in the process. Because the more people you have on your side, the more people you have to outweigh the other side. Her advice to other SGRs would be to, "find some people that were interested in doing that [supporting your SG's view] then they should get as many people as they can on the coalition in different [stakeholder] group headings ... as many as possible out of community, out of town

government, out of labor unions, out of different groups within this community, and make sure they loaded up the committee."

Another Labor SGR and a Health Care Provider SGR both concurred. The Labor SGR described how she tried to communicate: "We talked it up, and we contacted a lot of people and we got more and more people involved." The Health Care Provider, "saw my role as getting the other people interested so the interest kept on, and providing any information I might have but also being a part of the solution to whatever we found." All of these interactions seemed to be between two people, the NOCC members and the person they were trying to persuade to join the NOCC.

It seemed that the third Citizen SGR did communicate with her SG on an individual level, "I always felt that I am in contact [with my stakeholder group] anyway, because this is such a small town, 1,500 people." But again, this SGR did not accurately receive a message from the facilitators about communication. The NOCC was told that they can talk to the press, but that statements made should be from the SGR personally, and that they should not represent their personal views as a consensus view of the NOCC. The Citizen SGR understood this to mean that she should not make public statements. "I haven't tried to publicly come out and explain our presence or our progress or anything of that nature. A lot of that is due to the guidelines that were set up early along by the NOCC. ... Unlike some members of the NOCC, I followed their rule very strictly." So, not only did this SGR not make public statements herself, she was annoyed that other SGRs did make public statements -- all due to poor communication of SGRs' roles.

Another SGR representing Citizens, spoke to both individuals and another community group. Like other SGRs, the Citizen SGR stated that people will often see her "on the street" and ask her questions about what the NOCC is doing. Again, this form of communication is initiated by the SG, but is a two-way exchange of information. In addition, this SGR sends information out to her SG through updates to a community group. "I would say Rotary is the only group that I'm a permanent member of, but that's a very important group to keep in touch. So periodically, I tell them what we're [the NOCC] up to. Not that they are wildly interested, but at least I remind them what's going on."

Communication that occurred with representatives of the "Speaking like one of them" category are generally two-way exchanges of information that are most often initiated by members of the SGs. Except for one SGR, all the exchanges are between individuals. More communication was hampered by unclear communication roles for SGRs.

It is difficult to determine if a link exists between SGRs' views on representation and how it impacted communication with SG members, because of misunderstandings about how SGRs should interact with SG members. If the SGRs in the "likeness" category did not communicate because facilitators did not clearly define the role of communication in the consensus process, then it is hard to determine how widely SGRs would have communicated. On the other hand, if both SGRs and SG members agree that they share important characteristics that make their views on the issues similar (and there is some evidence of this in the NOCC), the need to communicate to determine the views of SG members is less important. Then, the most important time to communicate would be when the SGR changes her mind on the issues because of new information obtained at the negotiating table -- information that other "like" SG members do not have access.

Occasion for SGRs' Interaction with SG Members

Interactions between SGRs and SG members occurred mostly as chance meetings, were regular updates, or were project related. Most SGRs described conversations with SG members as chance occurrences throughout the course of their usual day. Some chance interactions happened in response to a NOCC project. Two SGRs described how they used meetings held by groups other than the NOCC for intra-stakeholder communication.

The Elected Official relied on an informal network within her town. "You know [the town][3] is a small town." She sees people informally, on the street. The Elected Official also stayed in contact with residents of the town through the Citizen SGR. The Elected Official saw herself as a representative of the town's government, and the Citizen SGR as the representative for residents. The Elected Official and the Citizen SGR had many opportunities to check in with each other at sub-committee meetings or on the street. This Citizen SGR thought that, "If you have a small town I would say that people that are interested are in touch with you."

This same Citizen SGR did not actively interact with her stakeholder group, because she did not see intra-stakeholder communication as an ongoing task. "I would suggest that [SGRs] contact them [members of their stakeholder group] by what ever means they can, but to wait for the appropriate time. I don't feel I have reached that time yet." She stated that the appropriate time would be if she had a substantial disagreement with the group, or when the group publicizes the consensus final agreement.

Another Citizen representative stated that she talked to other citizens about NOCC issues, "not very often. They read the paper. A few of them will ask questions and I'll answer them to the best of ability. But, I am not going out campaigning. I haven't got that kind of time." As events were planned or as information became available, the facilitators issued press releases to local papers, which seemed to encourage SG members to seek out conversations with their SGRs. The third Citizen SGR also interacted with SG members by chance as they hear about the NOCC's work, "It's often very informal, like on the street. [People ask] 'What is all this about? What are you doing? And why aren't you doing this?'"

One of the Labor representatives also used chance meetings to interact with her stakeholder group. "People I worked with, I talked with them on break time. I've got a right to talk union as long as it doesn't hold up production." Unlike the other SGRs in the "likeness" group, I believe that this Labor SGR initiated conversations about the NOCC's work during chance meetings. The Labor representative said that she would talk about the NOCC to, "People I see on and off the job and in the town."

The Labor SGR also stated that the labor union had meetings where she gave updates, but had neither done it consistently nor recently. The only other SGR in this group that used existing meetings to discuss the NOCC was a Citizen representative. The Citizen SGR stated that she consistently took advantage of an open comment and update period that is scheduled into all of the groups meeting agendas, "And in Rotary [Club], we have a time when people share stuff. And I'll get up and do my minute and a half overview."

Two SGRs, the Elected Official and a Health Care Provider, found that their stakeholder group members were more interested in communicating with them after the NOCC distributed the mid-process brochure. The Health SGR commented, "I had a lot of communication after the brochure

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[3] The name of the town is being withheld to conceal the identity of the interviewee.

was put out, because about 3/4 of the way through, my picture was in it. It was amazing, because I actually had some calls at home where people asked me about what the group was doing -- and those were citizens." The Elected Official thought that the brochure mailing was a great idea, because it went to all households by mail. She commented that not everyone gets the newspaper, but everyone looks at their mail.

Much of the interaction between SGRs in the "likeness" group and their SGs occurred as a result of chance meetings, either around town or at places of employment. Many of the conversations were initiated by SG members, indicating that information is being sought by the members of the SGs. In addition, many of the chance interactions were in response to news articles, or publicity materials for NOCC events. The mid-process brochure was the only item mentioned that prompted citizens to actively seek out information, by calling a NOCC member who was not their SGR.

Again, misunderstandings around the responsibilities of SGRs limited the occasions for intra-stakeholder communication. As a result, much of the communication that did occur, was initiated by SG members in response to NOCC events and projects. With a fuller understanding of the role of SGRs, SGRs in the "likeness" category may have initiated more conversations with SG members, instead of only reacting to SG members, or waiting for the final recommendations before initiating communication.

Even in light of the misunderstanding, SGRs did seem to realize that when NOCC recommendations went against the interests of the SG, conversations would need to be initiated. What SGRs failed to realize is that the SGR may not disagree with NOCC recommendations because they have been privy to inter-stakeholder communication, and have a fuller understanding of the issues as a result of being a NOCC member.

Chapter 6 - Speaking On Their Behalf

One way that NOCC members represent their stakeholder groups was to "speak on their behalf." Ten of the twelve NOCC members interviewed could be placed in this "speaking for" group. Stakeholder groups are usually too large for a consensus building process to accommodate all members to speak for themselves. Therefore, a few representatives are selected to be the voice of the whole SG.

NOCC members see themselves as speaking for their SGs in two distinct ways. SGRs who are residents of the Rumford area felt they were speaking for people who cannot sit at the table, not because there was not room, but because for some reason individuals were unable to speak for themselves. In contrast, NOCC members who were not residents of the area, spoke for their organizations -- or act as a spokesperson for the views of an institution. Often divisions of labor and organizational structure explain why a particular person was selected as the voice of the whole.

A Citizen SGR believed that she was representing young people who were not old enough to sit at the table, or who were not yet born. "The older people like myself ... aren't going to benefit too much. If we made it this far, we've made it. It's the grandchildren coming up and their children. And industry should be able to get along with the improvements that have to be met in order to keep the community healthy. ... And I am doing what ever I can for my grandchildren, because at my age there isn't too much more than they can do for me."

The most often stated explanation for why SGRs believed they were speaking for their SG members was fear. Many NOCC members stated that many residents are afraid to speak out about air quality and public health issues, because they fear that they will suffer repercussions from the largest employer in the Rumford area. Many residents depended on this employer for jobs, or as customers of self owned businesses. All three of the Citizen represented noted that they were at the table because they were not in positions where they would suffer repercussions if they did speak out. These SGRs were either retired, or employed in fields that were unrelated to the largest employer.

One Citizen SGR explained, "I think at least in terms of the whole pollution issue, I think people are very scared. But most people are beholden to the paper company in some way, so they're very reluctant to speak up. Plus, a lot of people in this town feel very much dis-empowered -- very much like they can't say anything because something awful will happen. So I tend to feel that those people need a voice." Another Citizen SGR stated, "This is an issue that has been here and been talked about quietly for a couple of generation. And nobody has really confronted it -- for a number of factors." She considered herself, "a reluctant member, I don't really relish the idea of getting out in controversial issues and being out front. ... But it was important enough I felt that someone has to do the job."

In addition, the two Labor SGRs also felt they were speaking for employees of the largest business and their families, because these people could not speak for themselves. The labor union was involved instead of individuals, "because of really the politics of it. In fact, if a person tried to do it as an individual, in fact they would be persecuted, outcast through the town, and the mill would persecute them -- as they did will other persons who have tried to protect the public health of the community." Another Labor SGR stated, "I was involved before then but I never really made that much noise because I was an employee, you know, I had to save my job."

SGRs who were not part of the Rumford community saw representing by "speaking for" their organizations to further organizational goals. One Agency SGR noted that her organization's "goal was to help the community understand government regulation, and the fact that the [organization] could not do more than it was already doing." In addition, "One of the other main goals was just to educate people about what the issues were, that [the organization] dealt with. [The organization] wanted the residents to understand some of the decisions and processes that we have to go through." Part of this Agency SGR's role was to speak for the organization to explain the organization's positions.

A different Agency SGR was helping her organization to fulfill a recent goal of improving community based environmental protection. "As an agency, what we would like to see, and what I think happened, is to have the community define what their priorities are to work on." Yet another Agency SGR believed that expressing her organization's views was part of her job, "but it's more than that because this is such a new thing and it became part of our job, because we made it part of our job. ... Clearly, I am performing this in a way that this is something that the agency should be doing and as such I am representing the agency."

Accountability of SGRs to SG Members

Most evidence of accountability I found was from SGRs who represented organizations. Once again, there was no mention of accountability from area residents to Citizen SGRs. For SGRs who felt they were speaking for the next generation of residents, there can be no formal accountability. For current residents who are afraid to speak out against the major employer, fear may also be stopping them from approving of a Citizen SGR or the SGRs' work.

When SGRs spoke for organizations, one form of accountability was trust. In some organizations, some aspects of a job require formal accountability from superiors, like having a manager review and sign an employee's time sheet to receive a pay check. In other organizations, managers do not review and sign time sheets. Employees submit time sheets and are paid. In this case, the manager trusts the employees to accurately represent the time they worked, so the employees are accountable by trust.

The Elected Official believed that she was accountable by trust to both other elected officials, and to the constituency that voted her into office. "Basically the way our town works is -- people vote their people in, the [elected officials], to do a job and then trust them to do it. Sometimes there is controversy, but this board has been able to avoid it and seems to be running smoothly." The Elected Official continued to say that she feels there is a high degree of trust between citizens and their local elected officials. When first joining the board, the Elected Official was assigned to the NOCC. "It is kind of an un-written assumption among the board ... that we take care of our own little bailiwicks. And there is just more stuff to do than we can all do together, and if we can parcel the stuff up, then we can operate more efficiently. I think we trust each other and other's judgment to do the right thing."

Another SGR elected to her position was from Labor. This SGR felt accountable to her constituents because she was elected to a position that required her to handle jobs such as NOCC. The Labor SGR noted, "basically, I represent Labor as the [elected position] of the United Paper Workers and my role also would take tasks such as these [the NOCC] to protect our members. So basically it is designed into my job position." The Labor SGR continued by saying, "My responsibilities are to protect our members' health and the community at large's

health as much as possible within my power to do so." The Labor SGR felt that the union members empowered her to speak for them, because, "I can take a lot of the political cover for that situation. Because in fact, what the mill would like to do is pigeonhole people and them destroy them. It is hard for them to do that to me, because they would have to take on the whole local."

Trust based on past experience is another way SGRs believed they were held accountable to their SG. The other Labor SGR has an appointed position in the union. She felt accountable to the members, because she proved her ability to address health and safety problems over time. "After I had been on the safety committee for those years, word got out that -- when people had safety problems or issues they would come to me. You know, word gets out." A Health Care Provider also believed she was accountable to her organization, because she had experience serving as a spokesperson for her organization in the past. In her job, the SGR often represents the hospital at other functions.

An Agency SGR also considered trust part her acknowledgment of accountability. She also felt accountable to her stakeholder group, because there were institutionalized approval processes. The SGR stated that there was enough trust and respect there that we essentially said 'whatever you decide is fine.' This SGR also felt that her job was easier because her constituents consisted of a handful of senior managers that were interested in the NOCC process -- and rubber-stamped everything the Agency SGRs did.

Alignment of SGRs' Interests with SG Members
For SGRs who are "speaking for" their stakeholder groups, it seems that it did not matter if interests were aligned or not. The reason was simple. Because SGRs were speaking for their SG members, not as an individual who was sharing her personal view. SGRs acted as conduits for information to be transmitted from the SG to the negotiation table. They represented as spokespeople instead of as an "average or typical" member of a SG who was more alike than different -- as in the "likeness" category.

When speaking for many citizens, or a large organization, there is room for some disagreement. No one expects that the views of many people, even if in the same organization, will be monolithic. One Citizen SGR noted, "I wouldn't say that my view necessarily is shared by every single person in [my town]. I am not saying that." But, other citizens will ask her questions, and express their opinions about NOCC issues. When this happens, the Citizen SGR will raise these points at NOCC meetings.

An Agency SGR recognized that it is not possible for all members of the agency to share the same view. "I think that when you talk about the [agency], it is so huge its hard to make such a big generalization. But, I don't think I am a lone wolf in the agency. So I think generally there are people who share my viewpoint." This SGR also noted that it was not difficult to speak for people who do not agree with her view on the issues. The Agency SGR described that, "there have been instances where [the agency's other SGR] and I have disagreed, and because in a hierarchical place, I would defer to him. I would say, 'This is another opinion.'"

Another Agency SGR also noted that her view is not always the same as her organization's view. But, she did not feel pressured into only acting as a "mouthpiece" for the organization. She knows her organization's view, because, "I do check in and talk to my management. Most of the time they are in agreement [with me], and sometimes we've had different concepts. And I have

gone along with that. Whatever they want me to do, I have done that. I have never really been told, 'Don't say this, don't say that. It's been pretty much, 'We know you can represent the DEP and what ever needs to be said at the time, go ahead and say it'."

A Labor SGR saw her role to as speaking for the majority view of her organization. "I have to try to represent, in my view and this is probably too idealistic, but realistically you have to represent the majority of your constituents or the people you represent -- not just a select few or one branch." The Labor SGR knows what the majority view is because, "A lot of people told me, 'we agree with what you are doing. We need people like you. But I can't help you. I can't speak in public' and all that ####. A lot of people told me that, including middle management. But that is something that never comes out."

A second Agency SGR noted how difficult it was to speak for such a large group with diverse views, and even more difficult to do it consistently. She noted that there were times during negotiations when she spoke from her views, but that she also talked about the NOCC with other people in her organization who were interested. Even when someone expressed an opinion that was not in line with her own, then she expressed that opinion to the NOCC.

A third Agency sought feedback from senior managers about issues or positions on issues, as well as endorsements of time or resources. She noted that upper management, also helped to form how the Agency SGR spoke for the organization on issues through agency-wide "position papers, where issues have been scoped out" and options were described. "Typically they [meetings with senior managers] are short, one hour overview of some aspect of it [the NOCC process], where we need to walk away with an affirmation. ... But I think that sometimes we did end up in different places -- the outcome stayed the same, but I think that we might have ended up in a different place had we more fully interacted on some of the things that got ruled out, but we did what we could. We worked with what we had. I think it would have been different if we had more time but that's probably true for everybody."

Breadth of SGRs' Interaction with SG Members
As in the "likeness" category, Citizen SGRs tended to have chance conversations with individuals. A Citizen SGR said that she received questions from citizens when she was out on business or anywhere outside. "People call me or see me at a store. A lot of people call, and they want to know 'what about this thing you got going? What about that statement?' -- when the NOCC does release something into the paper. 'What about this? What about that?'" These exchanges did appear to be two-way exchanges of information and opinions. The chance interactions may be a source of opinions from community members who were fearful to speak out in public.

The Health Care Provider and Agency SGRs tended to have interactions with small groups if people, determined by organizational structure and positions. The Health Care Provider representative interacted with her board of directors. She shuttled between the NOCC and her board, carrying messages in both directions -- from the board to the NOCC, and from the NOCC to the board.

One Agency SGR did some carrying of messages, but seemed to have more autonomy. The Agency SGR stated that the upper level management did have a great deal of trust in her handling of the NOCC. "I have been able to talk to the Air Bureau Director about some issues regarding the NOCC, and even the Commissioner on occasion. I think some times their attitude

is 'It sounds good, what ever you're doing, that's fine. Don't make anything bad happen and tell me good things.' It's been sort of hands off."

A second Agency representative also interacted with a small group of people who were also more senior in the organizations than herself. The Agency SGR stated that her organization gets her information by personal interaction with senior management. The organizations two SGRs had periodic meetings with more senior managers. Their agency had an organizational structure through which messages were sent.

The second of the two SGRs for this agency thought that stakeholder communication was easier for her than many other SGRs, and especially easier than for people representing citizens. In the agency, the SGR had a definable, finite, and small audience that was located within her building or easily accessible by phone. In addition, there were people who were very interested in community based environmental protection efforts, such as the NOCC. Part of the agency funded the NOCC, and the SGR's superior was supportive and interested in how the NOCC was doing. What this meant was that this SGR had an active audience that was listening and asking for information. "So I have been able to go back to these groups and keep them updated on what is happening."

This same Agency SGR also interacted with a large group of people in her agency. One of the ways that she stayed in contact with her stakeholder group was by using a computer network and computer mail groups. There were many people in the agency who work in community based environmental protection projects. All of these people were on a list that sends updates to everyone on the list about what was happening in all community based projects across the county. "It used to be that after every meeting I would send [the mail group] a note saying what is happening. And, now its about every other month that I send an update." While the SGR did get some feedback and comments from other people on the mail group, she said that it did not happen a lot. This SGR was asked to present information about the NOCC at agency wide meetings, and even won an award for community based environmental protection.

The Elected Official also interacted with her entire board, but it consists of only a handful of people. This SGR believed that it was part of the SGR's role to communicate back to the people she was representing, "and also communicating to the rest of the NOCC where I think my people are on various issues." But, "I think listening is something that isn't always done very well at a lot of different levels." "When the [board] delegate responsibility they kind of entrust the person to go ahead and run with it. And they don't feel the need to get reports back. And the reports that I have given back to the board even though I meet with them once a week have been fairly sporadic."

Occasion for SGRs' Interaction with SG Members
The SGRs in the "speaking for" group interacted with members of their SG at basically two times, when confronted, or consistently throughout the process. Citizen SGRs tended to have the chance interactions that were initiated by members of the stakeholder group as the NOCC publicized one of its various projects. The SGRs who represented organizations had more consistent interactions.

One Citizen SGR spoke with community members about the NOCC when she heard them complain about an issue related to the NOCC's work. "I think what I try to do is hear what people have to say and then give them the sense that something can happen that is positive.

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People did an awful lot of whining and complaining about 'they won't let me.' ... So I guess what I tend to do is try to encourage people to find constructive ways to be heard and to deal with issues, instead of just complaining about them."

Another Citizen representative described an interaction he had with a citizen a day after the NOCC recommended looking for ways to encourage small businesses to engage in pollution prevention. "I pulled into a little business in Dixfield and they were all over me. 'Hey, don't come into my business and show me how to take care of my oil cans and my etc. -- when they [a business] are pumping that stuff out the stacks at the volume they are in Rumford, ME. Don't expect my cooperation.' They were very vocal about that and I brought that up at the NOCC. I told them that this would be some of the attitude you would see with small business in the valley."

The Agencies interacted with their SG members in a more consistent manner throughout the 2 1/2 year process. One SGR thought the best way to handle intra-stakeholder communication was to, "I guess just check in on a periodic basis and tell people what is going on, and get some reaction." This SGR stated that her organization did not handle their internal communications in a formal manner. She noted that often she will e-mail updates, or see people in the halls of the office and talk to them. "Occasionally, we take time aside and we will go down to his office and a more formal briefing takes place, once every week or two."

An Agency representative of a different organization consistently meet with other SG members, but went back to people in the agency when there were decision points for the NOCC to get the opinions and input from other personnel. The SGR thought that it was especially important to keep in contact with your stakeholder group before decisions were made. If communication did not occur before NOCC decision needed to be made, the SGR felt that it was disrupting to the process, and time consuming for NOCC members to agree to decision and then later come back and admit that the decision was not acceptable to the rest of their group. She believed that if intra-stakeholder communication did not occur before decisions were made, agreements could fall apart at the end and the process becomes a waste of time for all parties involved.

Speaking for a group of people was not an easy task, as any of these SGRs would attest. One Agency SGR summarized the difference between representation by "likeness" and representation by "speaking for" very precisely. "The only advise that I would give is to make clear that you can be a representative because you have a perspective that is representative of your constituents and they have endorsed you to speak for them. But that isn't always the case, and is probably the rarity. In the event that you are a member of a constituency, it is unlikely that your individual perspective on everything is going to be absolutely representative of the constituency. It is really critical that there be a clear understanding that up front and an agreement with the constituency that 'yea we believe that you are representative of our views so we are empowering you -- that whatever you say we will endorse. But in the absence of that it is really important that the representative understand up front that part of the role is to both inform and to bring a collective wisdom to the table."

Chapter 7 - Speaking for the NOCC

Some SGRs saw part of their responsibility of serving on the NOCC as including informing and educating members of their stakeholder groups about the work and views of the NOCC. In some instances, NOCC members believed that they were influencing the opinions and decisions of their stakeholder group.

One Health Care Provider representative noted that she served in a decision making role at the hospital. She felt that she was in a good position to act as a role model for her organization, and could influence behavior, or opinions. "Part of what we want to do is be a lot more responsive to community needs. It is how we set up new services. That is how we look at our goals." In this respect, she felt that she has the ears of decision makers at her organization. The SGR could echo community concerns and health needs to SG members at her health organization.

Two Agency SGRs both stated that their organizations wanted to hear about the work of the NOCC and the opinions of community members. So, the Agency SGR described NOCC discussions and projects to her SG members. One Agency SGR said that part of her responsibility of serving on the NOCC was "reporting back to the DEP about what NOCC members are thinking and feeling." Another Agency SGR saw her role as a SGR as bringing information from the community to her organization. She did not feel that it was her role to represent the her organization's priorities to the community. This Agency SGR "did not want to dominate the group, because we are looking to have the stakeholders, the people who live in the community do it. We were looking to open up discussion between them." The SGR stated that she wanted to remain behind the scenes so as not to lead the priorities of the community in one direction or the other." Both Agency representatives believed it was important to have a channel for community members to get information to their organizations.

Accountability of SGRs to SG Members
In the other three categories of representation, SGRs were accountable to the SG, because the SG was being represented at the NOCC. When "speaking for the NOCC," SGRs were accountable to the NOCC, because the NOCC was being represented to the SGs. Accountability was provided by consensus decisions of the group early in the process. In addition, SGRs were held accountable to their SG to provide accurate information to SG members.

The NOCC's Draft Ground Rules (Latest version updated 3/28/97) discussed the SGRs' roles for the process. This document encouraged SGRs to, "keep those people [being represented] informed about important discussions and decisions at NOCC meetings," (NOCC Draft Ground Rules, 3/28/97, p. 2). The NOCC members themselves empowered each other to represent information shared at NOCC meetings to stakeholder group members.

NOCC members also outlined how members should interact with the media in the Ground Rules. It is important to specify how the media should be utilized in consensus building processes, because many SG members from various SGs receive information about the NOCC via newspapers, or other mass media. The Ground Rules stated, "NOCC members and alternates are free to make statements to the press regarding their own concerns or reactions to NOCC meetings, but should at all times refrain from attributing statements or views to other NOCC members or to the facilitators. If a news story misquotes or inaccurately represents an individual's views, then that individual should inform the NOCC of the occurrence as soon as possible," (NOCC Draft Ground Rules, 3/28/97, p. 5). By describing how SGRs can

communicate about the NOCC in the Ground Rules, and by the fact that the it was a consensus decision, SGRs were accountable to the NOCC for accurately representing views expressed at meetings.

In some cases, SGRs were also accountable to the SGs to accurately portray the events and opinions expressed at NOCC meetings. The organizations involved in the NOCC require accurate information to assess their positions, and achieve their goals. Both the agencies and the health care organizations included responding to community concerns to set goals or services in their organizations. For the organizations to respond to community concerns, they needed accurate portrayals of the NOCC.

A member of the Health Care SG discussed his responsibility and limits for verifying the accuracy of the information the SGR provided. "My responsibility is to be very up-front with [my SGR] and to look at her minutes and see where she has shared information and where she didn't. And to make sure that she does provide us and our employees with that information. Now in terms of the community, I don't have any say over that, but I would hope that she shared information there too." The SG member used the NOCC's meeting summaries, written by the facilitators, as the standard to which the SGR was held.

One agency SG member did not feel the need to verify the information their SGR brought to the agency. The SGR from this agency believed that intra-stakeholder communication meant she should go to others in the [agency] to discuss concerns about what is happening in the NOCC process. The SGR felt that communicating with the agency was not difficult, and could not think of any constraints that limited internal communication. The SGR noted that she believed there was no need for SG members to verify the information she brings to the agency. She also believed there was a high level of trust within the agency. The Agency SGR was certain that others in the agency trusted her work with the NOCC, and trusted the information the SGR brought back to the agency.

Agencies do have ways to verify the progress of NOCC activities. Another Agency SGR from a different agency discussed one way that SG members could check on the work done by the NOCC, and their SGRs. "We have this database, called a results database, where I had to put in events, when certain milestones were reached. And they couldn't be just having a meeting. It had to be, 'result oriented,' like the publishing of the brochure or the final radon meeting, as opposed to the three hundred small meetings that lead up to it. So, I filled that out, and got people's OK, and made sure there were enough items on it. It's so other people can know what is going on."

So, this agency's results database served a duel purpose. It was not only as a way to verify the work of their SGRs, but also as a way to communicate about the NOCC's work with SG members. The results database focused on the work of the NOCC on various projects. The database only indirectly contained information about concerns of people in the Rumford area. Community members' concerns could be inferred by the projects the NOCC decided to undertake.

Accountability when representing the NOCC was especially important to ensure the accuracy of information. Safeguarding accurate information allowed NOCC members to trust that other NOCC members will not misrepresent other SGRs views and the events of NOCC meetings. In addition, SG members can trust the information their SGR brings to them. Hance (1988) and Rowan (1994) found that part of the process of reducing conflicts requires building trust and

credibility among affected parties. Therefore, by making SGR accountable to both members of the consensus building process and SG members, trust between all parties in enhanced.

Alignment of SGRs' Interests with SG Members

SGRs who were "speaking for the NOCC" did not necessarily have the same views on interests as the stakeholder group. Obviously, all SGRs also did not share the same interests, or there would be no dispute to settle via consensus building. SGRs and members of the stakeholder group did need to be interested in the same topics, but were not required to have the same perspective on all topics. Having an interest in the same topics was necessary to represent by "speaking for the NOCC," so that SGRs had an audience willing to listen. But, SGRs may have different views about the topics as a result of participating in the consensus building process.

NOCC SGRs who attended meetings learned about other SGRs' views, and gain substantial knowledge about the issues. For example, early in the process, some SGRs wanted to prove that the mill was causing cancer. But, as the process continued, SGRs learned more about epidemiology, about proving causal links for long-term exposure, and about the about sample sizes needed to produce statistically significant results. As time went on, SGRs realized the difficulties of proving causality. This was why the NOCC focused on determining which cancers were elevated in their towns as compared to the state of Maine and the US. At this point, some of the SGRs decided to focus on air monitoring, cancer prevention, or other topics that the NOCC could affect.

If SGRs did not explain the shift in direction, questions about the recommendations would arise at the end of the process. "Since negotiators are continually being reeducated through the horizontal negotiations occurring at or near the bargaining table, they are frequently far more advanced in their thinking than are their constituents back home. The resulting gap can be a dangerous trap for all concerned. ... The negotiator must also know when and how to go back and educate his or her own constituents," (Colosi, 1983, p. 294). Avoiding implementation and acceptance problems is why intra-stakeholder communication is so important.

Susskind explains how a SGR can perceive herself as representing her SG by both "speaking on their behalf," and "speaking for the NOCC." As the stakeholder representative, "You begin as the spokesperson for your group's interests. Gradually, as you gain an understanding of the other side's interests, you become a spokesperson for the work of the group. You may well realize that your group's initial aspirations were unreasonable. But without help, your group will not grasp this. The interactions between you and your membership that were adequate at the beginning of the process may no longer suffice. Consider additional meetings or periodic published reports to your membership. Make sure they can easily reach you -- to ask questions or to express disappointment." (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987, p. 210).

Therefore, interests between the SG and the SGR may be aligned at first, diverge as SGRs attend meetings, until communication among SG members and the SGR occurs. Ideally, SGRs and members of the stakeholder group eventually have similar views on the issues. Just as one goal of consensus building is reaching a shared understanding among different stakeholders through interaction and discussion, SGRs and SG members should agree on the acceptability of the consensus agreement. Any disagreement between SGR and SG members at the end of a consensus building process can decrease the likelihood of implementation of the agreement.

To represent by "speaking for the NOCC," it was not necessary for SGRs and members of the SG to have the same perspective on the issues. Whether or not SGRs and SG interests were aligned depend on if and when during the process SGRs discussed NOCC issues with SG members. A health care SG member noted that his SGR brings new information to the SG. "I think that the committee meetings that [the SGR] had has given her a brand new perspective that she can share."

An Agency SGR saw her role as a representative of the agency as both speaking for her agency and as if she decides what her SG thinks. The SGR explained that "Because it is so hands off, I feel a lot of time I am calling the shots on what my group thinks about this." The other SGR from this agency noted that she and members of the SG did not always agree. When the SGR had strong concerns about something that was happening with the NOCC, she used the organization's proper channels, or the official chain of command to express her concerns. "If there is something of real concern that we [the agency] have to do, I will voice my concern to [my supervisor], and [the supervisor] will take it to the bureau director. We try to follow the chain of command that way. [The supervisor] is more of the spokesperson to upper-level management." If upper management had a different perspective than the SGR, then the SGR must respect the hierarchy of the organizations. The movement from having different positions on the issues to the same position is typical in organizations with a definitive hierarchy.

To speak for the NOCC, two reasons explain why SGRs and SG members were not required to have aligned interests. Hierarchical roles within an organization may define how SGRs act during negotiations, but do not affect what the SGRs believe about the issues under discussion. Or, SGRs and SG members have aligned interests, and the SGRs' minds were changed during learning during the course of negotiation. Although it was too early to know what will happen at the end of the NOCC's process, hopefully, any learning will be transmitted to SG members and interests will again be aligned.

Breadth of SGRs' Interaction with SG Members
Interestingly, only NOCC members associated with an organization felt that speaking for the NOCC was part of representing a SG. Being part of an organization that supports a SGR's time and position on the NOCC provides the SGR assurance that there is an audience that is interested in the work of the NOCC, and is actively listening or even asking for information. Citizen SGRs noted that one of the problems they encountered was apathy. The Citizen SGRs stated that they perceived members of their stakeholder group as disinterested, and that they would have communicated more if they had the attention of others. Only one SGR in the "speaking for the NOCC" category indicated experiencing apathy from SG members.

Because SGRs who speak for the NOCC were associated with organizations, much of the interaction between SGR and SG members occurred along organizational lines. For example, many of the SGRs discussed the NOCC with their supervisors, or others in the organization in decision-making roles. A Health Care Provider SGR spoke to the board of directors to review data collected by the NOCC. The SGR felt that communicating with people in decision making roles, because many programs run by the organization are initiated in response to community concerns.

The member of the Health Care SG also noted that communication among the SGR and members of the SG occurred as a result of the SGR's position in the organization. Part of the Health Care SGR's job was to talk to nurses. The SG member explained what he expected from his SGR, "I

expect that she is going to take questions from our employees as well as represent her community at the meetings. And I expect that the information that she brings back she is going to share with our employees so that they can educate their patients that have questions about health and the quality of the air." (Also note, that the health care organization recognized that SGRs represent more than just the organization's view, which further explained why SGRs fit into more than one representation category.)

Agency SGRs also interacted with decision makers in their organizations. In fact, two of the agencies interviewed were involved with the NOCC, in part, to find news ways to do their jobs. Two Agency SGRs from different agencies both noted that participating in the NOCC provided their agencies with a test case of a new way of fulfilling their mandates. One SGR mentioned, "For me it was an experiment about whether a community could be empowered to meaningfully address environmental issues within a community. ... I think the concept was more than does this work? ... I think that it was a good thing to do if the model worked, it was a model that we might to perpetuate."

The other Agency SGR expressed how being involved in efforts like the NOCC changed the way her agency did business. The SGR's organization, "wanted to do was to get their opinions and do what they [members of the community] want. It is a paradigm shift. We are the regulators, however we are not the sole decision makers. We are trying to build consensus instead of ruling from on high and dictating what we want." Even members of the SG mentioned the impact of listening to communities wishes on agency behavior. The SG member noted, "We have gotten more involved in community based programs and lending support to communities. And we just have more outreach to the communities than in the past. I've been with [the agency] for fourteen years and certainly, when I first started here, there wasn't as much emphasis on setting up partnerships."

Therefore, the Agency SGR defined her role as serving as a liaison from the community and the management of the organization she represented. The information about the community's interests was used to make decisions. The SGR remarked, "It would be very easy for the [Agencies] to dominate the discussions and say, 'OK we know what you want, but we are going to do this.' That's not what we wanted to do. We wanted to say, 'OK, what do you want? Where are we headed? And what do you want me to go back and tell our supervisors?"

It is possible that information about the NOCC's work and the process will be communicated agency-wide. The other agency interviewed stated that the NOCC was a test case for the agency as well. The Agency SGR "wanted to see whether a community could be empowered, and to see if the consensus building model work -- and that the agency should continue to use." A SGR from the same agency was asked to present information about the NOCC and her role at agency wide meetings. The SGR even won an award for community-based environmental protection.

The agencies who, on some level, view the NOCC as a process experiment, communication activities have only just begun. As two Agency SGRs explained, it is not until the NOCC concludes its facilitated meetings, issues its recommendations, and implementation begins that SGRs will be able to evaluate the process to determine its suitability for agency-wide use. For this reason, information about the NOCC may or may not be disseminated more widely. Thus far, SGRs can only provide updates and their impressions on how the NOCC is progressing. One Agency SGR already discussed the NOCC on an agency-wide level. There were many people in the agency who work in community based environmental protection projects. All of these people were on an electronic mail list that sends updates about what is happening in community-based

projects across the county. Earlier in the process, the Agency SGR would e-mail an update after every NOCC meeting. "And, now its about every other month that I send an update."

Occasion for SGRs' Interaction with SG Members
People who represented the NOCC to their stakeholder group did so based around the NOCC's schedule. As SGRs attended NOCC meetings, or as projects were undertaken, SGRs initiated discussions with members of their stakeholder group. This was true for all SGRs in the "speaking for the NOCC" category.

One reason a Labor SGR communicated with SG members was to get additional people involved in the process as NOCC members would quit. Because the NOCC's process continued for over two years, different members of the various stakeholder groups would serve as representatives. As people serving as SGRs would leave the process, one Labor SGR responded by encouraging other SG members to fill the empty slots. The Labor SGR said, "You need to get as many people involved as you can from diverse groups. You know the political tactics, ... like character assassination, closing ranks -- that's what happened to [a Health Care SGR]. That's why you need as many people involved as you can, as Lois [Gibbs] said in her literature, you need to keep them involved, you need to get new members as other people get burned out. The idea is involvement. It truly is a democratic process."

The Health Care Provider SGR used NOCC meetings to keep her stakeholder group members informed, and to solicit input. A member of the health care stakeholder group noted, "After every meeting she [the SGR] comes and talks with me about what she's hear at the meeting, and ask what I think about it." This kind of two-way communication helped to prevent the SGR's thinking from getting too far ahead of the members of their SG. Keeping in contact with members of the SG, the SGR updated the members with new information that was gathered throughout the process, or about opinions of the other SGRs.

The member of the SG expressed what kind of information he expected his SGR to communicate.
When the SGR received new information at NOCC meetings, the SGR should go to members of the SG and explain the new information. The SG member felt that: "If she hears new things come up, she should go back to people that she works with, friends, neighbors and ask 'what issues do you have with the air quality, what concerns do you have.' If she hears something new, something different, then she should go back to investigate with someone she's in contact with -- and I think that she has done that."

The Health Care SGR mentioned that NOCC projects sparked enthusiasm from her stakeholder group. This SGR integrated NOCC updates with pre-existing meetings and occupational settings to communicate about the NOCC. Part of this Health SGR's job for her organization was to talk to other employees. She would use these interactions to discuss the NOCC. The SGR stated that she would discuss the parts of the NOCC's work that related to the work of her organization. She noticed that she would receive more questions from SG members when NOCC publications were issued, like the brochure and the Cancer Report.

Agency SGRs used NOCC decisions as impetus for interactions with their SGs. "As an agency, what we would really like to see, and what I think happened, is to have the community define what there priorities are to work on. And I think it took a really long time for that to happen." After the NOCC decided what course of action to take, this Agency SGR would then find the

most appropriate members of her SG to communicate. For example, when the NOCC decided to publish a brochure explaining the NOCC's work, the Agency SGR initiated conversation with people in the publishing division of her agency. Another Agency SGR noted that she and SG members, "do not have a set scheduled meeting time. Their schedule for NOCC discussions revolves around what the NOCC is doing, when it meets, and when the [agency] needs to act."

SGRs used NOCC events, such as meetings or projects, to send information about the NOCC to SG members. NOCC milestones were cues to SGRs to initiate conversations. Events, like the publishing of the cancer report or the results of the radon study, gave SGRs something to talk about and a way to start conversations. Even apparently negative events, such as a NOCC member quitting the group, were used as springboards to talk about the work of the NOCC. In addition, NOCC decision points were important cues that increased the amount of intra-stakeholder communication for SGRs who were accountable to organizations. Because representatives of organizations were accountable to SG members, SGRs must initiate conversations about the NOCC's work and receive input before they can commit their SG to a position with the NOCC.

Chapter 8 - Bringing Knowledge and Resources to the Table

By "bringing knowledge and resources to the table" some SGRs supported the NOCC's work and represented their stakeholder groups. All SGRs in this category were representing organizations, not citizens directly. This was not surprising considering organizations generally have resources and technical expertise to contribute, where citizens do not. SGRs in this category saw their role in the NOCC as adding value to the debate, whether monetary, with services, or knowledge. In some cases, particular individuals were selected as a representative by their SG because they possessed skills or knowledge useful to the NOCC. Other SGRs were affiliated with organizations who possessed skills or resources that could aid the NOCC achieve its goals. "Bringing knowledge or resources to the table" was considered a form of representation, because the SGRs saw adding value to the NOCC as part of their role of being a SGR.

A Health Care SGR believed she was an appropriate representative for many reasons, including being part of her job, because she is a health care provider, and because she possessed specialized skills that that would enhance the work of the NOCC. "And, most recently in my role at the hospital, I worked in community education. I really felt like that experience enabled me to have a good insight to things we talked about at the NOCC. If we were organizing activities, or if we were looking at ways we could get information out to the community, my past experience in doing that, I shared it when I could. I thought that insight in working both as a health care provider and in community education at the hospital, I hoped that I could share that information and experience and make some of the work of the [NOCC] smoother or easier." Her goal was to add value to an on-going, action oriented, effort that would have a lasting effect in the community.

An Agency SGR believed she was selected to work on the NOCC because Rumford area residents were concerned with air pollution. The SGR supervised the department in the agency in charge of air toxics. Having experience regulating air toxics, and knowledge of applicable laws and the limits of current regulation, this Agency SGR was capable of adding policy and technical knowledge to NOCC discussions.

Selecting people from an organization like a government agency with knowledge and experience in fields appropriate for the issues under discussion, the consensus building process can be executed more efficiently. There is no need to stop or table discussion of an issue to verify or obtain information. In this case, if the NOCC was looking at air monitoring data, it would be important to know the current health based standards. By having people at the negotiation table who knew this information, the NOCC did not have to stop the discussion, research government documents, and return to the table with the information at a later date. The agency also benefited by selecting the right people to work on the NOCC. "Because the NOCC was our idea, we feel a certain amount of ownership to make sure the process works, to make sure it does what it is supposed to do. And of course, we rely heavily on CBI to make that happen, as well as [another agency]."

There were differences in the roles for SGRs from agencies and other SGRs. An Agency representative noted that one of the differences between regulators on the NOCC and other stakeholder groups was that: "one of our jobs as regulators at the table is both to be there to bring the resources that we have available, but also because of the technical nature of the work that's done it is absolutely critical that there be the technical resources at the table brought to bear in a way that they can nurture the technical abilities of what's typically an unsophisticated

group dealing with a sophisticated problem." The SGR continued by saying, "When I first started this, it became clear to me that the biggest challenge and perhaps the greatest contribution that the regulatory agencies could make is to give the people a more technically correct view of the issues that they are trying to tackle."

The same Agency SGR believed the two people from her agency working on the NOCC brought technical expertise and expertise in environmental policy to the table. She also believed that the she and her colleague, in addition to CBI, brought group management experience, such as agenda setting, working in groups, and goal setting.

Accountability of SGRs to SG Members

For SGRs to bring knowledge and resources to the table, it was essential for them to be accountable to SG members. Problems can arise for the organization, the SGRs, and the consensus building process if SGRs commit knowledge or resources without the support of their SG members.

If SGRs commit resources or provide information to other participants without the acknowledgment of their SG, then SGRs and the organizations they represent will lose credibility from other SGRs and (depending if information was widely disseminated) the public as well. SGRs may be forced to retract resources after they were promised. SGR may appear dishonest, disorganized, or simply incompetent. Over-committing resources places the organization being represented in a negative light, being perceived as the people who said, "No." If misinformation is brought the consensus building process, SGRs and the SG may be accused of trying to taint the process.

The consensus process can be damaged or slowed if SGRs act without the support of their SG members. Imagine if information submitted to the NOCC was used in designing the cancer study, and was later discovered to be false. If the information was used as a premise in the study, the results may not be valid. And the whole study may have to be repeated. Not only would this be a costly mistake in time and money, but the SGR and the organization that supplied the information may be chastised and mistrusted. Poor relationships among SGRs tend to slow the process of reaching an agreement, and reduce the likelihood of agreement. Even if the mistake were not found, the consensus agreement suffers from inaccuracy. An agreement based on accurate information is a wiser agreement.

A representative from Labor was accountable to the labor union, because she had experience representing the union with other groups looking at health issues. The Labor SGR stated that the labor union appointed her to serve on the NOCC, because of her work with the ME Labor Group on Health. On the Group on Health, the Labor SGR educates paper workers about workplace safety and health, including seminars about: safety equipment, chemical hazards, clean-up procedures. The union selected this particular SGR, because she well represented the union before, and possess knowledge about health issues. The SGR was involved with workplace safety and health issues for 17 years.

Because an Agency SGR saw the agencies as, "shapers of the technical direction and the policy issues that evolved there," she believed it was important to include regulatory agencies in the consensus building process. Agency SGRs had a special responsibility to ensure, "that the regulatory agencies don't shoulder a larger responsibility just by virtue of both the technical expertise they bring to the table, but also the resources they have available."

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A fine line forms to distinguish how much responsibility agencies should have for shaping of the technical and policy decisions. So not to cross over the line, Agency SGRs communicated with supervisors in their SGs for approval. An Agency SGR stated, "I always need to check back if I am going to make a commitment to do something that is above and beyond what I can control on my resource level." In addition, another Agency SGR would seek feedback from senior managers. The SGR would seek advice both about technical or policy issues or positions on issues, and endorsements of agency time or resources.

Alignment of SGRs' Interests with SG Members
When bringing knowledge and resources to the table, it is not essential for SGR to have the same view position on issues as all members of their SG, but do require the alignment of key SG members -- the SG members with decision making authority. Because all of the SGRs in this representation category were associated with organizations, to bring resources to the table required approval from someone in the organizations with authority to leverage the resources. Approval by a superior in hierarchical organizations does not require the SGR, often a subordinate, to agree with the higher up. Therefore, a SGR could offer resources from the organizations without personally agreeing with the expenditure. Conversely, if a SGR wanted to leverage resources, and her superior refused to release the funds, the resource cannot be used in the process. Therefore, alignment of interests was not required for knowledge and resources to be brought to a consensus building process.

The NOCC contained a stakeholder group that was an organization, but did not have a hierarchy. The labor union was the only stakeholder group that required the support of its members to leverage resources for the NOCC. One of the Labor SGR said that the NOCC was discussed at a general meeting, "we had some funding issues that we talked about, but in general they don't get too concerned about that issue. To a certain degree, they expect me to take care of it and use my judgment on that." She noted that she usually went to the full union when money needed to be allocated for the NOCC.

One the other hand, bringing knowledge to the process did not require alignment of SGR's and SG members' interests. A Labor SGR stated that she was appointed to the NOCC because she was "the most interested, involved, and informed persons in the state on occupational safety and health issues, and I have been concerned about dioxin for well over 12-13 years -- long before it became a truly global issue that it is now." She also felt that she did have some special skills that made her particularly suited for the job of stakeholder group representative on the NOCC: "I have a chemical engineering background."

This Labor SGR noted that many others in the union did not agree with her on many issues. "People just accept it, they are second, third, and forth generation paper workers and they accept the dirty air and the fowl smelling and the high disease rates and people dying. They have become complacent. So most folks are in denial. So, the response I get most common is 'well you got to die sometime.' Ignorance is bliss. And so through education and being the messenger, it's been shoot the messenger syndrome." This SGR believed that most members of her SG were far less interested in the issues than she.

One of the Agency SGR recognized how difficult it was to represent all of the different views in such a large organization. "I think that when you are at the meeting, you always end up acting as an individual. So there is always that combination of what you say is because of who you are.

But, I also feel like I always need to check back if I am going to make a commitment to do something that is above and beyond what I can control on my resource level." The SGR discussed obtaining funds for the NOCC with her supervisors.

At times, the Agency SGR crossed departmental lines to leverage resources from SG members, like technical services. To assist the NOCC develop an air monitoring plan for air toxics, the Agency SGR enlisted the advice and services of an environmental engineer from the air monitoring department. But, the environmental engineer did not see his role as providing his views or opinions about NOCC issues to the SGR. When asked if he believed that his SGR listened to and portrayed his views on NOCC issues, the environmental engineer stated, "I don't really know. ... It's not really a question of my point of view. I don't really provide an opinion per se, other than technical input on air quality monitoring." Communication pertaining to technical advice with this SG member was limited to the NOCC project. Even the SGR may not know if her view was the same as the environmental engineer, because they did not discuss positions on issues.

A SGR from another agency felt that her role on the NOCC was to provide technical expertise to the dialogue. The SGR was selected as a NOCC member, because of her position in the organization. The skills and knowledge that she brought to the table stemmed from her job. She worked in the toxics section looking at health impacts associated with exposure to pollutants. The SGR noted that when she had a strong concern about the NOCC, that she would bring the concern to her supervisor. She mentioned that it was important to follow the "chain of command." The supervisor, who also was a NOCC member, would take concerns to upper-management.

The supervisor SGR often experienced difficulty rallying support for the NOCC. She believed this was due to a change in senior managers. Senior managers of the agency initially started the NOCC. They were very supportive in terms of their time, and that their agency's SGRs had ample time to work on the NOCC. The SGR felt that interests were aligned until the agency experienced turnover in senior managers. The SGR stated, "Because of the political process, upper management has changed. And when upper management changes, you have to bring them up to speed with the NOCC. And to be blunt about it, if it wasn't their idea, they are not as into it."

It was less important for views about bringing resources and knowledge to the table to be the same for SGRs and members of SGs. But, it was clearly important to have the approval of some members of the organization being represented -- the ones who made expenditure decisions, whether about resources or personnel time. In these instances, alignment of interests were only important in one direction -- from resource controllers to SGR. It was irrelevant if SGRs do not support the use of resources, if the organizational decision makers approve.

Breadth of SGRs' Interaction with SG Members
SGR can be divided into two parts in terms of interactions with SGR: ones who initiated conversations with people who had control over resources, provided updates, and sought approval for resource use, and; ones who had little interaction with their SG, because they perceived themselves to be the possessors of the resource. For the "bringing" representation category, I cannot discuss how widely SGRs interacted without discussing the occasion for the interaction. In this case, breadth and occasion are inextricably linked. The breadth of the interaction was dependent on where a resource could be found in an organization.

The SGRs who felt as though they were the ones who possessed skills or expertise needed to interact less with their stakeholder group. At most, these SGRs needed to get approval to spend their time on the NOCC, or to get approval to be a representative of the organizations. This required an initial conversation with someone, usually a supervisor, who had authority within the organization to make the decision. For Agency SGRs and the Health Care Provider SGR, this meant getting approval or an assignment from a supervisor. For the Labor Union, the two SGRs were selected for the NOCC indirectly: one by election to a position where part of the responsibility of the position was to serve on the NOCC; the other was appointed to a position in the union, because she had skills and knowledge that qualified her for the position in the union. For this Labor SGR, the skills and knowledge needed for the union position were the same ones useful for serving on the NOCC.

After initial approval to serve on the NOCC, SGRs who possessed skills and knowledge did not need to interact more broadly with SG members. This is not to say that these SGRs did not discuss other aspects of the NOCC with other SG members. All of the SGR in this category did represent their organizations in other ways, for example by "speaking on their behalf." And interactions with SG members were required to represent the organization, but additional communication was not needed to use the knowledge that the SGR themselves possessed. The only additional conversations needed were with supervisors that were updated in order to continue approving the SGR's time that the organization was supporting.

The Health Care SGR who felt she had information that would benefit the NOCC, initiated a conversation with her supervisor. The SGR read about the NOCC in the local newspaper and thought is sounded interesting and like a good idea. The SGR mentioned hearing about the NOCC to the nursing supervisor, who was asked by the facilitators to send a representative from their organizations to serve on the NOCC. The supervisor told the SGR that their organization was looking for someone to participate. Because the SGR had experience in public health education, and organizing health related community activities, the supervisor approved spending time and organizational resources, like use of office equipment and supplies to the SGR for the NOCC. The SGR noted that about 1/2 of the time she spent working with the NOCC was compensated by her organization.

The SGR needed no further approval to bring knowledge and skills that she possessed to the NOCC. The Health Care SGR described the information that she believed she brought to the NOCC: "As a health provider, I feel my role is to provide any information that I might have that could enlighten anyone else in the group or help them; to share what was going on in the area from our point of view; and to share what had been done in the area regarding health of people in the area, and; to be a part of reviewing the information that was gathered, and making decisions about what we were going to do about it, and formulating a plan." Additional interaction with SG members was required to share her organization's "point of view," but that was covered in the "speaking on their behalf" section. The SGR did not need to interact with SG members to share information that she had with the NOCC.

For SGR that did not have personal control over resources or knowledge, broader communication was needed with SG members who did control the resources. For example, one of the government agencies involved in the NOCC had air monitoring experts working for the agency, but, the air monitoring experts were not SGRs. The Agency SGRs discussed enlisting the technical expertise of environmental engineers from the air monitoring department with the supervisor of the air toxics department. The Agency SGR then needed to discuss the NOCC's

plans with an environmental engineer from the air monitoring department. To bring knowledge and resources to the NOCC, the Agency SGRs communicated with supervisors of their own departments and with SG members across agency departmental lines.

Another government agency on the NOCC experienced a similar communication pattern. As a supervisor of her department in the agency, the Agency SGR crossed departmental lines to add expertise to the NOCC's discussions. The Agency SGR stated, "Sometimes it has meant going across divisions lines and talking with our licensing folks about some of the issues regarding the NOCC. A lot of that conversation was mostly around the P2 [pollution prevention] effort where we needed to talk to the licensing folks." This SGR obtained information about technologies and practices that would result in decreased air emissions for the paper mill, about small business pollution prevention, and about conducting an audit of a town garage.

Occasion for SGRs' Interaction with SG Members
SGRs who wished to bring skills or knowledge to the NOCC communicated with SG members for mainly one reason -- to get permission to use the resources. Most SGRs needed initial approval to serve as a representative of the organizations, or to bring the knowledge that the SGR themselves possessed to the table. Whether initiated by the SGR or someone in a position of authority within the organization, initial approval to act as a representative required a two-way conversation with the SGRs and members of the SG. In one case, a very senior manager in an agency decided that the air toxics department should represent the agency. The communication was initiated from top down in this agency. In another case, an employee of a health care facility initiated a conversation with a manager to express a desire to represent the organization. This communication stemmed from the bottom up. But, in both cases, initial approval to represent the organization was the impetus for communication about the NOCC.

Additional conversations with SG members were needed to better utilize resources for specific NOCC projects. Two of the agencies involved with the NOCC had been looking at air quality issues in the Rumford area before the NOCC was formed. But the NOCC gave the agencies a structure for looking at air pollution. By including residents and the mill in the discussion of air monitoring, the NOCC brought resources and local knowledge together. The agencies added technical information and resources such as, "VOC samplers [volatile organic compounds], and canisters, and analytical support for the a few years." Local residents suggested sites for the air monitoring equipment based on their knowledge of normal wind patterns and housing patterns. And, the mill provided emissions data, and information about where certain pollutants may be released based on their knowledge of the paper making process and the layout of the plant.

To bring air monitoring equipment and technical knowledge to the NOCC, Agency SGRs needed to communicate with the SG members who had access to the resources. In this case, the Agency SGR provided updates about the NOCC's air monitoring efforts to the environmental engineer who assisted the NOCC. The environmental engineer discussed how the SGR shared information with him: "I don't have to ask for it. They keep me updated on what is going on through intergovernmental mail and so forth. I have attended a couple meetings up there [NOCC meetings in ME]. ... I am there to add more technical support to any discussion that might come up and to answer any questions that might be asked. We often have conference calls with [the SGRs] and with the state of ME. We talk about technical issues or anything related to what we have done up there."

From the view of her stakeholder group, the Agency SGR served on the NOCC to provide an opportunity to leverage resources to the group and to provide technical expertise. In addition to air monitoring help, the Agency SGR enlisted the expertise of other departments within her agency. With the help of her supervisor and a second Agency SGR on the NOCC, the Agency SGR spoke with people in the pollution prevention office and asked them help with the NOCC's pollution prevention project. The agency's pollution prevention office helped to initiate a new sampling method that was implemented at the mill.

There were numerous examples of SGRs encouraging their organizations to donate staff time or resources to assist the NOCC. Many of these examples come from SGRs with whom I did not interview, but I know about because of my work with the NOCC. Many NOCC projects would not have been successful, if SGRs did not initiated conversations with SG members about adding knowledge and resources to the NOCC. For example, a government agency donated data from their cancer registry and staff time to assist in analyzing the data so the NOCC could undertake the study of cancer in the area. This same government agency donated staff time to the NOCC to assist with the NOCC's radon study. A SG member provided knowledge about radon, home radon testing, and mitigation techniques by speaking to Rumford area residents and reviewing NOCC publications. The paper mill donated start up money to support a "Healthy Community" project that will consider ways to improve public health. Examples of how intra-stakeholder communication increased the NOCC's knowledge and resource base are too extensive to list here.

To enhance consensus building efforts by adding value to discussions, SGRs must communicate with SG members. For the NOCC, this meant receiving initial approvals to participate on the NOCC, and to enhance NOCC projects. All intra-stakeholder communication to bring knowledge and resources to the NOCC, must be two-way, because all SGRs were associated with organizations. A message asking for resource use was sent, and approval or denial of resource use was sent as feedback.

The exceptions were SGRs who believe they were the holders of the knowledge. These SGRs did need initial approval to participate on the NOCC, but did not need to communicate with SG members to insert their knowledge into NOCC discussions. The Labor SGR did not need to communicate with SG members to share her experience on the Maine Labor Group on Health, which was an educational branch of the labor union. The Labor SGR believed that she was a good stakeholder group representative because, "one reason is I never give up, another reason is I have done my homework, and I know what a lot of the hazards are. Basically, I just paid attention and I know it is not ultimately politically realistic, but I believe in cutting to the quick." Persistence and knowledge of occupational hazards were important characteristics for the NOCC, but require no communication with SG members to utilize.

Chapter 9 - Conclusions and Suggestions for Facilitators

On the NOCC, different SGRs perceived and executed their roles differently. But, there are patterns of differences. I have described four categories of how SGRs represented their stakeholder group members. In the following chart, I summarized the elements of representation for each of the four categories executed in a consensus building process. The chart highlight the differences among representation roles based on interviews with the NOCC's SGRs.

Elements of Representation by Category

Representation Category	Accountability	Alignment of Interests	Communication
Speaking Like One of Them	Low formal accountability, some association with organizations. Small town, social ties.	SGR assumes alignment.	Communication is membership initiated. Less need for SGR to seek out members to communicate.
Speaking on Their Behalf	Medium formal accountability, some association with organizations.	Alignment is not required.	Urgent need for communication. SGR rely on organizational procedures where available. If not, SGR must invent opportunity.
Speaking For the NOCC	High formal accountability.	Alignment is not required.	Communication is facilitator (project) initiated.
Bringing Skills and Resources to the Negotiation Table	High formal accountability, all associated with organizations.	Alignment is important, but not crucial.	Communication is co-initiated by both SGRs and SG members.

Speaking Like One of Them

Of the four representation categories, SGRs who were "speaking like one of them," required the least amount of formal accountability from SG members. There is less accountability in this category for two reasons. Many of the SGRs were not associated with organizations, and did not bring their organizational accountability with them to the table. This is even true for SGRs who were representing organizations. These SGRs felt they had a duel representation responsibility, one to their organization (that they represented in other categories), and to citizens of the town in which the SGRs resided. Although these SGRs felt that they were representing citizens, they were not classified as citizen representatives. So, as citizen representatives, the SGRs associated with organizations had no formal accountability to the citizens they were representing.

The second reason there is less formal accountability in this category is because of the small town in which the consensus building process occurred. In small towns, it is possible for a large percent of the town's population to personal know the SGRs. In tight-knit community, social ties and social pressure can act as a form of accountability. SGRs will not agree to a decision that will adversely affect their neighbors, family, and friends. In larger towns and cities where residents do not know their neighbors, other forms of accountability will have to be invented.

SGR who believed they were speaking like the members of their stakeholder group believed that they held the same views as SG members. These SGR were acting as a representative member of the stakeholder group, who was no different than most other members. In addition, communication in this representation category is membership initiated. SGR believed there was little need for them to seek out the opinions of other SG members, because opinions were assumed to be the same.

Knowing that some SGR assume alignment is important for facilitators. Because SGRs see themselves as no different than other, SGR less often seek out information from SG members. When information was publicized about the NOCC, SG members contacted their SGR to express their opinions. Facilitators must ensure that all SG members are provided periodic updates. Since communication is membership initiated, facilitators need to provide information for SG members to respond, and provide information about how SGRs can be contacted.

Speaking on Their Behalf

"Speaking on their behalf" requires more formal accountability than "Speaking like one of them." When SGRs speak like one of their SG members, they are still speaking as an individual with a representative view. When speaking for other SG members, SGRs are expressing the views of other individuals. To do this, SGRs must be held accountable for the views they bring to the negotiating table in order to be seen as credible and reliable. Accountability comes either from personal acknowledgments from SG members, or embedded in structure of the organization they are representing.

Alignment of interests is not required for SGR to speak for their SG. Allowing non-alignment between SGR and SG members is both positive and negative for the consensus building process. It benefits the process, because SGRs can describe the range of views within their SG. If the SGR can represent the range of views, more members of the SG will feel as though their concerns were incorporated in the consensus decision, and support it. But, there may be a negative effect on the process, because non-alignment can affect the SGR's motivation to participate. SGRs can unconsciously argue more zealously for their own point of view, while barely mentioning opposing views from SG members. SG members may feel less represented, or distrust their SGR, which is needed for SG members to accept the consensus agreement.

For the SGRs to share the range of views at the negotiation table, communication among SG members and the SGR is essential. There is no way for the SGR to know what members of the SG think about the issues, unless they talk (either in person, or via technology). And, the communication must be three-way. First the SGRs explain the discussions at the table and the issues to SG members. Second, SG members express their reactions about their positions on the issues to the SGR. And third, the SGRs explain the positions of SG members to other SGRs at the negotiating table.

Speaking For the NOCC
High accountability is required when "Speaking for the NOCC." Before the issues of dispute are discussed at the negotiating table, an agreement was reached that permitted and encouraged intra-stakeholder communication. NOCC members are accountable to each other, by their agreement to each other. It is essential to the consensus building process for information that comes within the process to be accurately portrayed to SG members. SG members need accurate information to make decisions about their positions on the issues, and to trust the process. If SG members hear conflicting information from their SGR, other SGRs, and the media, they will not know who to trust. Accountability is also essential for trust to be formed between SGRs. SGRs need to develop a level of trust to work efficiently with each other to be able to come to a consensus decision.

SGRs can represent NOCC happenings whether or not interests are aligned, including SGRs with SG members, or between SGRs. As with "Speaking on their behalf," the SGRs are describing other people's views, and occurrences at the negotiating table. Representing the NOCC is almost done journalisticly, that is reporting what occurred at NOCC meetings.

Representing the NOCC often was not done by SGRs. It was often facilitator, or project initiated. As the NOCC planned or executed public events, the facilitators would advertise the events, or provide information to local reporters. SG members would hear about the events through the media, or if SG members were needed to help with an event. One interesting aspect of representing the NOCC was that project or facilitator initiated messages would become the impetus for SG members to contact SGRs with their opinions.

Bringing Skills and Resources to the Negotiation Table
All SGRs who believed they brought skills and resources to the table had formal accountability to their SG. The accountability was provided by the organizations for whom the SGRs worked. SGRs are either assigned to the NOCC, or approved to act as a representative of the organization. Additionally, SGRs of organizations cannot commit service or monetary without approval of "proper channels" within the organization. How SGRs are held accountable to their stakeholder group is completely dictated by the organization, and the SGR's position within the organization.

To bring resources to the table, alignment of interests is important, but not crucial. In an organization, it is possible to be assigned to a task that you may not want to do. SGR can do the job or leave the organization. Of course, it is better for the consensus building process if SGRs are interested and supportive of the effort, because they will extend more initiative and attention. SGRs who support the process are more likely to seek out additional knowledge and resources from their organization. A few times, monetary or service resources were offered to the NOCC without SGR initiation. But, in most cases, the SGR asked sought out resources for the NOCC. It is better for the consensus building process if SGR and SG decision makers are in alignment, because both will be more motivated and enthusiastic about the work. It is easier for SGRs if their SG members are in agreement with them, because SGRs will have less work to do. If there is no alignment of interest, SGRs will be constantly trying to convince SG members to support the consensus process.

Communication about the consensus building process is co-initiated by SGRs and SG members, depending on the occasion for communication and the organization involved. Some SGRs asked to represent the organization on the NOCC, other organizations asked the SGR to join the NOCC. The same is true for project related resources, initiation could be by either SGR or SG

member. For some NOCC projects, the SGRs asked their organization to donate services or resources. Other NOCC projects were undertaken because an organization offered a resource. It is best for the consensus process if the SGR initiates communication about bringing skills or resources to the table, because SGRs have the more information about what the organization has available and about what the process needs.

Improving the Consensus Building Process: Suggestions for Facilitators
Understanding how SGRs perceive their roles as representatives can help facilitators improve the decision making process. Facilitators' role is to assist participants in reaching consensus decisions that are fair, wise, efficient, and stable. The facilitators' job is multifaceted. Facilitators identify stakeholder groups, train participants to be SGRs, organize meeting logistics, manage the dialogue at the negotiating table, help SGRs caucus, write press releases, research the issues under discussion, identify technical experts, aid the coalition secure funding, and much more. The facilitators' job is difficult and time consuming.

Considering the facilitators' already taxing role, I would like to offer suggestions to facilitators geared at easing the job, not adding to it. By empowering SGRs to communicate with their SG more effectively, the consensus building process can be executed more efficiently, with broader support, with less of the facilitators' time spent communicating on behalf of the coalition.

From the interviews with NOCC members, I discovered four kinds of problems encountered during the consensus building process. First, some SGRs seemed to be confused about the role of the SGR in the process, and SGRs mentioned that a lack of time limited their ability to fulfill their responsibilities. Second, a few SGRs did not understand that they could utilize various media, or did not know how to do it. Third, a few SGRs underscored the difficulty in discussing scientific and technical issues with lay people. And forth, many SGRs perceived their SG members to be apathetic and disinterested in the NOCC.

The Role of the SGR, a Time Consuming Task
At the beginning of the NOCC consensus building process, NOCC members attended a retreat where the facilitators explained the process. The facilitators discussed the goals of the process, the role of the SGR, and the role of intra-stakeholder communication. But the NOCC's process continued for over two and a half years, over which many SGRs forgot the basics, or joined the group after the retreat. In addition, SGRs saw themselves as having many roles, and different SGRs conceptualized their roles differently. Facilitators need to find ways to assist the various roles of different SGRs. The following are recommendations to help clarify SGRs' roles.

1. Remind SGR what their roles are.
At every NOCC meeting, facilitators hang an abbreviated agenda and list of ground rules on the wall. An abbreviated list of SGRs' role could be developed and also hung on the wall. This would remind members at every meeting of their responsibilities. In addition, anyone attending the meeting, such as the press or members of the public, would also know of their SGRs' role.

2. Be sure to explain the SGR role to new members.
All of the SGR that joined the NOCC after the retreat noted that no one explained the process, the role of the SGR, or the need to interact with other SG members. Therefore, facilitators need to explicitly describe the process as new members join the group. A "welcome packet" could be developed that included a meeting summary from the retreat, a summary of stakeholder responsibilities, ground rules, the mission statement, and meeting summaries from pivotal

meetings. In addition, new SGRs could be paired with a long-standing member who could serve as a mentor to guide them through the process. Ideally, the long-time SGR and the new member would be from the same stakeholder group.

3. Develop a communication sub-committee.
Facilitators can spend a great deal of time writing and distributing press releases. To free the facilitators of some of this responsibility, a communication sub-committee could be formed to write press releases or even an informal newsletter. This committee could maintain contact with local papers to publicize upcoming meetings, and submit agendas to encourage SG members with an interest in issues under discussion. Just as a technical sub-committee is formed to focus on technical issues so that all members do not have to spend time on it, a communication sub-committee would focus on communicating the group's work. This could help all SGRs to communicate with their SG, and help them reduce SGRs' time updating members. SGRs with communication or educational skills would be well suited for this committee.

The communication sub-committee could also help SGRs discover ways to communicate with SG members. Finding ways to communicate is especially important for SGRs not associated with organizations and do not have clear communication channels. For example, the sub-committee could seek out existing community or trade organizations that other SG members are associated with and could be used to channel information. Members of the community where the consensus process is occurring are better equipped than facilitators to expand communication channels available to SGRs.

Dealing With The Media
In addition to having some SGRs serve on a communications sub-committee, all SGRs should feel comfortable interacting with the media. Facilitators can help prepare SGRs and the media to communicate more easily. It is not enough to simply tell SGRs to attribute statements made to the media to themselves as individuals, and to not attribute statements to the whole coalition. SGRs should be encouraged and enabled to communicate with the media as a means to publicize the work of the group and to promote intra-stakeholder communication.

Promoting interactions with the media is beneficial for all representation categories. Obviously it helps SGRs to "speak for the NOCC," by discussing the work of the group. But it also helps SGRs who "speak like one of them" and "speak on their behalf." Having information about the NOCC in the media sparked the interest of SG members. It also gave them something to form an opinion about, to comment on, and a reason for the SG members to contact their SGRs. Since most intra-stakeholder communications was membership initiated when "speak like one of them" and "speak on their behalf," media coverage helps SGRs of these categories to hear and express the concerns of their SG members.

The communication sub-committee can prepare a media contact list with names, phone numbers, and addresses of local media contacts, deadlines for submission, and reporters specialties if applicable. Included in the contact list should be: community announcements; letters the to editor; local features; the science reporter; radio station public service announcements, and; local cable access shows. This one time effort can provide SGRs with everything they need to get their messages to a large number of people. SGRs should also be warned about spin. Facilitators should stress that although the media can deliver a message to a large number, the message will be the reporter's view, not the view of the coalition member. The media is a source of

information, not simply a conduit to channel information. If SGRs disagree with a journalists, they should be prepared to write a follow-up letter to the editor.

The communication sub-committee can also help local reporters. A packet can be distributed to local reporters who may be covering the events of the coalition. The packet would contain basic information about the group, so that when reporters attend a coalition meeting, interview a members, or cover a coalition event, they can focus on the SGRs' opinions instead of asking about the coalition's history. The coalition is ensured the reporters will have accurate information, and the SGRs will worry less about conveying inaccurate information, putting the SGRs at ease.

The packet could contain a collection of pre-existing documents and un-controversial data. The coalition's mission statement and goal would explain why the group is meeting. The coalition's membership list, or phone list (with home phone numbers erased) would list all stakeholders groups and their representatives, and the facilitators. A glossary of important definitions and acronyms could be compiled from past meeting summaries. A glossary would be especially important if the coalition is looking at highly technical issues and science journalist is not available. In addition, reporters should understand the consensus building process, and how it works. Facilitators should have access to concise descriptions of the process that can be included in the packet, and should be available to answer questions about it.

Communicating Scientific and Technical Issues
I was surprised to find that no SGR mentioned having difficulty with intra-stakeholder communication due to the technical nature of the NOCC's work. Some SGRs did mention that some discussions at the negotiating table were hampered by the differences in technical ability between SGRs. But, these same SGRs also noted that the facilitators helped the scientific discussions at the table in three ways. If SG members can more easily grasp the technical nature of many disputes, they may feel more comfortable expressing their opinions to their SGR.

1. Discuss scientific and technical information with smaller groups of people more often. Many of the SGR who served on sub-committees believed that they gained the most from the conversations with other sub-committee members. The difference between sub-committee meeting and full coalition meetings was the number of people who participated. The full NOCC consisted of forty people; sub-committee meets were attended by six to twelve people.

Sub-committee meeting consisted either of people who had an interest in the issues, like air quality, or who had expertise in the issue. And with the smaller number of people at the table, one on one, two way conversations would occur between people qualified and interested in explaining the issue and people interested in listening and understanding. This scenario lead to an effective exchange of information.

2. When technical issues are controversial, use more technical experts as educators and consultants who had no ties to the process.
In addition to people serving on the NOCC who possessed expertise, the NOCC utilized technical experts who were not members of the NOCC. For example, to design the cancer study, the NOCC enlisted the help of an epidemiologist from New Jersey. The epidemiologist had no personal interest is the outcome of the report, other than it being valid. The epidemiologist was neither connected to the paper mill nor any anti-industry groups. NOCC members could ask the epidemiologist questions, without fear that the answer would be biased.

An Agency SGR expressed the importance of using unconnected technical experts in the consensus building process: "One of the things we recognized early on was that people would listen to a third party on matters of public health and environmental policy. And that is why getting [the epidemiologist], and trying to bring in [agency] people who weren't tainted, and other experts that the community felt were working for them, I think gave them the incentive to listen more closely and perhaps put aside their own personal biases and anecdotal snippets that may be misinforming them. And that is really critical. I think that the single most important thing we did was to try and have the group have some technical credibility, and acknowledging that it wasn't going to come from inside the [NOCC], and investing in outside expertise that the [NOCC] felt that they owned."

Choosing a technical expert takes much care. The expert must be trusted by all stakeholder groups, be competent, be available and willing to act as a consultant (and usually for little or no money), and be able to communicate with SGRs with various levels of technical knowledge. One of the most stated benefits of utilizing the epidemiologist was that he was capable of explaining difficult concepts to all members of the NOCC.

Perceived Audience Apathy
This communication barrier is by far the most difficult to remedy. I am unable to determine the extent to which audience apathy does exist, or if apathy is only a perception of the SGRs. If widespread audience apathy does exist, I am unsure how to combat it. Addressing perceived audience apathy is important for "speaking like one of them," "speaking on their behalf," and for "bringing knowledge and resources to the table."

One comment that many SGRs did make was that community members have lived with the pollution for decades, and feel unable to change their situation. Facilitators should suggest that SGRs stress actions that their SG members can take to improve their situations. SGRs should balance their communications with both positive and negative information. If communications are always negative, then people will stop listening. Likewise, if information is always positive, it will not seem credible, and again people will not listen. Therefore, facilitators should help SGRs to balance their communications to paint an accurate picture of the issues and to suggest actions to give the audience a sense that their situations can change. For SGRs who "bring knowledge and resources to the table," SG members can be empowered by SGRs suggesting how the donation of knowledge and resources can benefit the group's work.

Conclusion
Understanding how stakeholder group representatives see their roles both as representatives and as communicators can help facilitators help the participants of the consensus building process. Representation is carried out differently by different SGRs, depending on who they represent, the resources they have available, and their available time. NOCC members saw themselves as speaking like their SG, speaking for their SG, speaking for the NOCC, or as bringing skills and resources to the negotiating table. Further research should be conducted to determine if other coalitions who use consensual decision making can also be described by these four representation categories. However SGRs see their roles as representatives, facilitators need to be aware of SGRs definitions of representation in order to help them to carry out their roles effectively.

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List of Interviews

All people interviewed were promised complete anonymity. Thus, interviews are identified only by stakeholder group. The number of people interviewed for each stakeholder group is designated in parenthesis.

NOCC Members
(24 active members)

Agency Stakeholder Group (four members)
Citizen Stakeholder Group (three members)
Elected Officials Stakeholder Group (two members)
Health Care Providers Stakeholder Group (two members)
Labor Stakeholder Group (two members)

Stakeholder Group Members

Agency Stakeholder Group (one member)
Citizen Stakeholder Group (one member)
Elected Officials Stakeholder Group (one members)
Health Care Providers Stakeholder Group (one member)
Labor Stakeholder Group (one member)

Narrative Protocol for NOCC Members

Name
Occupation
What group of people (or organization) do you represent as a member of the NOCC?

1.   Tell me how you got involved with the NOCC? How were you selected to the NOCC?

2.   How would you characterize your responsibilities as a NOCC member?

a.   What were/are your goals as a NOCC member? What did you hope to accomplish (for yourself or the group you were/are representing)?

3.   One of the things the facilitators discussed during the early NOCC retreat was the need for NOCC members to keep in contact with the people they were supposed to be representing, their stakeholder group.

a.   What did you think this meant and how, if at all, did you go about doing it?

b.   Would you describe some of the interactions you had or tried to have with your stakeholder group? If you didn't have any, why was that?

4. How effective do you think other NOCC participants were in keeping in touch with their stakeholder groups? Can you think of a NOCC participants who seemed to be doing an especially good job of this?

5. If you were giving advice to someone somewhere else involved in a similar process in the future, what would you suggest to them about keeping in touch with their "constituents" or stakeholder group members?

6. I'm particularly interested in the problem of passing along complicated scientific information. Do you have any thoughts about this?

7. What is your overall assessment of the whole NOCC process?

In what ways do you think it has been successful?   unsuccessful?

8.   Demographics
Gender -   F   M
Age -   20-30   30-40   40-50   50-60   60+

Education level -   high school diploma (or less)   1-2 yrs college
                         3-4 yrs college   graduate degree (or more)

Political affiliation -   democrat   republican   other
Length of time living in the Rumford area?
Prior level of involvement in community affairs?

Questions for stakeholder group members

Name
Occupation

1. (If interviewee is from the community) What are some issues about the quality of life in your town that are important to you?

2. Have you heard of the NOCC? (If no, thank them and end interview)

3. What have you heard about the NOCC?

4. Is there a person on the NOCC that you feel represents your point of view and your concerns about your (community, agency...)? Does anyone on the NOCC represent you?
If yes: Who is it?
If no: Have you spoken with (NOCC Member) about the NOCC?

5. Why do you believe that (NOCC Member) represents you? (Why do you say that?)

Does your SGR have the same perspective on those issues as you do?

6. What do you expect from (NOCC Member) as a representative of your group/organization?

7. Has your stakeholder group given you information that has changed the way you/your organization thinks or acts?

8. How do you think (NOCC Member) should go about finding out what people like you think about the things being discussed at NOCC meetings? How should they get information about your opinion?

9. Do you believe the information you received from the NOCC is accurate and truthful?

10. What responsibilities, if any, do you have to make sure that informal representatives like so-and-so know what you are thinking? What responsibilities to do you have as a constituent?

11. Demographic Data (OPTIONAL)
Gender -   F   M
Age -   20-30   30-40   40-50   50-60   60+

Education level -   high school diploma (or less)   1-2 yrs college
                    3-4 yrs college   graduate degree (or more)

Political affiliation -   democrat   republican   other_____

NORTHERN OXFORD COUNTY COALITION

Draft Ground Rules

I.   Mission and Goals

The Northern Oxford County Coalition has been established to improve the quality of life in the valley by protecting and promoting public health, enhancing air quality, and improving the overall image of the region. The Northern Oxford County Coalition will meet at least once a month beginning in September, 1995.

The goals of the NOCC are:

1.   To bring together as many individuals and groups with a stake in air quality in the region as possible to work together in an open and collaborative manner;

2.   To document current levels of air quality and the state of public health in the valley;

3.   To inform and educate the members of the coalition, and then the public-at-large, about current and projected future air quality in the valley and its relationship to the public health of the residents of the valley;

4.   To identify, explore, and recommend specific actions that government and local stakeholders might take to reduce risks in the valley associated with current or expected air quality; and,

5.   To recommend monitoring strategies, if appropriate, to provide continuous information regarding the changing nature of air quality and public health in the valley.

II.   Representation

The Northern Oxford County Coalition began meeting on February 2, 1994. At its April 4, 1995 meeting, participants discussed whether additional individuals or groups should be added to the NOCC. The Consensus Building Institute (CBI) offered to prepare a stakeholder analysis based on in-person and phone interviews with everyone who had attended a NOCC meeting as well as other people who NOCC participants recommended. The main purpose of the analysis was to identify the range of "stakeholder groups" with specific concerns about air quality in the valley, and to assess whether there was a need to add people to the NOCC to ensure that all stakeholder groups are fully represented.

The completed stakeholder analysis was based on the results of 48 interviews. Eight "stakeholder groups" with identifiable concerns about air quality or public health in the valley were identified. They are:

> State and Federal Government
> Local Government
> Business
> Organized Labor
> Citizens
> Health Care Providers
> Environmental Advocates
> State-wide Non-governmental Organizations

Based on the results of the stakeholder analysis, CBI made recommendations for adding representatives to the NOCC in several of the categories listed above. These recommendations were summarized in a document called "Suggestions for Ensuring Full Representation of Stakeholder Groups." NOCC participants discussed the recommendations at a meeting on June 6, 1995, and agreed that CBI should implement them. Between the June 6 meeting and the July 13 retreat, CBI worked with NOCC members to identify individuals who could represent health care providers, citizens, business, organized labor, and the State Bureau of Health. These individuals were invited to attend the retreat, and to join the NOCC on a long-term basis.

Additional members can be added to the NOCC at any time if members jointly agree that a stakeholder group is not adequately represented.

III.   Role of Members

In order for the NOCC to make progress, it is important that there be continuity among those participating. Over time, participants will develop experience, knowledge and relationships with one another that will be important to building consensus. Therefore, the NOCC will be comprised of a group of official members and their designated alternates.

Members of the NOCC are expected to attend all meetings of the coalition. They may also be asked to participate in subcommittee meetings. Members should participate by articulating the viewpoints of the stakeholders they represent and by helping other NOCC members to reach a better understanding of those views. In addition, they should seek input on a regular basis from those they represent, and keep those people informed about important discussions and decisions at NOCC meetings. In order to ensure an informed and productive discussion, members should also prepare for meetings beforehand by reading and reviewing the materials sent to them.

IV.   Role of Alternates

Each of the eight stakeholder groups can select one or more alternates to participate in NOCC meetings when one of the representatives from that stakeholder group cannot attend. If a member is absent from a meeting, then the alternate for that stakeholder group will be invited to sit at the table and participate in the discussion. When alternates take a seat at the table, they should identify the member they are replacing.

Alternates will be on the NOCC mailing list and will receive copies of all meeting summaries, reports, handouts, and other documents necessary to keep them informed so that they will be ready to step in at any time. They are encouraged to attend all NOCC meetings in order to keep informed about the progress of the coalition's deliberations. Alternates can participate actively on all sub-committees.

V.   Role of Other Members of the Public

Meetings of the NOCC are open to the public. Interested citizens are invited and encouraged to attend. Observers will be seated separately from the members and alternates. They will be asked not to interrupt the discussion taking place at the table, unless there is time set aside for observers to offer their views on issues under discussion.

VI.   Communication and Decision Making

The purpose of the NOCC is to share information, discuss concerns and viewpoints, and build consensus. There will be no formal votes taken during NOCC meetings. Instead, members of the group will aim to reach agreements that meet the interests of all the participating stakeholder groups. Any consensus achieved on a specific issue will be tentative pending an agreement on all the issues being considered by the NOCC. A member's absence will be considered equivalent to not dissenting.

In order to facilitate an open and collaborative discussion, all members and alternates will be asked to follow the following rules:

* Only one person will speak at a time, and no one will interrupt when another person is speaking.

* Each person will express his or her own views rather than speaking for others at the table.

* No one will make personal attacks.

* Each person will stay on track with the agenda.

* Each person will refrain from dominating the discussion, in order to ensure that everyone at the table has an opportunity to speak.

Members are expected to communicate concerns, interests and ideas openly and to make the reasons for their disagreements clear. In the event that a member is unable to speak about a concern directly to another member, he or she can contact the facilitators by phone (or in person). The facilitators will serve as a channel for these concerns. Upon request, all information or views shared during conversations with the facilitators will be kept confidential.

VII. Role of Facilitators

Facilitation will be provided by Patrick Field and Sarah McKearnan of the Consensus Building Institute. Professor Lawrence Susskind will provide supplementary training and advice on the design of the workplan and any joint fact-finding process the NOCC decides to undertake. The facilitators will help to:

1) formulate the agenda for all meetings of the NOCC and its subcommittees, and facilitate discussion at full NOCC meetings;

2) summarize points of agreement and disagreement and communicate these to the NOCC in the form of written meeting summaries;

3) assist in building consensus among participants;

4) serve as a confidential communication channel for members, alternates or observers who wish to express views but do not feel comfortable addressing the full NOCC;

5) advocate for a fair process and remain nonpartisan with respect to the outcome of the NOCC's deliberations;

6) ensure compliance with all the above listed ground rules; and

7) draft summary reports, if appropriate, for review and approval by NOCC members.

The facilitation team can be reached at

Consensus Building Institute
131 Mount Auburn Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
1-800- 433-3043

VIII. Subcommittees

Subcommittees will be established by the NOCC to engage in more in depth discussion on specific issues, to carry out tasks described in the work plan, and to perform administrative functions that are best left to a small subset of NOCC members. These

subcommittees will meet between meetings of the full NOCC and will report back to coalition members about the results of their work.

IX.   Outreach

All meetings of the NOCC will be open to the media.

The facilitators will assist NOCC members in identifying ways of keeping residents of the towns of Rumford, Mexico, Peru and Dixfield informed about the NOCC's work. It may be possible to have meetings of the NOCC videotaped and later broadcast by a local cable channel. The facilitators will also distribute all meeting summaries and other documents prepared for coalition members to any members of the public who want to receive them. A database of such interested citizens will be maintained at CBI, and members of the NOCC are encouraged to add additional names to it at any time.

NOCC members and alternates are free to make statements to the press regarding their own concerns or reactions to NOCC meetings, but should at all times refrain from attributing statements or views to other NOCC members or to the facilitators. If a news story misquotes or inaccurately represents an individual's views, then that individual should inform the NOCC of this occurrence as soon as possible.

Regular press conferences will not be held, but the facilitators may periodically produce draft press releases to keep the media informed about the NOCC's work. These will be reviewed by a designated subcommittee of NOCC members.

X.   Meeting Summaries

The facilitation team will prepare a summary of each meeting. The summary will include the key points covered in the discussion, as well as areas of agreement and disagreement described without attribution. A draft version will be sent to NOCC members and alternates after each NOCC meeting. Approval of the summary will occur at the following meeting, after the facilitators take note of any proposed additions, corrections, or clarifications. If substantial changes are made, a revised version will be sent to members and alternates, as well as any observers who wish to receive it.

Attendance will be kept at each meeting, and a roster of the those in attendance will be mailed out with each meeting summary.