NTPEP Geosynthetics Technical Committee
February 18, 2009, 2:00 p.m. EST, Conference Call Minutes

Participants: Keith Platte (AASHTO), Tony Allen (WSDOT), John Remmers (NYDOT), Jim Curtis (NYDOT, John Remmers (NYDOT), Peter Kemp (WIDOT), Dan Sajedi (MDDOT), Ron Haste (MDDOT), ??? (MDDOT), Kurt Neihaus (KSDOT)

1. Geotextile program product tracking and test cycle dating

Options to track and date geotextile submissions were discussed. It was decided that the most reliable and consistent date to use is the date the test results are reported. Currently, the GTX number contains the submission date, and may cause confusion with regard to product tracking. However, the submission date still needs to be tracked as well. To address this issue, it was suggested, and agreed upon, that a temporary submission number be given, such as a letter and a sequential number until the test results are reported, at which point, a final GTX number (including the reporting date) would be assigned. It was noted that the GTX PEF will need to be modified to reflect these changes.

2. GTX report format

The format for report containing the GTX test results was briefly discussed. Excel will be used to create the report, using the format developed recently by Keith Platte and NYDOT.

3. Geotextile UV testing

What products need to be tested, and whether or not the UV testing is optional, has been confusing. Tony Allen explained that the UV testing is intended to be mandatory just as the rest of the geotextile tests are mandatory. But the UV test, as a minimum, only needs to be done for the lightest weight product in the product line. A manufacturer should have the option, however, to have UV testing performed on additional products in the product line. The GTX testing fee schedule needs to be modified to reflect this, as the current testing fee schedule is confusing on this point.

Whether or not to wait until the UV testing is done before reporting any test results for a given product and product line was discussed. The problem is that it could easily take an additional month or two beyond the rest of the geotextile testing for the product line to obtain the UV test results. This potentially could delay reporting GTX test results to the next testing cycle. The TC decided that it would be best to wait until the UV test results are available before officially reporting the complete suite of test results for those products. Note that some modifications to the GTX test report may be needed to properly report the UV test results. It also needs to be clear that the UV test results apply to other heavier products in the product line, not just the product upon which the UV test was conducted.

The need for additional geotextile sample for the UV testing was discussed. Currently, the sampling requirements and procedures in general for GTX are only contained in the letter sent to the state DOT sampler. The sampling requirements and procedures should be covered in a more accessible document, such as the Application Package and/or the GTX Work Plan. The applicant should have some idea about how much material we will be taking, and the requirements should be preserved in a more permanent and official document.
4. Other issues

Tony Allen has been working with Keith Platte to clean up the REGEO Work Plan and Application Package. Based on that experience, it appears to be necessary to clean up the General Procedures document and Application package for the GTX program as well. It was noted that the presentation of the GTX Application on the NTPEP website was confusing, as some of the DOT members on this conference call didn’t realize that the header page showing above the document links for the PEF and Testing Fee Schedule was in fact the rest of the application package.

NYDOT mentioned that some manufacturers apparently are confused about what a MARV is. It was discussed, however, that this is likely an isolated problem, and the best approach is to simply correct the manufacturers is this problem crops up.

It was noted that some products are coming from manufacturers with dual designations. How should this be handled? The group agreed that the second designation should be treated as a private label, which means that the manufacturer needs to supply documentation identifying that the two designations do in fact represent the same product, and the private label administrative fee should be charged.

How to handle geotextile products made from post-consumer recycled material was also discussed. Issues include potential for increased variability, loss of stabilizers, and changing polymer sources and quality levels. Should each recycled material product be treated as its own product line (i.e., for UV testing)? If we accept recycled products for testing, do we increase testing frequency? Should NTPEP even accept geotextiles made from recycled material for testing? Should the manufacturer be required to disclose on the PEF whether or not the geotextile contains recycled material? What of the product contains regrind material from within the manufacturing plant? Is that OK?

It was noted that AASHTO M288 says nothing about any prohibitions regarding the use of recycled material in geotextiles. Tony Allen mentioned that the AASHTO Bridge Design Specifications do prohibit the use of post-consumer recycled material for geosynthetic reinforcement. The work plan already requires manufacturers to disclose their use of recycled material for geosynthetic reinforcement products, due to this AASHTO requirement. Tony also mentioned that use of regrind is fairly common in geotextile manufacturing, and in general they can accomplish that without degrading the polymer or the stabilizers. However, NYDOT cited experience with polystyrene blocks that had property problems due to the use of regrind in that case. In general, trying to deal with the regrind issue could be very difficult and controversial.

No consensus was reached regarding the recycled product issue. Further discussion on this issue will be postponed to the NTPEP national meeting in Maine. Tony mentioned that the time available for the Geosynthetics TC in Maine may need to be increased to allow enough time to discuss this issue.

Tony Allen mentioned that the TC will shortly be receiving a ballot for the revised REGEO Work Plan and Application package. Tony agreed to send Keith the final cleaned up version to Keith for balloting purposes by Thursday, 2-19-09.

Conference call adjourned at 3:30 p.m. Eastern time.