

Minutes of the Air Quality Task Force Meeting

Mexicali/Imperial

June 12th, 2014

Mexicali

Co-Chairs: Reyes Romero; Saul Guzman

Attendance:

Reyes Romero, Imperial County Air Pollution Control District;
Belen León, Imperial County Air Pollution Control District;
Ray Askins, Environmentalist;
Claudia Cristerna, citizen;
Margarito Quintero, Engineering Institute at UABC;
Michael Schorr, Engineering Institute at UABC;
Raul Tovar, Secretariat of Environmental Protection in Baja California;
Meosotiz Torres, Environmental Protection Management;
Hector Lares, Environmental Protection Management in Mexicali
Luis Carlos Castro, Mexicali Business Development Board;

Ricardo Soria, Mexicali Business Development Board;
Miguel Canales, Engineering Institute at UABC;
Carlos Angulo, CALEPA Border Affairs;
José Guerrero, Environmentalist;
Jesus Jimenez Payan, PROFEPA;
Carlos Salazar, Secretariat of Environmental Protection;
Tania Rodriguez, Secretariat of Environmental Protection;
José Mercado, Media;
Dave Fege, EPA;
Mr. Renison, Imperial County Supervisor;
Monica Villaseñor, Secretariat of Environmental Protection.
Blanca Tapia, Media

I. Welcome and Initial Comments

Reyes Romero thanked everyone in attendance for taking time off their busy agendas to be at this meeting. **Rail Tovar** also thanked everyone for being at the meeting on behalf of **Doctor Carlos Graizbord**, who unfortunately could not make it today.

II. Revision of Minutes from Prior Meeting

Reyes Romero asked everybody at this time to make any comments or suggestions with regards to the minutes from their prior meeting. **Margarito Quintero** asked to have more information on a project that **Luis Olmedo** mentioned on the last meeting. **Reyes Romero** explained to him that it was a study to determine which the most important pollution spots in the Imperial Valley were. **Carlos Angulo** offered to send him more information about it. After these comments, the minutes were approved.

III. Presentations; questions and answers

Actions to Improve Air Quality; Carlos Salazar Briones, on behalf of Doctor Carlos Graizbord

Reyes Romero asked how this program was connected to the Pro Aire Program. He mentioned that he was under the understanding that the Pro Aire Program had been updated, and that it had been included to the 14-20 Air Quality Program.

Carlos Salazar explained that state and federal agencies had participated on this pilot program, and he added that what they were looking for was making this programs very specific programs, and they were going to look for all the stakeholders needed, whether they were state, federal, or even international ones.

He finished saying that the main objective of this program was to come up with a management system through everyone's collaboration, and pointed out that the state is actively participating on the projects that are a part of the Pro Aire Program.

Ray Askins said he felt that the 2012 program had failed. He mentioned that with the change in administration no one follows through, and the plans literally die. He also mentioned that according to the Constitution in Mexico, article 34, we are entitled to a clean ecology, but the Mexican government does not take that seriously. He said that he would like to see definitive progress.

Carlos Angulo said that this meeting should be constructive. He mentioned that they should look at the issues at a globalized level. He suggested observing their state needs, finding out what they count with to solve them, and to take actions accordingly. He mentioned that California already had a legislative mandate to reduce green gasses. He also mentioned that Mexico already has a climate change committee that should consider the idea of buying carbon credits, and that they should consult with California or the West Governors Conference to try to comply with the requirements for them, and to present tangible projects to them.

Jesus Jimenez Payán mentioned that they still didn't have monitors to indicate air quality in Mexicali. He said citizens could see that they're going through a very critical phase regarding air quality. He added that everyone should work together to find a solution to the program. He said that sometimes it was necessary to stop the pollution source at that precise moment, and they had realized that businesses were not the main pollutant source, and that these were already somehow regulated. He mentioned that trash and tire burning were a bigger problem, and that they were not regulated. He asked what the proposal from this task force was to solve these kinds of issues, and he requested to find a way of taking punitive measures assigning surveillance committees to attack the problem.

Reyes Romero mentioned that he could feel certain frustration on the comments from participants at this meeting, and he said he understood them. He also mentioned that 15 years ago, no one was worried about air quality issues in the region, and that it had been through these task forces together with bi national dialogues that an advance on the issue had been made. He said that as an example, the Mexicali paving program had been developed through groups such as this one. He also mentioned the media campaign through which they had been raising awareness about trash and tire burning, as well as fireworks burning, which are serious problems during the winter season. He finished saying that even though he understood their frustration and their wish to see bigger advances, they should all continue to participate so that through task forces such as this one, they would make their voices heard, and that if they really wanted a change, they should claim it.

José Guerrero said to also had been coming to these meetings for years, and that he could tell there was a lot of talent, as well as valuable and committed people in groups such as this one, because they had the conviction that groups like this work, and even though the advances are not always what they would like them to be, they had already accomplished many good things. He invited everyone to continue participating and looking for plans that could be jointly accomplish.

An attendee mentioned that what the government was lacking were the indicators since without measurements, tasks cannot be diversified or improved. He said that groups like this one, should raise what is missing in order to set goals and more specific tasks that should be followed up meeting after meeting

Carlos Salazar said that on the presentation he had shown plans and projects exclusively. However, he said they had indicators, and that an example of this was the Mexicali air quality daily measurements, which were published on the SPA website. He also mentioned that a lot of the information that the Secretariat currently has come from research done by different institutes including UABC, and that the projects on this presentation were based on these results. He said that it was definitely time to move from forecasts to actions, but he also mentioned that their resources were limited, and that they had to go through the necessary processes to make sure resources were directed to the environmental funds

provided by law. He explained that some of the projects were already being carried out. He concluded saying that there was still lots to do, but that any project that would allow progress, would set them closer to their goal. He ended saying that their intention was to keep headed on that direction.

“Green Shields”; Carlos Salazar Briones, SPA

Michael Schorr said that he would like to propose something very specific. He proposed publishing a bilingual annual summary on which the work done by this Group would be shown. He said it should include specific proposals, as well as illustrated activities done during the year.

Carlos Angulo suggested to present a plan on which Mexicali were declared a disaster zone as far as air quality goes. He said it should contain all the necessary elements to support it, and that it should be sent to whom it may concern at NAFTA to claim a percentage of the environmental risk fund because of the environmental damage caused by the factories due to green gasses, he said this would also help Mexicali to get carbon credits.

Carlos Salazar said he was grateful for all the suggestions to find mechanisms to get resources for the projects.

An attendee asked why the SPA did not manage CESP on investment and allocation of purple lines. He asked how many purple lines were going to be done in 2015. He also asked how many companies were audited on environmental issues, how many were in compliance, and how many were fined.

Carlos Salazar said that the purple lines infrastructure was CESP responsibility, and that the Green Shields Program was focused not only to drains and canals, but also to central street dividers. He said they were negotiating to get CESP support to add an irrigation system to the pilot programs they are proposing so that they can monitor it. He also mentioned that there was an intention of adding funds for SPA to take on these kinds of projects, and that they did not want to leave research out. He explained that most of the contribution from the secretariat would be on the management system. He finished thanking the support to get federal funds for these projects.

Ray Askins said that he wanted to suggest to plant trees on all those empty lots which the municipal government said needed to be fenced.

Carlos Salazar said they were working on a pilot proposal so that owners of large land extensions would have some kind of incentive to keep their land with a significant amount of vegetation.

IV. Updates on Border 2020 Program, Dave Fege

Dave Fege said that another project the EPA supports through the Air Resources Board was the real time website that reports air quality for Imperial Valley, and that starting in January they were going to have forecasting for Pm 2.5 and Pm 10 for the Imperial Valley website.

V. Updates on Federal, State, and Local Governments

Belen Leon said that under the Vehicle Idling Emission Study they were doing an analysis on Vehicle idling at the East and West ports of entry including commercial trucks on the East port. She explained that they were surveying people depending the car they are utilizing, their purpose in the US is, what type of gas they're using as well as how long they've been waiting in line. She also said that the purpose of this study was to gather information to find out what kind of impact for PM and CO the lines will have. She mentioned that the first survey had been done during the Memorial weekend on over 500 cars, and over 180 trucks. She explained that they were going to do this in three different seasons; the first one had already been done for the spring in May, the one for the summer would be done in July and August, and the last one, for the winter season would be done around November and December. She said she had

information that she could send by e-mail if they were interested, and she also mentioned that they had been meeting regularly to follow up on the project.

Reyes Romero mentioned that one of the interesting points of this project was that once emissions have been evaluated at the ports of entry, recommendations will be made to allow them to work together with the federal government on the implementation of them to reduce emissions. He also mentioned that they were working on a State Implementation Plan to reduce PM 2.5. He said they were working with the state and the EPA to come up with a document so that they would be able to give them more details on what this program included. He mentioned that one of the chapters within this document talked about bi national collaboration, and that the projects that were being carried out and had come up from this group were part of this chapter as well.

Raul Tovar mentioned to have had federal support to give preventive and remedial maintenance to the monitoring stations in Tijuana and Mexicali. He also said to be working on its website so that the generated information could be seen.

Jesus Jimenez Payan mentioned that the website used to have very good service, and that he was glad to know that it was going to have that good service again.

Margarito Quintero mentioned that the border has been benefited from the 2012,2020, and other programs. He congratulated **Carlos Salazar** on his presentation, even though he said it seemed a little too ambitious. He asked what was going on with the Pro Aire Tijuana Rosarito Program. He said he would like to know when it was going to get started, and if it was going to be presented soon because otherwise, the information would no longer be updated. He also asked when the monitoring station was going to be installed on the roof. He said he would like to know what had happened to the Pro Aire Mexicali 2011-2020 monitoring group. He said it had been a long time since they last met. He said they had to follow up on the projects, finish them, and begin new ones.

Raul Tovar said with regards to the Pro Aire programs that the federal government had decided to make a change and see them all as a whole. He mentioned that Saul Guzman was now the environmental issues director, and that following up on those programs was part of his agenda. As far as the monitoring station, he said they were waiting to receive the necessary resources to start working on it again.

Jesus Jimenez Payan said that as far as the work of this task force was concerned, they already had enough collected data, and that it was time to take on more specific actions based on that information. He said that it was not clear to him what the attributions of this group were. He mentioned that it was necessary to publish something, just as **Michael Schor** had suggested earlier so that the community finds out what they had been working on, and what the proposals that they are generating are. He also mentioned that it was time to take on remedial actions, and to implement preventive actions afterwards.

Margarito Quintero said to agree on publishing what they do within this task force, and he also said that it would be interesting to publish what had been discussed today at this meeting on the newspaper or at SEMARNAT or EPA.

VI. Wrap Up / Date of the Next Meeting

Reyes Romero said that the date for the next meeting would be September 11th in Calexico, and that he hoped to see everyone there again.

Meeting Adjourned

