

Minutes

78th Meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee for the Improvement of Air Quality in the Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua / El Paso, Texas / Doña Ana County, New Mexico Air Basin

Virtual Meeting: Oct 15, 2020	
JAC Members Attending (*Alternate ** Not Present)	
U.S.	México
Guy Donaldson, US EPA	Daniel López, SEMARNAT
Lorinda Gardner, TCEQ	Lili González, PROFEPA
Armando Paz, NMED	**COESPRIS
Jacob Kidd, City of Las Cruces	*Gilberto Wenglas, SDUE de Chihuahua
Norma Hajar, City of El Paso	**Gibrán Solís, CANACINTRA Juárez
John Quinn, Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold	Dra. Margarita Peña, Dirección de Ecología de Ciudad Juárez
*Larry Olsen, Ph.D., Citizen	**Ing. Vicente López, IMIP
**Alberto Correa, Capítulo Paso del Norte	René Franco, Franco y Asociados
David Dubois, NMSU	Dra. Alba Yadira Corral, UACJ
Wen-Whai Li, Ph.D., P.E., UTEP	Mario Vázquez, NADB
Claudia Valles, El Paso MPO	
Carlos A Rincón, US EPA - Liaison	Biól. Gerardo Tarín, SEMARNAT- Liaison
Eugenia (Gina) Posada, TCEQ - Liaison	

Welcoming Remarks:

Guy Donaldson, JAC Copresident welcomed everyone. He introduced Commissioner Janecka of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for welcoming remarks.

Commissioner Janecka welcomed and thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting. He also wished for participants to continue being healthy and safe. Commissioner Janecka welcomed Sergio Vasquez to the Border Affairs team. He thanked Sergio and Gina Posada for all their efforts in coordinating the JAC meeting. The TCEQ submitted draft framework comments for B2025 and hope all stakeholders provided feedback on this important roadmap for

collaboration. He commented that he is looking forward to the upcoming premier of the new program. He mentioned one particular topic in this framework that TCEQ is excited about relates to exploring innovative funding mechanisms that support air monitoring. He reported there are several viable options to create a binational fund, mainly through NADB, that members of the JAC could advise. He mentioned looking forward to learning more details for the new binational funding mechanism proposal. He reported air quality is the top priority for TCEQ in this region. He mentioned wanting to work closely with New Mexico and Chihuahua to ensure everybody has access to air quality data. He recognized that data for the entire air basin helps the public make better decisions to protect their health. The Commissioner mentioned the need to ease the transfer of monitoring equipment across the border for government sponsored studies, ensuring Texas, New Mexico and our partners in Chihuahua can work together. Commissioner Janecka asked for support from EPA and SEMARNAT in establishing a simple process to ensure these studies are successful. He recognized Arturo Blanco, the EPA Director of the Office of Environmental Justice and Tribal Affairs, for his upcoming retirement and congratulated him for his wonderful work.

Copresident Donaldson also recognized Arturo Blanco's long public service career at the city, state and federal levels within the field of environment. Copresident Donaldson worked with Arturo on a committee similar to the JAC in Houston and appreciated Arturo's humble leadership style. Copresident Donaldson mentioned looking forward to the wonderful presentations at this meeting.

Arturo Blanco thanked Commissioner Janecka and Copresident Donaldson for their kind words. He thanked both JAC Copresidents for allowing him time to express his appreciation for this committee. He has worked for EPA for the last five years on border topics. He recounted his career trajectory starting in Abilene and working in the border region in Brownsville and Laredo. The border program is close to his heart. He acknowledged all the agencies working together was a vital part of all the successes achieved in the border region. He expressed appreciation to Commissioners Lindley and Janecka, the leadership in Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, and Chihuahua. He was grateful for the opportunity to speak and bid farewell to all.

Copresident López greeted everyone. He thanked Commissioner Janecka for all the support TCEQ provides for this meeting and announced there were more than sixty people in attendance. This virtual platform has helped the JAC to disseminate information more broadly. He has worked with Arturo a few times, and appreciated all his support and dedication to the border work and this committee.

Copresident Donaldson acknowledged the support of the TCEQ for coordinating the virtual meeting.

Copresident López acknowledged the full agenda. He welcomed the updates for some of the projects but especially the binational funding proposal.

Presentation and approval of minutes:

The minutes were approved in anticipation of the virtual meeting. Each voting member approved the minutes through email and this action was annotated and dated per email receipt. Quorum was reached.

Public comments: Dr. David Eaton of UT-LBJ announced there is a new program that will fund 10 internships for the University of Texas at Austin U.S.-Mexico Environmental Fellowship Program. Graduate and undergraduate students can apply to work with governmental agencies in

the US or Mexico, including New Mexico, Texas, and the four Mexican states, or non-governmental agencies, or private for-profit companies to solve environmental issues in air, water, or waste topics. The students must be bilingual and willing to work on a cross-border environmental topic for the upcoming summer. If interested please call Dr. Eaton, Eddie Moderow, or any of the BA staff.

Eddie Moderow encouraged meeting participants to find a fact sheet about the fellowship on the JAC Website.

Copresident Donaldson acknowledged the program and the opportunity for students to obtain experience on binational issues.

Cemellí de Aztlán, of El Paso Equal Voice Network, asked about concerns for ozone levels. She is also a member of the Environmental Justice Council. She thanked everyone for the opportunity to speak.

Member announcements: No member announcements were provided.

Paso del Norte Air Quality Report by Carlos Rincon, USEPA

CemellíA de Aztlán asked about the reduction of air monitoring stations.

Copresident Donaldson informed Ms. Aztlán that he was not aware of the reduction of air monitoring in the area. The NAAQs minimum requirement both NM and Tx meet it.

Eddie Moderow informed that TCEQ far exceeds the minimum monitoring network requirement. Ojo de Agua moved the parameters to another site. He mentioned being available to discuss the network.

Inventory of Emissions Inventories: New Effort to Compile Existing Information in the Border Region by Carrie Wheeler and Caroline of USEPA, and Hugo Landa of SEMARNAT

Larry Olsen asked if there was more SO₂ data then 2016, and if that data related to satellite images.

Caroline mentioned 2016 was the latest data and the data was not related to satellite images for the US side.

Copresident López answered SEMARNAT was currently working on 2018 data. He stated the agency handles a great deal of information in greater detail and that this process delays in terms of information processing. He informed the participants that it takes a year and a half depending on the type of information and resources SEMARNAT may have to process the data. He gave the example for the 2020 yearly emissions inventory; the process could be ready by the end of 2021 or 2022. At the moment SEMARNAT was working with 2018 data and as soon as the information is ready, he hoped next year SEMARNAT will be updating it in coordination with the EPA.

Copresident Donaldson mentioned this presentation was a very important overview.

Ecología Municipal de Ciudad Juárez: AQ Monitoring Stations Update by Dr. Margarita Peña and Alejandro Vega, UACJ

Dr. Margarita Peña informed the committee Dr. Vázquez was not able to attend and sends condolences to his family.

Copresident López appreciated all the efforts the municipality is doing and understands this has been a challenge due to the lack of funding from the federal government.

Dr. Patricia Juárez from UTEP asked what is the reason the air monitoring stations are located in the fringe of Ciudad Juárez instead of the dense traffic areas.

Ricardo Aragón from Ecología Municipal answered by stating the location of the monitors was decided following a study done by TCEQ and City of El Paso. He acknowledged Ciudad Juárez has grown a tremendous amount and yes Ecología Municipal tried to cover all the requirements needed. The relocation from Delphi to Conejos Médanos is due to the location being nearby, but it was the most accessible place that was found until now.

Dr. Alba Corral from UACJ asked if at the time of the Delphi relocation if Ecología Municipal considered the impact of the wastewater treatment plant emissions, and the vehicular flow in this area.

Ricardo Aragón answered it was considered. He reported the new location is away in a lower traffic area. Yes, the possible emissions from the treatment plant have also been considered. Yes, the location is away from the emissions from the plant to have a more accurate measurement. Dr. Alba also suggested to have a monitor to measure hydrogen sulfide.

Ricardo Aragón agreed to the suggestion.

Dr. Patricia Juárez from UTEP mentioned Delphi, Canales are in green areas, and asked if this could impact real measurements.

Dr. Margarita Peña answered that the monitors are not in green areas, and there is heavy traffic.

Ricardo Aragón mentioned that Advance was strategically placed there because of the brick kilns. Delphi was placed in an industrial park.

Dr. Patricia Juárez asked if the locations can also impact the results if the monitors are placed in green areas.

Ricardo Aragón responded that it could have an impact if the trees were high and captured emissions, but these stations are not in green areas.

Border Transportation Master Plan by Caroline Mays, Texas Transportation Department

Dr. Rincón informed Ms. Mays of the SEDUE and IMIP's transportation projects. Both agencies finished a project to identify efficiencies and mechanisms to have workshops with freight companies, but due to COVID-19 those were not completed. He suggested a follow up presentation for the next meeting.

Ms. Mays responded that TXDOT engaged with IMIP, and recently she met with TCEQ. She stated there is a link between transportation and environmental community issues that can be addressed together. She reported TXDOT has community outreach in the US and Mexico with freight, trucking industry, and rail companies.

Copresident López thanked Carlos and Caroline. He mentioned the study and collaboration will assist in policy actions. In the case of Mexico, there were problems in terms of ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel in the area for freight transport. He reported the border area has had access to this type of fuel for several years. He mentioned there is a lack of policies at the local level to take advantage of the availability of this fuel. He acknowledged studies like this one help us to determine the action needed to establish with the Chihuahua government and municipalities the reduction of emissions in the region.

2020 Urban Heat Island Mapping in El Paso and in Las Cruces, NM by [Fernando Berjano, City of El Paso](#) and [Dr. David DuBois, NMSU](#)

Copresident Donaldson mentioned the relationship between high temperatures and air pollution, particularly for ozone, being interesting. He was amazed with the project volunteers and students in collecting the data in such hot weather.

Dr. Olsen mentioned nothing can be done about the heat but to give people advice about what to do on those days with high temperatures.

Dr. DuBois mentioned heat warnings can be given. There is a need for cooling centers. He reported guidance can be given to people and to government.

Gustavo Sanchez asked if there are more technologies that can be used.

Dr. DuBois mentioned the need to identify hot spots, the need for trees, and cooling centers. He reported City of Las Cruces, El Paso and other parts of the southwest are dealing with the same problems. He stated another option is to try to learn from other locations.

Fernando Berjano mentioned obtaining the results two weeks ago. He reported this could be a powerful tool to mitigate health and heat.

Dr. Kathleen Staudt suggested planning departments can be more proactive in incentivizing landscaping and other efforts to get more shade or green areas. She reported the City of El Paso widening interstate highways but this strategy can bring more issues.

Dr. Olsen suggested communicating with city councils in the area. He used to live in Tempe, Arizona where they added misters. He reported businesses increased sales by this addition.

Dr. Dubois mentioned the City of las Cruces is increasing the use of public transportation for their climate change action plan.

Copresident López appreciated the interaction from all on this topic and emphasized it was an interesting presentation.

Status on Closure of Border 2020 Paso del Norte Air Quality Two Year Action Plan by Dr. Carlos Rincon, USEPA

No public comments were made.

Public comments:

Carlos Rincón reminded Copresident Donaldson to ask Ms. Posada regarding the quorum. Copresident Donaldson reported quorum was reached.

Karl Rimkus posed a question for an agenda item at the next meeting. He mentioned the topic is in regard to the Levee Rd. which is between the international boundary and the border fence. He reported the border patrol vehicles emit a great deal of emissions. He requested an agenda item to resolve this issue with a non-regulatory approach. The border patrol can expand on techniques used to solve the issue. Mr. Rimkus informed the City landfill is sprayed with a soil stabilizer where it cements particles together. This spray helps with erosion and dust control. The City proposed the use of this soil stabilizer between Ascarate and Chamizal along the levee road; then observe if those levels in the monitors are reduced.

Copresident Donaldson favors this proposal and welcomes conversation with Border Patrol and the City of El Paso.

Dr. Rincon suggested the West Texas Advisory Group might be a good forum for this topic as well. EPA will follow up on this topic.

Report from Subcommittees:

Air Quality Monitoring by Armando Paz, NMED

Dr. DuBois suggested adding the dates of exceedances and high ozone value dates.

Ms. Posada suggested adding the dates in the notes of the slides since they are too busy with information.

Binational Air Quality Funding Proposal by Dr. Wenglas, SEDUE and Eddie Moderow, TCEQ

Copresident Donaldson appreciated the information and advised the committee members to read the information and make informed decisions.

Copresident López agreed this is great news for the region and hopes other funding sources are identified.

Highlights and Consensus Items

Copresident Donaldson appreciated the interpretation services, and the TCEQ for another smooth meeting. He thanked Sergio, Gina, Carlos and all working behind the scenes. He reminded all to take advantage of the invitation from Dr. Eaton. He hoped to identify funding streams for the last presentation.

Dr. Rincón suggested the topics for the levee brought by the City and the SEDUE and IMIP transportation projects be added to the agenda.

Copresident López and Donaldson agreed on the suggested topics by Dr. Rincon.

Copresident López thanked everyone.

**Establish next meeting date: February 4, 2021 (later amended to February 11)
65 participants via the ZipDX online platform**