

## Minutes

83<sup>rd</sup> 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

<b>Virtual Meeting: June 23, 2022</b>	
JAC Members Attending (*Alternate ** Not Present)	
U.S.	México
Guy Donaldson, US EPA	*Judith Trujillo, SEMARNAT
Lorinda Gardner, TCEQ	*Lili González, PROFEPA
Armando Paz, NMED	**COESPRIS
Jacob Kidd, City of Las Cruces	Gabriel Valdez, SDUE de Chihuahua
Jason Sarate, City of El Paso	Brenda Nava, CANACINTRA Juárez
*John Moore, Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold	*Ricardo Aragón, Dirección de Ecología de Ciudad Juárez
Larry Olsen, DrPH, Citizen	*Ing. Alberto Nicolas López, IMIP
Alberto Correa, Capítulo Paso del Norte	Rene Franco, Franco y Asociados
*Stan Engle, NMSU	Dra. Alba Yadira Corral, UACJ
Wen-Whai Li, Ph.D., P.E., UTEP	*Fernando Ortiz, NADB
Claudia Valles, El Paso MPO	
Carlos A Rincón, US EPA - Liaison	Biól. Gerardo Tarín, SEMARNAT- Liaison
Eugenia (Gina) Posada, TCEQ - Liaison	

Welcoming remarks by Judith Trujillo of SEMARNAT were provided on behalf of Daniel López Vicuña who could not attend this meeting. She mentioned this was an honor to be able to chair the meeting with Guy Donaldson from EPA. This was the first time she participated in a JAC meeting, but not the first time to work on topics related to transportation and air quality in Ciudad Juarez. She mentioned a few years ago SEMANAT participating in a project where freight transport operators were trained. The project also promoted the participation of companies in the region in the Clean Transport Program, which is a program similar to EPA's SmartWay Program. In fact, in the Border 2025 Program there is an objective to promote both programs, SmartWay and Clean Transportation in the region. She mentioned the purpose of the initiative is to achieve efficient, competitive and environmentally friendly cargo transportation.

Also, she mentioned that in 2016 she participated in the workshops that were held on the measures for the ProAire Chihuahua.

She was enthusiastic to have participated in this meeting and very interested in learning about the progress made in terms of air quality in the region of Ciudad Juarez, El Paso and Dona Ana County, as well as the results of the studies and projects presented during the meeting.

She informed the committee she was leaving at 2:00 pm, one hour before the end of the meeting.

Mr. Hugo Landa represented SEMARNAT in the last hour of this meeting.

She thanked everyone and suggested to actively participate in the comments, suggestions, or observations for the JAC, and to achieve the goal of improving air quality, the participation of all is essential to face the challenges in air quality.

Copresident Guy Donaldson of EPA welcomed everyone. He introduced North America Senior Advisor to EPA, Lesley DAnglada.

Ms. DAnglada thanked Carlos Rincón for inviting her to this meeting. She thanked everyone for the commitment of health and well-being for this US-Mexico border community. She mentioned being involved in the Mexico border program. This program is unique. EPA works with the national agencies, but also works with Mexican federal, state and local entities, committees like the JAC, and NGOs. B2025 is the latest cooperative effort implemented under the 1983 La Paz Agreement. Where both, the US and Mexico recognized the need to address environmental and health challenges by signing an agreement for the protection and improvement of the border area. B2025 builds on previous 2012, 2020 border programs and encourages meaningful participation from communities and local stakeholders. EPA and SEMARNAT are working to emphasize regional bottom-up approaches for decision making, priorities setting, project implementation to address environmental and health problems in the region. She emphasized the four strategic goals in the border program. Goal number one is to reduce air pollution. She mentioned the cities in the border share an air shed. They acknowledge activities in one city can affect the other: whether in the same country or across the border. Therefore, the strategies and solutions to address air pollution in the border should be developed and implemented binationally with active engagement from community stakeholders as well as local, state, federal and tribal authorities. B2025 encourages stakeholders develop and implement projects that maximize health and environmental benefits from multi pollutants and emissions. The program also prioritizes environmental justice and efforts to address disproportionate air quality impacts focusing the activities in or near vulnerable communities. In areas that do not meet one more ambient air national standards. These areas include those in the San Diego/Tijuana area, Imperial County – Mexicali, Ambos Nogales, Yuma San Luis Rio Colorado, and Paso del Norte, which includes El Paso, Ciudad Juarez and Sunland Park. Another important priority of the border program to adapt operative measures to address specific concerns and have full participation of US tribes, Mexico's indigenous peoples, and Afro Mexican communities. Making sure cultural the integrity within the purposes of this program is protected and preserved. B2025 Goals are aligned with EPA Administrator Michael Regan five environmental international priorities, to advance the values of environmental justice, and equity and to transboundary pollution in North America and globally. By developing these international priorities EPA will advance environmental justice principles and all its multilateral policy work and bilateral technical assistance, as well as addressing transboundary pollution that is generated elsewhere but reaches are border and communities. The Office of International Affairs will continue coordinating

closely with EPA offices and regions, as well as with SEMARNAT, and other partners to take the effective actions needed to advance the B2025 goals and EPA's international priorities. The in last 40 years, since the Border program was launched the Office of International Affairs has been able to not only fund some of the work of the program but also create partnerships to achieve tremendous success in protecting human health, and environment, both here and in States and across the border. To reiterate Judith's comments these successes are only possible when EPA along with border residents, SEMARNAT and others invest in protecting their environment and maintain these partnerships for the wellbeing of their communities. She was happy to listen to the special presentations and discussions.

Copresident Guy Donaldson thanked the North America Senior Advisor to EPA, Lesley DAnglada.

#### **Approval of Agenda**

Judith Trujillo of SEMARNAT continued Chairing the meeting and approved the agenda.

Ms. Zambrano of SEDUE made a motion to add a topic to the agenda. The topic to be the Yearly Report for the Binational Fund Committee by Oscar Fentanes of INECC. The report to be in the section of Subcommittee Report to the JAC.

Voting member Rene Franco second the motion and Alba Corral did as well. All members were in favor of the motion.

Copresident Guy Donaldson asked if anyone was opposed since virtual voting is a challenge. The motion passed.

#### **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

Judith Trujillo of SEMARNAT requested the confirmation and approval of the previous minutes. Ms. Gina Posada informed Ms. Trujillo that the approval of minutes was requested through email and approved by all members before the meeting.

Judith Trujillo of SEMARNAT announced the minutes were approved.

Copresident Guy Donaldson mentioned if there were any comments from the public for the morning section. There were none.

Ms. Posada informed Copresident Donaldson that there was a person registered to speak on the afternoon section.

Judith Trujillo of SEMARNAT introduced Carlos Rincón of EPA.

#### **Air Quality Report for the Paso del Norte by Dr. Carlos Rincón, USEPA.**

No questions nor comments.

#### **ECHO by EPA (Enforcement and Compliance History Online) by Courtney Tuxbury and Madelaine LaPatra of EPA-OECA.**

Chat Questions.

Claudia Lozano asked if a Spanish version will be coming soon.  
Ms. LaPatra answer that she will find out and informed Dr. Rincón of the answer.

Katheryn Becker from NMED asked if she could identify the index page and EJ.  
Ms. LaPatra demonstrated how to get to the index page.

Dr. Carlos Rincón asked what mechanisms do local and state have to send information and then you upload the information.  
Ms. LaPatra answered that the Clean Water Act information is sent through CEWIS, and the data is available quarterly. The day to day extracted and the new expected. For state systems, depending on the program they are required to report certain information to EPA and ECHO pulls from those systems.

Ms. Courtney Tuxbury informed the public that the air data comes from ISIS database system. ECHO grabs the data from ISIS. It is a complicated system. It depends on the state and how that particular state uses their system.

John Moore asked if there was a similar database for Mexico.  
Ms. LaPatra answered that she did not know.  
Judith Trujillo of SEMARNAT said no, there is nothing similar.

Copresident Guy Donaldson congratulated Ms. LaPatra for the presentation and the wonderful information presented.

Judith Trujillo of SEMARNAT agreed with Copresident Donaldson. Ms. Trujillo introduced Dr. Fitzgerald.

**Upper Air Studies in the Paso del Norte: the ceilometer network by Dr. Rosa Fitzgerald, UTEP**  
Chat Questions

Eddie Moderow asked what is the importance of triangulation of these instruments?

Dr. Fitzgerald mentioned that triangulation helps understand the impact the terrain has and the channeling effects, because the PBL is very sensitive to all those changes. If we could have more than three ceilometers, it would be much better. Strategically positioned so observed the channeling effects, up and down slopes, as well as using some meteorological equipment in addition to ceilometers.

Eddie Moderow mentioned that the project was funded by EPA and TCEQ.

Dr. Fitzgerald thanked both agencies.

Dr. Rincón asked if there has been an effort, an outcome of this research applicable to public health.

Dr. Fitzgerald said FEMAP, and financial impact can be traced, this could be correlated with health data. PM for example once inhaled it gets into the lungs, then the blood stream, deposits in the kidneys, in the brain, it causes inflammation and leads to several diseases such as Alzheimer. It is very important to do a follow up study on this.

Dr. Rincón explained FEMAP is an NGO committed to improve conditions on both sides of the border. A strong binational partner with health topics.

Fernando Mercado asked if the PBL changed over the years of the data you have.

Dr. Fitzgerald mentioned she could only account from 2015, that's when the ceilometers were installed. Yes, there has been some changes. It is known that El Paso exceeds the highest PBL heights. If there is a lot of wind, then we get some errors in the ceilometer and the reason is because the PBL gets it from the aerosols. Before we use to rely on weather balloons, but they are only release twice a day. The ceilometer is running continuously, and it requires minimal maintenance, and they are relatively cheap compared to all the instrumentation.

Copresident Guy Donaldson thanked Dr. Fitzgerald for the work the team is doing.

### **Project video: upper air studies in the Paso del Norte**

Judith Trujillo of SEMANAT introduced the ceilometer video.

Chat questions:

If the link to the video is going to be shared with the public.

Sergio Vasquez provided the link to the video.

### **One-hour break**

Judith Trujillo of SEMANAT introduced Dr. Roop.

### **Freight Shuttle System between Ciudad Juárez and El Paso by Dr. Roop and Michael Jagger.**

#### **Chat Questions:**

Rene Franco asked about the CO2 equivalent. If they are also having an estimate of the indirect emissions that will be generated using electricity. I imagine that they are going to have an electricity supplier, I would like to know if that supplier, especially in Mexico, if it uses fossil fuels for that energy, or is it going to use solar, wind or some other type of energy to consider the indirect emissions that would produce by using electrical energy.

Dr. Roop stated that they will build appropriate infrastructure across the border. There will be a new bridge structure that will connect a secure terminal.

Dr. Rincón translated Rene Franco's question.

Dr. Roop stated that the electrical grid of the freight shuttle is well suited for renewable energy capabilities like wind and solar. The reductions, even under the worse scenario are 85 to 95 percent reduction in emissions. Even using electricity directly from the grid, but Freight Shuttle

plans to employ solar energy and other renewable wherever possible to make these zero emissions.

Dr. Rincón asked if will be require having a free zone, and have the proper authorities been aware of this?

Dr. Roop stated they have worked on this project for ten years with USCPB and now with the Mexican government to assure these fits with the security regiment of both countries. 99% of the cargo will be precleared, and not experience interruption and delivery of goods. It decongests the international bridges, dramatically improves the velocity of trade, and reliability and predictability of the economic interaction of supplies and recipients on each side of the border. It is a perfect solution to balancing security and trade. It has been embraced as the right answer at the right time.

Judith Trujillo of SEMANAT continued with the agenda and suggested for the other questions to be taken separately and directly with the presenters. She mentioned the project was interesting and congratulated the presenters. She said farewell to everyone and introduced Hugo Landa who is taking her place.

Copresident Guy Donaldson mentioned he was very intrigued with the solution to try to address the concentration of freight traffic in border areas and its impact. He also saw a slide the solution for seaport, not pertinent to this area, but in other areas in the country. He wished the presenters a great deal of success.

### **Reports from Subcommittees**

- Announcement of recipients of Border 2025 grants in Texas-Chihuahua-New Mexico Area for air quality projects presented by Fernando Ortiz, NADB.
  - He provided the names of two project in the region. One to UACJ entitled Education to the West of Ciudad Juarez. The project description is to install a meteorological station for ozone and PM2.5 and provide educational workshops for young people.
  - The second project is with UTEP. Assessment of AQ and its effects at an international border crossing. Including indoor workplace installations and outdoor emissions of idling vehicular traffic at the bridge.
  - Evaluation of Air Quality and its effects in an international border crossing. Including indoor workplace installations and outdoor emissions from vehicular traffic idling on the bridge.
- Update on El Paso County as new JAC member by Carlos Rincón, USEPA. He mentioned there is no equivalent counterpart in Mexico for El Paso County. SEMARNAT suggested the Transportation Department of the State of Chihuahua be the counterpart of the El Paso County. This request needs to be submitted to OITA and UCAI with the C75 form and presented to the embassies. Then State Department and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs updating the Appendix 1, Annex 5 of the La Paz Agreement. Daniel Lopez will be following up with the State of Chihuahua.
- JAC Logo by Carlos Rincón, USEPA. He stated a logo was submitted and it will be presented to the Copresidents. Then the logo will be provided to the JAC voting members.

- Annual Binational Fund Committee Report by Oscar Fentanes, INECC. Dio una actualización de los trabajos que se llevaron a cabo durante el 2021.

Copresident Donaldson appreciated the information provided by the subcommittees.

Eddie Moderow asked about a private monitoring network in Ciudad Juarez, and the AQ Fund Committee suggested to collaborate and perhaps obtain the data from them. He wanted to know if there has been any progress on the topic.

Oscar Fentanes replied by saying that it was a private entity and there no access to the data. The JAC copresidents are working on a letter to solicit the data. Maybe in the next AQ Fund meeting will have an answer.

#### **Public Comments**

Fernando Acuna registered for public comment. He did not attend the meeting and Ms. Posada will follow to obtain written comment.

It was agreed to send in the invitation information requesting registration for public comments or provide questions before the meeting.

#### **Highlights and Consensus Items**

Copresident Guy Donaldson thanked Commissioner Janecka for participating in the meeting. Copresident Donaldson stated learning a great deal with the presentations. Specially of my own organization working on ECHO, a very useful tool in keeping the public informed facilities in their areas and compliance issues. The Freight Shuttle system presentation is very intriguing for him. He mentioned Dr. Fitzgerald's ceilometer hard work and research on ozone to get to the complicated air quality problems.

A great deal of work is being done at the Subcommittee level. All moving forward to working in air quality challenges. He thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Hugo Landa stated SEMARNAT-INECC will continue to give continuity to the issues within the corresponding states.

#### **Establish Next Meeting Date and Adjourn**

Next virtual meeting date is for October 20, 2022.

60 participants attended the meeting virtually.