

## Minutes

81<sup>st</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: August 31, 2021</b>	
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	Dr. Gilberto Wenglas, SDUE de Chihuahua
Karl Rimkus, 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, DrPH, Citizen	*Ing. Alberto Nicolas López, IMIP
**Alberto Correa, Capítulo Paso del Norte	Rene 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 from Copresidents

**Guy Donaldson, USEPA-Dallas** thanked everyone for joining the virtual meeting.

**Daniel López, SEMARNAT-México** welcomed everyone to the meeting. He mentioned the honor of working with everyone in this committee. He hoped that all the projects were geared to improving air quality but mostly to positively impact everyone's health. He thanked everyone for their time and efforts in this meeting.

**Approval of Agenda and Previous Minutes:**

Copresident López agreed that he was soon expecting to be in face-to-face meetings. He moved on to the adoption of the agenda. The necessary votes were obtained for the approval of the minutes.

The agenda was approved.

**Copresident López requested public comments.**

Veronica Carrillo mentioned she is a member of the neighborhood located around El Paso High school. She lives half a mile from I10 and many of her neighbors live closer to the interstate. There is a growing concern about air quality in the community and this prompted the Citizens Air Monitoring to start collecting data. The group looks forward to understanding what the JAC does to protect air quality and what this committee can do to improve air quality in all fronts to include transportation and highways systems.

Copresident López thanked Ms. Carrillo for her comments. He mentioned this committee is an open forum and welcomes any comments by citizens concerned with air quality. The JAC is represented by the three levels of government from Mexico and the USA.

Larry Olsen asked if the Citizens Air Monitoring has a proposal to do monitoring. He understands this task take a great deal of work. He would like to have a better understanding of their project.

Ms. Veronica Carrillo answered that the group obtained a few purple air sensors and they are in communication with someone who has done a little bit of research in the area. The group was to move to other ways of collecting data once done with the purple air monitoring.

Copresident López mentioned previous projects with low cost sensors with various local universities. Recently, EPA, SEMARNAT and TCEQ had a discussion on quality control of these monitors. It is important for the community to know the air quality concentration but some monitors do require quality control to be trustworthy.

Ms. Veronica Carrillo requested a name representing the JAC to follow up on the topic.

Carlos Rincón volunteered to be the person who can follow up with the group.

Larry Olsen asked Ms. Carrillo if she had someone to calibrate the instruments.

Ms. Veronica Carrillo mentioned the instruments were calibrated once, but they would need to do it on a regular basis. She will follow up with Carlos Rincón.

**Copresident Donaldson thanked Ms. Carrillo for her comments. He also introduced Dr. Rincón.**

[Paso del Norte Air Quality Report](#) by Carlos Rincón, USEPA

**Comments by the public:**

Dr. Larry Olsen mentioned that from the presentation ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) and PM are the parameters who are creating a problem. He asked if this was a correct summarization.

Dr. Carlos Rincón answered that basin wide actions impact those parameters. PM tends to be more localized in Ciudad Juárez. The JAC, border specific projects, and Border 2025 goal one aim to reduce air pollution.

Dr. Larry Olsen recommended the committee to work on PM 10 and ozone.

Copresident Donaldson made note of the exceptional events data in the report. He mentioned it is a regulatory mechanism that recognizes some events, e. g., dust storms are beyond man's control. This prevents triggers on any additional regulatory requirements. This is the approach under the Clean Air Act, however data is still collected and indicates a health risk. He wants the members of the public to understand that it is something to recognize as a health risk. People should act to minimize risks and avoid exposure if at all possible.

Dr. Larry Olsen recommended adding an asterisk to the exceptional events and add a date when it occurred.

Copresident López introduced SEDUE. SEDUE was not ready to present.

Copresident Donaldson introduced Dr. Margarita Peña from Ecología Municipal.

### **Juárez Ecology Municipal AQ Monitoring Stations by Dr. Margarita Peña**

#### **Comments by the public:**

Copresident López mentioned the great collaboration efforts and the new binational fund actions. This will aid in having better data on this side as well.

#### **Chat questions:**

Ricardo Aragón from Ecology Department thanked everyone for monitoring efforts on behalf of Dr. Peña. He mentioned she is recuperating and doing well. This is the start in getting all the monitors producing continuous data and hopefully in the near future measure more parameters.

Copresident Donaldson introduced SEDUE.

### **Public Transportation System by Arq. Salvador Barragán, SEDUE**

#### **Chat questions:**

#### **Comments by the public:**

Dr. Larry Olsen asked what was the recharge time for the buses.

Arq. Salvador Barragán asked if it pertain to the fuel. There is a possibility that two bus stations have fuel supply, in the case of compressed natural gas, currently in Ciudad Juárez there is a company that has three locations. For units moving through this fuel, depending on the equipment, this fuel supply operation can be facilitated.

Dr. Larry Olsen asked if it is like a regular gas station.

Arq. Salvador Barragán mentioned there are less common than gas stations.

Dr. Larry Olsen mentioned for electric buses it would take much longer.

Arq. Salvador Barragán mentioned that option has been considered as well. In Bogota they are already working with a huge electric bus fleet and finalizing it by 2022.

Rene Franco asked of the 373 buses that will be circulating how many are going to be discontinued.

Arq. Salvador Barragán mentioned that there is a factor that was considered to remove buses from circulation. It has an equivalence to a mini bus, the baseline model bus is 1.4, the registered bus is 2.4, and it is multiplied to take out the obsolete fleet.

Rene Franco mentioned the bus dealer that does not have a complete route and only shares the street roads that will no longer continue to circulate in the right lane.

Arq. Salvador Barragán said no, those are based on communications with them. It is part of the bids that have been made. It will take a while with the new administration to be implemented and put into operation as an integrated transportation system. Yes, the dealers have already agreed to take these units out of circulation. They will acquire new units everything is within this plan. SEDUE will be able to reduce the fleet and improve the environmental conditions that have an impact on the health of the population.

Copresident Donaldson thanked SEDUE for their presentation and congratulated them on the ambitious plan moving forward in the City of Juárez. Both improve the service for the public but also benefits the environment. All these efforts are for the benefit of the air basin. He wished SEDUE the best of luck and hoped for one day to visit and ride the new buses.

Copresident Donaldson announced a quorum.

Ms. Posada agreed on the announcement.

Copresident Donaldson announced this was an official meeting and thanked everyone's participation.

\*\*\*One-hour break\*\*\*

Copresident Donaldson introduced Dr. Ardon-Dryer.

### **Dust Storms and Health Impacts by Dr. Karin Ardon-Dryer, TTU**

#### **Chat questions:**

Dr. Rincón asked if cells from a child or an adult differ.

Dr. Ardon-Dryer mentioned that in the community they are examining very specific cells. The impact to children is different because they are not developed. Cell behavior might be similar in adults, but their lung capacity might be different if they have respiratory issues.

Karl Rimkus mentioned the presentation was fascinating specially when mineralogy and crystals play a big role. Getting to the understanding of why PM is a problem, and maybe speciating specific health issues. He asked if she had looked at biologicals attached to the grains, such as molds or bacteria.

Dr. Ardon-Dryer mentioned examining different dust in El Paso, and what impacts would it have in seasonal dust. In the next presentation there will be more information on mineralogy. Yes, and Texas Tech is also looking into bacteria, fungi and some are known to cause health problems. Texas Tech does have a grant to study the type of clay and the type of minerals. Minerals are attached to dust particles. It is rare to find suspended fungus.

**Comments by the public:**

Copresident Donaldson mentioned it was a fascinating presentation and Lubbock is a great place to study dust particulates.

Dr. Li asked how do you correlate an in-vitro study to the true exposure.

Dr. Ardon-Dryer mentioned that in in-vitro studies they use different doses. She wants to know from what dosage it will be more toxic. One thing that the study demonstrated is that the concentration they used are not really represented from one to one source in the atmosphere. We need to measure the particles we have in the atmosphere and we have a station she built here. We look at the concentration of microgram per milliliter, how much weight we put. But what about the concentration, how many particles. In general, the concentration issuing 30% of what we have in the atmosphere to what we actually breath in.

Copresident Daniel López introduced Ms. Ramirez Diaz.

**[The Impacts of Clay Minerals in Epithelial Lung Cells- Analysis at the Single Cell - Level](#) by Zyanya Ramírez Díaz, TTU**

**Questions in the chat:**

Karl Rimkus asked do you know what about these minerals causes toxicity. All these are silicates, generally vary stable in the earth surface. In chemical compositions most likely could be the way they bond to each other when it comes in contact with cellular tissue. At what level do they have more or less luminal.

Ms. Ramírez Díaz answered that clays are well known in geology. These are used in standard testing to run different experiments. We do know Kaolinite is less toxic.

**Copresident López introduced**

**City of El Paso Levee Road Collaboration by Karl Rimkus, City of El Paso**

Karl Rimkus informed the committee the project is in a holding pattern and he requested for Dr. Carlos Rincón to provide guidance.

Dr. Carlos Rincón mentioned Region 9 and 6 at EPA included this project in the capital improvement project at Customs and Border Protection. Since the fiscal year is starting he will follow up on an update.

Karl Rimkus asked if that action was the most challenging and time consuming. He asked how can the project accelerate a discussion regarding the product to be used.

**Copresident Daniel López introduced**

**[El Paso Air Quality Overview: Ozone and Particulate Matter](#) by Donna Huff, TCEQ**

### **Comments by the public:**

Karl Rimkus mentioned the information took a somewhat convoluted path, but he is glad the City AQ Department has been working closely with various departments such as Streets, Transportation, Improvement and the MPO. It is an improvement to finally obtain attainment for PM and hopefully win the argument on the non-attainment for ozone as well. He invited TCEQ to give the same presentation to the Environmental Services Department.

Donna Huff thanked Karl for his comments and invitation. She accepted to present at a future date.

Armando Paz of NMED thanked Donna for the information and provided his assistance on anything if needed.

Copresident Donaldson mentioned TCEQ provided letters to consider its decision making. He confirmed that EPA is looking into that information, in addition to comments EPA received from the public. All this is part of the process. EPA provided the notifications to Texas required by the Clean Air Act. EPA provided 120-day notice for designation decision, which is different from what a state has put forward. The time limit runs out on September 24, 2021. EPA is trying to move forward expeditiously. EPA has not made any decision.

He reported that on the PM front, he is hopeful that it will be successful. He appreciated the efforts of TCEQ and City of El Paso.

### **Copresident Daniel López introduced Eddie Moderow.**

#### **Reports from Subcommittees:**

#### **Update on Binational Air Quality Fund by Eddie Moderow, TCEQ**

Eddie Moderow mentioned the diversity of the presentations have been awesome. He thanked all participants. He informed the committee the video producers at TCEQ are making a video focusing on the JAC. He requested the participation of all attendees to please turn on the camera feature for a quick screen shot of the meeting to add to the JAC story. He mentioned data collection is so important for binational collaboration, especially for the AQ report Dr. Rincón presented. It paints a picture on the whole airshed. Quality assurance and control are important goals for this as well. The JAC created the Fund Committee by passing a resolution. It provides a mechanism to accept funds and to spend funds. It also mandates seven entities make joint decisions by consensus. It complements the activities already in place. The binational fund represents a portion of the whole. He suggested to visit the JAC website for Fund Committee meetings, minutes and participants. He highlighted the work of Dr. Vázquez at UACJ and Ricardo Aragón at Ecología Municipal in the maintenance and operation of three ozone analyzers and met sensors collecting five parameters. Over the coming months decisions will become more complex as the Funds grows, the monitoring sites and more pollutants are studied. The intent is to grow funds by fundraising committees. He informed the group Community Investment Foundation at Marathon Oil is interested in contributing funds. Public/private partnership is evolving and he hopes it grows from there.

On 08/01/21 the first Fund Committee virtual meeting took place, and adopted a procurement procedures and conflict of interest procedures. Both were approved and posted at the JAC website. The committee also selected Cochairs. Items discussed where the annual budget and the Fund Committee instructed the Administrative Unit to search for three bids for the operation and maintenance of the three ozone analyzers/monitors.

The second Fund Committee meeting will take place on 09/02/21 to present a summary of the bids obtained and recommend the selected bid to NADB. Another topic for discussion at the meeting is to bring new members such as Sergio Vasquez of the TCEQ in the Administrative Unit, and other organizations officially as members. An interested organization who wishes to join was El Paso County.

Copresident Daniel López thanked TCEQ for the Binational Fund report.

Copresident Guy Donaldson also mentioned the impressive work the Binational Fund and the Administrative Unit have done in the last few months.

### **Public Comments**

No public comments

### **Highlights and Consensus Items**

Copresident López thanked everyone who participated in this virtual meeting. It is a challenge to have the meetings virtually. He prefers in person meetings. He apologized for his dog interrupting. He is very happy to see the progress UACJ and Ecología have done in the AQ monitoring network. He also mentioned the progress made in the Binational Fund and this will assist in procuring great data. The Public Transportation in Ciudad Juárez will also assist in lowering PM and mobility issues. He enjoyed the presentation by Texas Tech researchers and how PM affects health which give the bases to provide actions to reduce emissions, and identification of polluting sources. He also mentioned TCEQ's presentation and this session was focused on PM.

Copresident Donaldson recognized Commissioner Janecka's participation.

Commissioner Janecka was impressed by the attendance and commitment of participants to stay the entire session of the meeting. This attest to the collaboration and cooperation efforts by all entities.

Copresident Donaldson concurred with Commissioner Janecka. He also mentioned the monitoring sites have done great progress and the foundation has been built. He recognized the work on both side of the border to make this happen. The Public Transportation System hit on the nuts and bolts to improve air quality and to provide a better service for the public. He recognized the project is a very ambitious plan and he was hopeful for the success of it. Today's presentations focused mostly on PM and he learned a great deal. As a committee PM is a focus that is important to work on. The regulatory backdrop is important to understand. He thanked everyone for all the wonderful and informative presentations.

**Establish Next Meeting Date and Adjourn: next meeting Thursday, February 10 2022.**