

Minutes

60th Meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee for the Improvement of Air Quality in the
Cd. Juárez, Chihuahua / El Paso, Texas / Doña Ana County, New México Air Basin
Texas Department of Transportation, 13301 Gateway Blvd. West, El Paso, TX 79928
May 22, 2014

1. Welcome and Introductions
Bill Luthans (BL) of USEPA Region 6, and Ana Patricia Martinez, SEMARNAT, welcomed all, to the 60th JAC meeting. A quorum was established.

JAC Members Present	
U.S.	México
Bill Luthans – EPA	Ing. Ana Patricia Martinez – SEMARNAT
Lorinda Gardner – TCEQ	**Quim. Lilia Gonzalez - PROFEPA
Michael Baca – NMED	Quim. Araceli Salazar – COESPRIS
Daniel Hermosillo –DAC Government	Salvador Rubalcaba (SR) – Gob. Edo. De Chihuahua
Karl Rimkus – City of El Paso	Raul de la Fuente, DNA
*John Quinn - FMR	**Ing. Rene Franco (RF)
Elaine Barron, M.D.	**Denisse Varela - NGO
**Alberto Correa, PhD	Dra. Alba Yadira Corral – UACJ
David Dubois, NMSU	**CANACINTRA
Wen-Whai Li, Ph.D., P.E., UTEP	*Ing. Briselda Duarte – Alt for Dr. Alberto Ramírez -
Christine Ponce-Diaz, El Paso MPO	**Ing. Vicente Lopez – IMIP
	** Quim Pilar Leal - Franco y Asociados Alterante
* Alternate	** Not Present

The meeting begins with the words of Co-president for the US, Bill Luthans who mentions that the State of Texas has appointed a permanent member to the JAC – Lorinda Gardner who is the director of the TCEQ in El Paso, Texas and I welcome her.

It was also mentioned that the State of Texas has opened a link to comment on the current location of the stations measuring air quality in El Paso, in case people want to make comments or suggestions.

At the national level EPA has had a series of meetings with energy partners and suppliers, in June it will have a proposal to regulate greenhouse gases with have specific sources.

Ana Patricia Martinez welcomes and opened the meeting for public comment.

Rafael Carrasco of the Grassroots organization raises a concern of the Montana Vista community in El Paso, Texas where soon it will operate an electricity generating plant of El Paso Electric.

He comments that in recent years he has seen as business and industries have been installed in residential areas due to lack of land use regulation. There is diesel and gasoline tanks a few blocks from his house, he has three children and no agency regulating this.

He demands greater access to information and not having to review voluminous files to from the agencies. He demands an air quality monitor in the Montana Vista area to continuously measure the emissions from the power plant.

He suggests on moving some air quality monitors from the current site to where the city is growing and help people who do not have training to better understand the rights and all technical information.

Bill Luthans responds that a week ago the person in charge of the TCEQ monitoring was in El Paso to listen to claims, however it requires technical data and resources to move the stations, but perhaps new monitors are required in new locations. He will provide follow up to this concern.

TCEQ staff adds that there is a website where you can be making comments on the current monitor's location in El Paso.

Air Quality Report

Gerardo Tarin from SEMARNAT Chihuahua reported on air quality in the binational airshed to cover the period of the first 4 months of 2014. He stated that there were no exceedances of air quality for pollutants that are measured in the three cities: Carbon monoxide, ozone, pm10 and pm2.5 Only have seen some exceedances of hydrogen sulfide in the lower valley monitor (which are declining) possible due to the waste water treatment plant in Ciudad Juarez, which is very close to this monitor in El Paso.

In these first months elevated ozone date is not expected as the season is from May to October. Regarding Carbon monoxide their peaks are given during the winter season.

Ozone Monitoring Trends in Dona Ana County, NM

Michael Baca from the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) reports findings of high levels of ozone in the monitor of Santa Teresa, New Mexico, whose design value has approached the limit set by the EPA 75ppb more than any Ozone monitor in the binational air shed. He states that these findings have given favorable weather conditions, but ozone concentrations are not spatially distributed and responds more to a local phenomenon so it is assumed that this monitor is located at the border crossing in Ciudad Juarez, on the outskirts, it could be impacted by a local source, either vehicular or industrial.

NMED will continue to investigate the phenomenon to determine the causes of the high levels recorded in recent years.

ProAire

Ana Patricia (Master) states that SEMARNAT has obtained resources to develop six ProAires in the Border States. It is intended that resources are applied at the border via BECC and to start the first ProAire in Chihuahua this same year. The calendar has been already approved.

On Wednesday, May 21 a very productive meeting at the BEEC involving all partners of the ProAire like State Government, Municipality, COESPRIS, PROFEPA and IMIP participated. In the meeting the guide or guidelines for its preparation as well as the terms of reference of the expected products were discussed.

The Mario Molina Center has identified 67 air basins in the country; Proaires will now have the air shed approach which they will integrate state and one or more air basins.

At this moment it has been discussed with BECC and it is expected that in 3 weeks we should have a consultant who submits the best technical-economic proposal to develop the ProAire in Chihuahua.

Multistate Project i-Tree Eco

i-Tree Eco is a public access software developed by the Department of Agriculture, United States Forest Service with the aim of analyzing the environmental services provided by urban forests.

This project aims to develop in collaboration with New Mexico, Texas and Arizona a study of benefits and value of woodland in cities; develop green strategies that have a positive impact on air quality and improve the quality of life in urban areas.

The project in New Mexico developed a baseline in four municipalities of urban trees in structure, health and environmental effects (carbon sequestration, pollutant removal, etc.) Outreach materials were also published to increase public participation, showing where improvements to urban trees could improve air quality and other environmental impacts.

The next steps will complete the data analysis, quantify the benefits, develop regional standards to improve air quality and replicate the project in other locations.

Air Pollution and Hospital Admissions for Respiratory and Cardiovascular Diseases in Dona Ana County, NM.

This project sought to assess the relative contribution of local and regional sources of pm10, pm2.5 and ozone. Review the spatial concentration of ozone trends in relation to forest fires; obtain basic information regarding the health status of the community and to estimate relative risks related visits with respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

The climate and air quality data were obtained from 1993 and deterministic and probabilistic models were applied. Health data were obtained from 2007 and a linear Poisson Model was applied.

We found that local sources of pollution are important determinants of the concentrations of pm and ozone with input from other regions with different chemical and physical properties.

The wildfires near reduce levels of ozone, but more distant fires can contribute as much as 10ppbv or 4.25% increase in respiratory hospital emergencies.

Respiratory and cardiovascular diseases are among the six leading causes of death (cancer, diabetes and cardiac arrest)

Significant associations were found between pm10 (less than 150ug/m3) with summer ozone and emergency room visits for cardiovascular diseases.

Holistic Management of Rangeland. Results

In the particular issue of air pollution, it has been shown that large dust storms generated in the northern state of Chihuahua and southern New Mexico and which impact large urban areas, have their origin in cleared land and degraded grasslands in Janos and Ascension. The dust storms reach the Great Plains of the United States of America.

Respiratory health impacts due to increased dust concentrations are high, and studies have shown a direct effect of particle concentrations in the atmosphere in respiratory health, allergies and asthma.

Gerardo Benzanilla Engineer of the Local Ascension Livestock Association said the holistic management should be seen as an improvement in air quality from soil improvement; interface representing the soil may have a number of positive impacts on water quality, air quality, environmental services, wildlife, carbon sequestration and forage production.

The herbaceous cover of grasslands has declined in recent years, mainly due to unsustainable use of rangelands due to changes in land use, as well as increasingly important causes of climate change, among others.

Being supportive of livestock- and various vital ecological services- today requires the coordination of the three levels of government and private land owners, producers, academics and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to find solutions to curb its rapid loss and regain its productivity.

This are the environmental services that the grasslands provide which need to be seriously evaluated before the impending challenges face in the context of global climate change, especially in arid areas such as the Chihuahuan desert.

Holistic management is a system created by Allan Savory based on their experience in the African plains, supporting stocking large quantities but the food needs to provide forage for wildlife. The system is based on capturing carbon dioxide and water considering the ecological, economic and social aspects.

To support efforts in Chihuahua's holistic management the support of the government is needed, more dissemination and training in the technique to more farmers, invest more in infrastructure and further investigation.

Elco Blanco Eng. Says grasslands play an important role in groundwater recharge, in capturing atmospheric carbon and provide habitat for wild flora and fauna important to both regional and international levels.

The holistic management is a new alternative that allows mitigating the effects of climate change and ensuring the dispersion of food for the populations. Adopting a holistic range management (including management of soil and climate conditions, etc.) you can restore the areas affected by erosion and triple its productivity.

With the same soil you can increase plant growth through different and innovative practices that centralize the integration of livestock within a framework of regenerative management of grasslands management. Where is has been applied has been a regeneration of biological material in the soils.

To promote the holistic management in the State of Chihuahua the government should be more open to this system, financing, and creation of infrastructure is needed. It is seen as a solution to the problems of climate change and air pollution by particles as well as the loss of soil fertility by wind erosion.

At the end of the meeting it was agreed to make a field trip to visit the holistic management experiences in the town of Ascension. The date was scheduled for June 28.

Discussion of the Joint Advisory Council's Future

Bill Luthans brought up the JAC's discussion and proposed to hold a yearly meeting for the JAC, but suggested to form some sort of task force to discuss air quality. He proposed to think of possible solutions, and requested to hold a space of an hour for the next JAC meeting to discuss the recommendations from the committee members.