

**Executive Summary
Minutes**

Ninth Meeting of the
Joint Advisory Committee on Air Quality Improvement for the
Cd. Juárez, Chihuahua / El Paso, Texas / Doña Ana County, New Mexico
Air Basin
Doña Ana Branch Community College
Las Cruces, New Mexico
December 14, 1998

JAC Members Present:

For Mexico:

Dr. Victor Hugo Paramo - National Institute of Ecology
Quim. Ma.del Pilar Leal - Alternate for Biol.Ma.del Pilar Lopez Marco, PROFEPA
Dra. Rosalba Rojas - Secretariat of Health
Ing. Jose Luis Canales - Ecology for the State of de Chihuahua
Biol. Alma Leticia Figueroa Jimenez - Cd. Juarez-Urban Development and Public Safety
Quim. Adrian Vasquez - UACJ
Dr. Leonel Barraza - Good Neighbor Environmental Board
Ing. Rene Franco - Mexican Ecological Movement

For the U.S.:

Mr. Bill Luthans - Co-Chair - USEPA Region 6
Mr. Tom Martin - ASARCO
Dr. Carlos Rincon - Environmental Defense Fund
Mr. George Avalos - Dona Ana County Transportation Dept.
Mr. Archie Clouse - TNRCC
Mr. Bob Currey - Alternate for Dr.Chip Groat - UTEP
Mr. Joe Rodriguez - Alternate for Jesus Reynoso -El Paso City-County Health and Environmental District(EPCCHED)
Mr. Helly Diaz - Alternate for Ms. Cecilia Williams - NMED

Welcome and Introductions

Bill Luthans (BL) & Dr. Victor Hugo Paramo (VHP) welcomed all to the 9th meeting of the JAC. BL mentioned the demonstration firing of an environmental brickkiln attended earlier this day by several JAC members & the public at the KM-20 brick-makers' neighborhood.

VHP - introduce the new members of the Mexican delegation to the committee. Representing Cd. Juarez, Biol. Alma Leticia Figueroa Jimenez, General Director of Ecology & Public Safety. Representing the State of Chihuahua Ecology Department, Lic. Jose Luis Canales De La Vega. Representing the Good Neighbor Environmental Board, Dr. Leonel Barraza. Representing the academic community, M. en C. Adrian Vasquez Galvez.

BL stated the US Delegation will be accepting nominations for the academic sector position vacated by Dr. Chip Groat.

Presentation and approval of current agenda

The Agenda was approved with the following changes: delete the discussion on vehicle importation into Cd. Juarez; delete a discussion on oxygenated gasoline use in New Mexico.

Approval of minutes of the 27 August, 1998 meeting

Carlos Rincon (CR) requested that several changes regarding wording be made on the Spanish version of the minutes. Joe Creagh (JCr), Environmental Manager from Chevron requested that some wording changes be made to the comments he provided at the Aug. 98 JAC meeting. With the given changes the minutes were approved. BL suggested the minutes also be a little more brief.

Updates

Air Quality Reports

Joe Rodriguez (JR) reported El Paso had no NAAQS violations for the months of Aug., Sept., Oct.

Helly Diaz (HD), NMED, indicated that Sunland Park, NM (SLP) has had no violations of the NAAQS for the 3rd quarter of 1998.

Biol. Alma Leticia Figueroa (ALF) indicated that Cd. Juarez (Jz) has experienced 25 total exceedances this year: 17 PM, 4 ozone, & 4 CO.

VHP asked that presenters make a similar type of graphic presentation, and instead of separating the air basin, that they get together and present the data in the same format. ALF agreed to get the group together to develop an official format.

Update on preventative measures and environmental contingencies

Dra. Rosalba Rojas (RR) from SSA provided an update on preventative measures and environmental contingencies. SSA buys spots on the television and radio to mention the importance of taking care of oneself under various environmental conditions including the proper use of home heating equipment to prevent indoor CO accumulation. She indicated SSA issues air pollution health alerts when pollution levels reach 250 IMECA.

ASARCO announcement on El Paso Plant shutdown

Tom Martin, Environmental Manager for ASARCO - El Paso, announced the El Paso smelter would suspend operations of smelting sulfide-based concentrates for 3 years beginning Feb. 1999. The reason for this is that the worldwide price for copper has fallen to such a level that it has become unprofitable for ASARCO-El Paso to operate.

Update on oxygenated fuel initiative for Cd. Juarez

Joe Creagh (JCr), Environmental Mgr. for Chevron, indicated Chevron met w/ PEMEX officials in Sept. to discuss supply and oxygenate of choice for Juarez. At the conclusion of the meetings PEMEX understood both ethanol and MTBE were available. Biol. Guadalupe de la Luz (GL) indicated that INE received a letter from PEMEX on 6 Nov. which states that there are two issues of concern: 1) the cost of the oxygenate, and 2) the distance of the PEMEX refineries to Juarez. VHP recommended that a Technical Commission form to address the two concerns raised by PEMEX (costs and distance) and send a reply to PEMEX to continue developing this issue.

Update on the Environmental Brick Kiln (EBK) Project undertaken by UACJ and NMSU.

Robert Marquez (RM), PhD Candidate in Chemistry from NMSU, provided an update on the work during the last two years to achieve emissions reductions in the Cd. Juarez Brickkilns. Research on the EBK indicates firing time and fuel requirements are reduced.

VHP congratulated RM and agreed that we should develop a report or update given the various aspects of this project such as the smoke, particulate matter and balance current research with issues that can help bring this issue to fruition.

Update on Dedicated Commuter Lane Initiative (DCL) at the International Bridges

Bob Gray, Information Technology Coordinator for UTEP, indicated the DCL was approved by the EP City Council; this opens the way to work with US Customs. Estimated opening day is April 1999.

Update on recommendation from the Air Work Group to the Governor and Legislature for the State of Chihuahua regarding the Cd. Juarez Inspection/Maintenance Program

Biol. Maria Guadalupe de La Luz, INE-SEMARNAP, reported that letters have been sent to the AWG co-chairs. The letters have not been signed yet. CR stated that in the spirit of the resolution regarding the Cd. Juarez vehicle verification program, the letters be signed a bit more expeditiously since the program is intended to begin soon & having letters signed by the co-chairs of the AWG would add strength to the argument being made locally that the Jz Vehicle Verification program be initiated.

Presentation of the 1999 Cd. Juarez vehicle Inspection/Maintenance Program

Luis Carlos Salmeron (LCS) provided an update on the Cd. Juarez vehicle verification (VV) program for 1999. Cd. Jz currently has a total of 420,000 vehicles; this program contemplates about 315,000 vehicles will participate. For those vehicles that do not pass the emissions test, the City will be implementing a new program to reduce emissions whereby the owner can work on their vehicle with authorized emissions testing shops to reduce emissions. The plan is to get the vehicle owner to use the money/fine on repairing the vehicle to reduce vehicle emissions. Proximate repair cost is \$650pesos (equal to the fine-\$65US).

Draft Strategic Plan -Discussion on development of a Strategic Plan for the JAC

Luis Raul Cordova provided an update on the draft JAC Strategic Plan (JACSP). The Draft was submitted to the JAC for their review and comment. This is the product of one year's work; by presenting the JACSP, the Strategic Planning Technical Commission (SPTC) is now in the process of finalizing the document. The goal of SPTC is to have the final draft completed by January 11, 1999 and would like to have a final meeting of the SPTC on January 13, 1999.

Bill Luthans took this opportunity to introduce Greg Cooke (GC), EPA-Regional Administrator. GC appreciates the opportunity to address the JAC, and commends the group for development of the strategic plan and looks forward to its implementation. He looks forward to working with the JAC in the future.

VHP commented that he was please w/ GC's coming to this meeting and stated that the JAC is unique since there is much participation among its members, and the Mexican government appreciates this group and believes that the JAC is working very well. Mexico plans to promote the formation of similar groups along the Border since it seems to be an effective way of doing things and working in a cooperative, binational relationship.

Report on a UACJ / SENES Particulate Matter -Carbon Monoxide Study in Cd. Juarez

Adrian Vazquez reported that this study involved a year-long effort to gather emissions inventory, meteorology, as well as receptor data from the local particulate matter samplers. Also included was information on mobile and point sources to obtain information on which areas of Juarez were being impacted by high concentrations of PM as well as high CO concentrations. Collected information was modeled along with city planning efforts as well as regional cartography.

Presentation on Paso del Norte Summer Ozone Studies

VHP stated that this project has provided an updated emissions inventory (EI) for SLP, NM; Cd. Juarez and El Paso. This work involved gathering EI's, combining all the data into a single data-set, gridding a regional map, and integrating all this data into an Urban Airshed Model. Some of the data is still under review, and a meeting w/ the contractor should be upcoming.

EDF Proposal to integrate JAC Strategic Plan Initiatives with the Kyoto Protocol regarding the Worldwide Reduction of Greenhouse Gases

Carlos Rincon presented a review of his meetings that took place in Argentina regarding activities under the Kyoto Protocol rubric to reduce greenhouse gases. He asked that the JAC consider working with him to combine efforts proposed by the Strategic Plan with efforts stated in the Kyoto Protocol.

New Initiatives

Bob Currey asked that NMED provide information on establishing a vehicle I/M oxy-fuels program in Dona Ana County, NM.

Highlights and consensus items of the meeting.

- 1) A JAC Clean Fuels Technical Commission will send a letter to PEMEX regarding the distribution of oxyfuels in Juarez addressing the two issues (cost of oxygenate and distance to the PEMEX refineries).
- 2) The Air Quality Report will be developed jointly.
- 3) The JAC will continue to research the Environmental Brick Kiln (EBK)
- 4) Strategic Planning Technical Commission will meet Jan. 13, 1999 to finalize the Plan.

5) The JAC will firm-up its relationship with the Chihuahua State Legislators regarding the Cd. Juarez Vehicle Verification Program

6) CR will present the Strategic Plan to the "Encuentro Fronterizo" at its April Meeting

Establishment of date for next meeting

Next Meeting will be Feb. 25, 1999 in El Paso, TX

10. Adjournment

Draft Minutes

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Updates

Air Quality Reports

Joe Rodriguez (JR) reported El Paso had no NAAQS violations for the months of Aug., Sept., Oct.

Helly Diaz (HD), NMED, indicated that Sunland Park, NM (SLP) has had no violations of the NAAQS for the 3rd quarter of 1998. BC asked HD if an effort was underway to redesignate SLP to attainment for the 1-hr ozone standard. HD responded that a letter would be sent by NM to the EPA-Regional Administrator requesting a "maintenance" NAAQS designation for SLP.

Biol. Alma Leticia Figueroa (ALF) indicated that Cd. Juarez (Jz) has experienced 25 total exceedances this year: 17 PM, 4 ozone, & 4 CO.

CR asked why do we have such a disproportionate number of exceedances in Jz compared to El Paso and SLP when we're sharing the same airshed? Given we have all the computer resources for modeling how can we have such differences.

VHP asked that presenters make a similar type of graphic presentation, and instead of separating the air basin, that they get together and present the data in the same format. Bob Currey (BC) agreed and asked that the 3 air quality presenters meet to synchronize the air quality presentation regarding reporting periods & format for the 3 criteria pollutants of concern (ozone, particulate matter - PM, and carbon monoxide - CO).

ALF agreed to get the group together to develop an official format.

Update on preventative measures and environmental contingencies

Dra. Rosalba Rojas (RR) from SSA provided an update on preventative measures and environmental contingencies. SSA buys spots on the television and radio to mention the importance of taking care of oneself under various environmental conditions including the proper use of home heating equipment to prevent indoor CO accumulation. She indicated SSA issues air pollution health alerts when pollution levels reach 250 IMECA; usually for ozone. Luciano Grovet Vallarta (LGV), Delegado for SEMARNAP in Chihuahua, asked RR what type of correlations have been found between air pollution concentrations and health. RR responded that at about 250 IMECA the effects on health may double. She added that the sum of 2 days IMECAs has to be less than (<) 400 IMECA to remove the contingency to reduce vehicle circulation within MX, D.F. or any other city suffering from high levels of air pollution.

VHP added that a contingency is synonymous with a "smog alert"

ASARCO announcement on El Paso Plant shutdown

Tom Martin, Environmental Manager for ASARCO - El Paso, announced the El Paso smelter would suspend operations of smelting sulfide-based concentrates for 3 years beginning Feb. 1999. The reason for this is that the worldwide price for copper has fallen to such a level that it has become unprofitable for ASARCO-El Paso to operate. Eighteen months ago the price of copper (Cu) was about \$1.20/lb; today the price is about \$.67/lb. There is a shortage of copper concentrates in the US with much being imported from South America and Mexico. ASARCO found it could sell its Cu concentrates on the market at a greater margin than smelting them at the El Paso Plant. ASARCO has a workforce of about 420 people, and depending on personnel needs 310-370 people

will be laid-off. The Plant is evaluating a scrap and blister copper melting operation. The plant will remain in compliance with a 2 year old TNRCC order by constructing a storm water run-off management system and the demolition of certain facilities that are no longer in use.

Update on oxygenated fuel initiative for Cd. Juarez

Joe Creagh (JCr), Environmental Mgr. for Chevron, recapped the issues. PEMEX earlier this year asked Chevron what it would take to supply oxygenated gas this year. Chevron met w/ PEMEX officials in Sept. to discuss supply and oxygenate of choice for Juarez. At the conclusion of the meetings PEMEX understood Chevron was advocating use of ethanol and the advantages of MTBE over ethanol since this can be supplied via pipeline while ethanol cannot be transported via pipeline. Either MTBE and ethanol have the same air quality benefit. When looking at the risks or benefits MTBE has an added encumbrance that doesn't have a commensurate benefit.

Daniel Chacon indicated that more than 95% of the gas stations in Juarez already have the double-walled fiberglass PST (petroleum storage tank) installed. Each year an independent organization conducts tests on the PSTs to assure tank integrity. At this time the probability of having a leaking PST is minimal.

Since the Sept. 1 meeting, Chevron has been awaiting a response. One question he has is who is the contact person w/ PEMEX on the JAC and what sort of feedback has been received. VHP responded that INE would be the responsible party. Biol. Guadalupe de la Luz (GL) indicated that INE received a letter from PEMEX on 6 Nov. which states that there are two issues of concern: 1) the cost of the oxygenate, and 2) the distance of the PEMEX refineries to Juarez. She also indicated that the President of INE and Julia Carabias, Head of SEMARNAP, are thoroughly informed of these issues.

VHP recommended that a Technical Commission form to address the two concerns raised by PEMEX (costs and distance) and send a reply to PEMEX to continue developing this issue.

Update on the Environmental Brick Kiln Project undertaken by UACJ and NMSU.

Robert Marquez, PhD Candidate in Chemistry from NMSU, provided an update on the work he has undertaken the last two years to achieve emissions reductions in the Cd. Juarez Brickkilns. First steps involved trying to get the brickmakers to convert to using LPGas as a fuel source, but that didn't work due to economics. Current steps involved redesigning the kiln with a hood and plenum to improve firing to create an environmental brickkiln (EBK). Research on the EBK indicates firing time and fuel requirements are reduced, the kiln heats up quicker, and a chemical analysis of emissions from all kilns indicate high levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) are present. Some PAHs are known carcinogens and can affect the health of not only the brickmakers, but also neighborhoods surrounding the brickmaking operations.

CR indicated that the EBK does not cost much; whereas a traditional brickkiln costs about \$1000, an EBK modification costs about \$400. The JAC should support this concept and begin marketing it.

Luciano Grovet Vallarta (LGV) congratulated RM on his work on the EBK, and stated that the EBK is a very good expression of Appropriate Technology. It is important for the JAC to support this project and a process to report this effort with the objective of initiating concrete actions in economic support of the local and regional brickmakers. The EBK is constructed with indigenous materials and this should be a great incentive to develop and promote this technology for the benefit of the brickmaker.

VHP congratulated RM and agreed that we should develop a report or update given the various aspects of this project such as the smoke, particulate matter reductions and balance current research with issues that can help bring this issue to fruition. In essence, what can be added to this effort or should we begin applying this technology?

CR asked what would be required financially to support the students from UACJ to continue this project. Adrian Vazquez (AV) indicated \$6000 was needed. CR indicated that EDF could fund the students portion of this study. He asked that if there is a consensus within the JAC to continue supporting this effort he could obtain these funds. RM stated that it is important to make sure that you're working with the right people in order for the funds to be properly distributed. Many times when the funds dry up the grant recipient walks away from the project; he indicated you need people committed to the effort.

Update on Dedicated Commuter Lane Initiative (DCL) at the International Bridges

Bob Gray, Information Technology Coordinator for UTEP, indicated the DCL was approved by the EP City Council; this opens the way to work with US Customs. Some concerns were increased traffic into S. El Paso & overall number of crossings in the downtown area. This caused an environmental assessment to be conducted. Estimated opening day is April 1999. Prescreening for recipients to obtain DCL approval will begin very soon. CR also mentioned the upcoming workshops managed by the Western Governors Association to discuss methods of improving the problems associated with the international bridges. The El Paso workshop by the WGA will take place on 3 Feb. 1999, 9am-1pm. CR also mentioned a letter sent to U.S. Sen. John Chafee by a local group concerned about HR8 which would require certain vehicles entering into the US from Mexico to pass a vehicle emissions inspection and Sen Chafee's reply. It appears HR8 will not impact the Paso del Norte Region due to the ongoing binational activities that seem effective.

Update on recommendation from the Air Work Group to the Governor and Legislature for the State of Chihuahua regarding the Cd. Juarez Inspection/Maintenance Program

Biol. Maria Guadalupe de La Luz, INE-SEMARNAP, reported that letters have been sent to the AWG co-chairs. The letters have not been signed yet. CR stated that in the spirit of the resolution regarding the Cd. Juarez vehicle verification program, the letters be signed a bit more expeditiously since the program is intended to begin soon & having letters signed by the co-chairs of the AWG would add strength to the argument being made locally that the Jz Vehicle Verification program be initiated.

Presentation of the 1999 Cd. Juarez vehicle Inspection/Maintenance Program

Luis Carlos Salmeron (LCS) provided an update on the Cd. Juarez vehicle verification (VV) program for 1999. Cd. Jz currently has a total of 420,000 vehicles; this program contemplates about 315,000 vehicles will participate. This is the best case scenario if the State government requires vehicle owners to have their emissions test prior to vehicle registration according to state law. About 24% of the vehicles will not pass the emissions test. For those vehicles that do not pass the emissions test, the City will be implementing a new program to reduce emissions whereby the owner can work on their vehicle with authorized emissions testing shops to reduce emissions. The plan is to get the vehicle owner to use the money/fine on repairing the vehicle to reduce vehicle emissions. Proximate repair cost is \$650pesos (equal to the fine-\$65US).

VHP asked about the position of the recently-elected leaders on this issue.

LCS responded paraphrasing the words of the State Secretary of Urban Development and Ecology who stated that in Cd. Juarez the priority is not on environmental issues alone, but with security, housing, education, and environmental issues. Regarding the Director of Ecology neither supportive or non-supportive statements on this issue have been made. However, they are philosophically supportive of this effort. The program is still in effect it is just not enforced.

Regular Agenda

Draft Strategic Plan -Discussion on development of a Strategic Plan for the JAC

Luis Raul Cordova provided an update on the draft JAC Strategic Plan (JACSP). The Draft was submitted to the JAC for their review and comment. This is the product of one year's work; by presenting the JACSP, the Strategic Planning Technical Commission (SPTC) is now in the process of finalizing the document. There are 4 parts to the plan: 1) the introduction provides background on the Paso del Norte Region and how air quality does not respect international borders and impacts citizens on both sides of the US/MX border thus requiring a greater level of binational cooperation; 2) discusses the number of violations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards through the years and efforts that have been undertaken to achieve lower ambient air pollution values through legislative processes, rules, and regulations; 3) air quality being measured and characterized, there is a need for addressing these problems considering cultural, social, and economic factors among all participants in this process; and 4) this part considers the major sources of air pollution, characterizes those emissions and efforts to undertake to reduce emissions emanating from these sources in a coordinated fashion considering the factors mentioned in #3 and also the SIP for Texas and New Mexico and the Cd. Jz Air Quality Management Plan. The goal of SPTC is to have the final draft completed by January 11, 1999 and have a final meeting of the SPTC on January 13, 1999. This will be the final opportunity to speak up on the final draft before it is sent to the Air Work Group.

LGV asked: 1) What is the importance of the projects - how is the SPTC overlooking the obligations of those responsible parties that may not be on the SPTC but to whom it corresponds making the necessary investments to achieve emissions reductions; 2) how are you forecasting for each action the reduction of emissions? how is this realized?

CR responded: each project has its background information & emissions reductions from sources cannot be proven until a project is started/completed.

Pilar Leal commented that she supports the goals of the strategic plan, but states that the translation into Spanish requires further review because wording is everything when it comes to translations. She proposed to all the members to take a good look at the document to see that it really is an agenda of good, viable projects.

Bill Luthans took this opportunity to introduce Greg Cooke (GC), EPA-Regional Administrator. GC appreciates the opportunity to address the JAC, and commends the group for development of the strategic plan and looks forward to its implementation. He looks forward to working with the JAC in the future.

VHP commented that he was please w/ GC's coming to this meeting and stated that the JAC is unique since there is much participation among its members, and the Mexican government appreciates this group and believes that the JAC is working very well. Mexico plans to promote the formation of similar groups along the Border since it seems to be an effective way of doing things and working in a cooperative, binational relationship.

GC responded that this group, being binational in scope will be looked at as a model of binational cooperation as the 5-year review of the NAFTA comes up. Bob Currey added that what fortifies this group is its local representation and local commitment to fixing our local problems. GC agreed that its important for the federal government to let local problems be fixed locally by the local people; it's a way of being less federal.

Report on a UACJ / SENES Particulate Matter -Carbon Monoxide Study in Cd. Juarez

Adrian Vazquez reported that this effort was provided through the valuable support of INE in order to form a working group within UACJ to obtain experts to provide information on local air quality. The study involved a year-long effort to gather emissions inventory, meteorology, as well as receptor data from the local particulate matter samplers. Also included was information on mobile and point sources to obtain information on which areas of Juarez were being impacted by high concentrations of PM as well as high CO concentrations. Collected information was modeled along with city planning efforts as well as regional cartography.

Presentation on Paso del Norte Summer Ozone Studies

VHP stated that this project has provided an updated emissions inventory (EI) for SLP, NM; Cd. Juarez and El Paso. This work involved gathering EI's, combining all the data into a single data-set, gridding a regional map, and integrating all this data into an Urban Airshed Model. Some of the data is still under review, and a meeting w/ the contractor should be upcoming. There was a meeting in Dallas attended by reps from several institutions to see the model run which is called CAMx. This is a 1st cut model and regardless of the results there are a series of recommendations that have been made to work with the data. Once data issues are clarified, a report should be made available.

EDF Proposal to integrate JAC Strategic Plan Initiatives with the Kyoto Protocol regarding the Worldwide Reduction of Greenhouse Gases

Carlos Rincon presented a review of his meetings that took place in Argentina regarding activities under the Kyoto Protocol rubric to reduce greenhouse gases. He asked that the JAC consider working with him to combine efforts proposed by the Strategic Plan with efforts stated in the Kyoto Protocol.

New Initiatives

Bob Currey asked that NMED provide information on establishing a vehicle I/M oxy-fuels program in Dona Ana County, NM.

Observations and Comments from the Public

Highlights and consensus items of the meeting.

1) Carlos Rincon will head up the JAC Clean Fuels Technical Commission to send a letter to PEMEX regarding the distribution of oxyfuels in Juarez addressing the two issues PEMEX made in its letter to INE (cost of oxygenate and distance to the PEMEX refineries).

2) The Air Quality Report will be developed jointly.

3) The JAC will continue to research the Environmental Brick Kiln (EBK)

4) Strategic Planning Technical Commission will meet Jan. 13, 1999 to finalize the Plan.

5) The JAC will firm-up its relationship with the Chihuahua State Legislators regarding the Cd. Juarez Vehicle Verification Program

6) CR will present the Strategic Plan to the "Encuentro Fronterizo" at its April Meeting

Establishment of date for next meeting

Next Meeting will be Feb. 25, 1999 in El Paso, TX

10. Adjournment