

Minutes
Tenth 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
Chamizal National Memorial - El Paso, Texas
25 February, 1999

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 Department - The State of Chihuahua
Biol. Alma Leticia Figueroa Jimenez - Cd. Juarez - Urban Development and Public Safety
Quim. Adrian Vasquez - UACJ
Ing. Rene Franco - Mexican Ecological Movement

For the U.S.:

Mr. Bill Luthans - Co-Chair - USEPA Region 6
Elaine Barron, M.D. - an El Paso Physician
Mr. Tom Martin - ASARCO
Dr. Carlos Rincon - Environmental Defense Fund
Mr. George Avalos - Dona Ana County Transportation Dept.
Mr. Frank Espino - TNRCC - Alternate for Mr. Archie Clouse
Mr. Bob Currey - Alternate for Dr.Chip Groat - UTEP
Mr. Jesus Reynoso -El Paso City-County Health and Environmental Dist.(EPCCHED)
Mr. Fabian Macias - Alternate for Ms. Cecilia Williams - NMED

Welcome and Introductions

Bill Luthans (BL) & Dr. Victor Hugo Paramo (VHP) welcomed all to the 10th meeting of the JAC.

The following persons were recognized as being in attendance:

Mr. Nick Nikkila, Commission for Environmental Cooperation
Mr. Darrin Schwartz-Larsen, Director of the EPA Border Office in El Paso
Dra. Maria Teresa Zorilla de Valenzuela, Environmental Health Programs in Juarez
Lic. Luciano Grovet Vallarta, Delegado for SEMARNAP in Chihuahua
Ing. Antonio Cervantes, Director of the Chihuahua State Ecology Department

Announcement: The JAC received a special recognition from the League of Women Voters for its contribution to the Paso del Norte Community during the LWV Mission Possible Conference.

Presentation and approval of current agenda.

An effort was made to shorten meeting times by providing a Consent Agenda which would contain limited discussion followed by Regular Agenda items requiring more in-depth discussion. The agenda was accepted.

Approval of the minutes of the 14 December meeting

Carlos Rincon (CR) first determined if a quorum existed. A quorum did exist. He then requested the minutes from the 12/14 state there was consensus on the JAC to continue working on the Kyoto Protocol initiative. The minutes were approved w/ the recommended changes.

Updates

Air Quality Reports

Joe Rodriguez (JR) presented a consolidated report for the 4th quarter of 1998 identifying carbon monoxide (CO) & particulate matter (PM) w/ a diameter of 10 micrometers or less (PM10) concentrations for the 3 jurisdictions represented on the JAC. Carbon monoxide data for the region indicate that Juarez had 7 days where 8-hour average CO levels were between 9ppm to 11ppm and 18 days w/ 8-hour average CO levels of 11.1ppm and higher. Juarez exceeded the Mexican PM10 standard 5 times during the reporting period. El Paso and Dona Ana County had no exceedances during the reporting period. This report is developed by reporting the highest value for the criteria pollutant for each jurisdiction. CO is a continuous measurement and results are available daily. The PM10 air quality report is developed by posting results for each 24-hr PM10 ambient monitoring day which occurs every 6 days. There were 16 PM10 ambient monitoring days for this reporting period.

A request was made by VHP to provide information to help explain why Cd. Juarez air pollution levels were higher than the adjacent jurisdictions. For instance, what is happening at the monitoring stations such as wind speed, wind direction, and other atmospheric conditions to cause this to be the case. One explanation may be the localized nature of PM & CO w/ the PM samplers and CO monitors sited near the sources. Alma Figueroa stated that the PM exceedances come from the monitors that are in area where the streets are not paved, the brick kilns exist. CR commented that a synopsis of the annual air quality for this basin should be provided to the JAC for the next meeting. VHP supported this recommendation. Adrian Vazquez also mentioned that a continuous PM10 monitor has been installed at UACJ. Alma Figueroa also requested that Cd. Juarez personnel be available when the CAMS in Juarez are calibrated. Chuy Reynoso agreed that he is open to the idea of having Cd. Juarez personnel participate.

New Members

At the previous meeting of the JAC, the EPA announced that a new member of the JAC would be appointed to the position designated for an academic institution. The EPA received four nominations for the position and selected a candidate. The selected nominee must first pass a routine US Justice Department background check before an official announcement can be made. A vacancy has been created due to the expiration of the term for the seat held by Mr. Danny Vickers. An announcement will be made to begin the nominating period for the JAC seat

available for the private sector.

Oxygenated fuels in Sunland Park.

At the Dec. 1998 JAC meeting members requested an opinion from the State of New Mexico on a proposal to require that oxygenated fuel be distributed in filling stations in Sunland Park. The JAC mobile source technical commission will study and assess the cost and impact of this proposal. Results will be presented to the JAC to discuss next steps as appropriate.

Dedicated Commuter Lane.

The DCL is scheduled to open July, 1999.

Vehicle Importation.

The JAC and the Air Work Group acknowledged in previous meetings that vehicles imported from the United States into Mexico present a problem for urban air pollution in Paso del Norte because these vehicles may significantly pollute. The JAC Strategic Plan includes the study of this issue as a mobile source priority. The JAC also agreed to create a technical commission to study the issue and provide recommendations to the Air Work Group. A recommendation was made by Ing. Antonio Cervantes, Environmental Director for the State of Chihuahua that this issue be discussed among the appropriate jurisdictions and proposals submitted via the legislative process.

Strategic Plan.

The JAC Strategic Plan is in the final stages of editing and translation into English and Spanish prior to printing and distribution to JAC members.

Oxygenated Fuel In Juarez.

The Joint Advisory Committee and the Air Work Group recommended to PEMEX that oxygenated fuel be supplied in Juarez for retail sale. Biol. Guadalupe de la Luz stated that PEMEX has analyzed the idea and contacted Chevron Inc. about the possibility that this fuel be offered. Dr. Adrian Fernandez of INE sent a letter to PEMEX on behalf of the JAC responding to its two concerns regarding distance from the refineries to Juarez and cost of the oxygenate. Almost all Cd. Juarez gasoline is shipped via pipeline from El Paso refineries & gasoline terminals operated by various entities. Oxygenate is readily available in any formulation requested whether ethanol or MTBE. As an aside, Biol. Luis Carlos Salmeron commented that Cd. Juarez currently has a defacto oxy-fuels program given the cost of gas in Juarez is approximately \$1.60/gallon compared to \$0.85/gallon of gas in El Paso; many Juarenses currently purchase their gasoline in El Paso where oxy-fuels are sold at all retail outlets from October 1 through March 31. CR asked that the members of the JAC Technical Commission on Oxygenated Fuels be immediately made aware of this response and act on it forthwith and has asked the committee approval.

Cd. Juarez Vehicle I/M.

A recommendation was submitted from the Air Work Group to the Governor and Congress of the State of Chihuahua regarding a Vehicle Verification Program for Cd. Juarez. Biol. Alma

Leticia Figueroa, Director of the Cd. Juarez Department of Urban Development and Ecology has visited w/ the director of ecology for the State of Chihuahua to request that the state begin to enforce Article 20 of the Transit Laws of the State of Chihuahua requiring a vehicle to pass a tail-pipe emissions test prior to obtaining its annual registration tags. This law is enforced at the discretion of each municipality in the State of Chihuahua.

Cd. Juarez 1999 Vehicle Emissions Verification Program.

The JAC has discussed the Cd. Juarez 1999 Vehicle (Emissions) Verification Program and the need to make an emissions inspection mandatory in order for vehicle owners to register their vehicles. While this had been a requirement, currently a vehicle need not pass such an inspection to receive registration. The State of Chihuahua and Cd. Juarez have worked to make the program mandatory but with certain exceptions such as "vehicle compliance periods" to ease the transition to a mandatory system. The new program will assist a vehicle owner to meet emissions criteria by offering tune-up & maintenance assistance & a one year grace period after a vehicle owner shows good faith effort to participate in the vehicle I/M program.

New Regional Power Plant/Mutual Notification Protocol. Summary: NMED will provide updates as available on activities involving permitting and construction of the Dynergy Electric Power Plant to be constructed east of Sta. Teresa.

Environmental Health Fair in Cd. Juarez

Dra. Ma. Teresa Zorilla de Valenzuela reported that on Feb. 24 a Health Fair took place in Juarez to discuss recent studies linking air quality degradation to asthma and other respiratory illnesses. The Report linked increased emergency admissions to hospitals in both Juarez and El Paso to increases in the levels of particulate matter air pollution in the Paso del Norte region. Dr. Jim VanDerslice from the Univ. of Texas-Houston School of Public Health in association IMSS (Instituto Mexicano de Seguro Social) and Mexican Health Ministry collected data which was often difficult to collect. The investigating teams were able to make an initial conclusion that young females were admitted more often than young males to hospitals for respiratory health symptoms and these admissions closely tracked increased levels of PM. PM concentrations were obtained from the EPA AIRS database.

Paso del Norte Clean Cities Coalition Report

Carlton Bennett and Veronica Carbajal presented several activities currently being undertaken by the PDNCCC including Ozone Action Days, Alternate & Renewable Fuels Projects, and a Heavy Duty Vehicles Pilot Project which will convert several semi-tractors into alternate fuels vehicles. The Ozone Action Days program is a voluntary program to designed to increase awareness among individuals that they can do their part to reduce emissions which may be precursors to ozone pollution. Among these activities an individual may undertake are carpooling or using public transit, not fueling their vehicle during the day, not cutting the lawn during the day w/ a gas-powered mower. A group has been formed named the Clean Air Partnership to promote the Ozone Action Days Program in all jurisdictions in the airshed.

Border XXI Health Study

Allyson Siwik discussed the pilot project undertaken by EPA to determine if sufficient spatial gradients of mobile source pollutants such as NO_x & selected VOC species exist in the El Paso. Passive monitors were installed in 26 sites (elementary schools & TNRCC ambient monitoring sites) to monitor exposure among elementary-school aged children to these pollutants. If significant spatial gradients exist, the project team may design and execute an epidemiological study of respiratory symptoms and pulmonary function in El Paso and Juarez schoolchildren.

Highlights and consensus items of the 10th meeting of the JAC.

- 1) The Mobile Sources Technical Commission will become more focused in developing a partnership w/ transportation planning organizations to develop or improve transportation systems.
- 2) A request was made that on the Air Quality use all data from all monitoring sites and provide an annual end of year summary. Have Quality Assured data that is comparable, and provide an analysis of why data is so varied across the airshed.
- 3) On the oxy-fuels for Juarez initiative, a request was made that the JAC be notified when PEMEX responds to the letter that was sent by the JAC if more technical information is requested.
- 4) On I/M and importation, a legislative approach will be taken which may be necessary. Also this issue will be raised at the 10 Border States Governor's meetings & work with local mayors to continue pursuing this issue.
- 5) On the Sta. Teresa - Dynergy - Power Plant, NMED will keep the JAC apprized on any upcoming comment periods in case the JAC needs to provide an opinion on development and permitting of the plant.
- 6) The JAC will solicit nominations for the vacancy in the private sector created due to the departure from the JAC of Danny Vickers.
- 7) Based on the outcome of the Environmental Health Forum, the JAC recognizes that it can play a role on air quality issues related to Health, and on a case-by-case basis the name of the JAC can be associated with initiatives taken by its members to link air quality improvement or research activities with environmental and respiratory health issues.