

## Minutes

### 35<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the

Joint Advisory Committee for the Improvement of Air Quality in the  
Cd. Juárez, Chihuahua / El Paso, Texas / Doña Ana County, New Mexico Air Basin  
El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization - El Paso, Texas  
Thursday 14 September, 2006

#### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Bill Luthans (BL), EPA Region 6, welcomed all to the 35<sup>th</sup> meeting of the JAC. BL also welcomed Luis Ito, a new JAC member representing the industrial sector. He reminded all participants that the idea of JAC meetings is to meet so that all members present their ideas and they are up to date on topics discussed at JAC meetings.

JAC Members Present	
U.S.	México
Bill Luthans - EPA	Ana Maria Contreras V. - SEMARNAT
Arch Clouse - TCEQ	Mario Sanchez S. - PROFEPA
Jesus Reynoso - EPCCHED	Lic. Marco A. Quezada M. - Edo. Chih.
Tom Ruiz - NMED	Alba Y. Corral A., PhD. - UACJ
Bob Currey	Ives Figueroa - Ecology, Cd. Juárez
Luis Ito	Ing. Baltazar Granillo - CANACINTRA
Wen-Whai Li - UTEP	
Elaine Barron, MD	
Mariana Chew - Sierra Club	

#### 2. Presentation and approval of current agenda

The Agenda was accepted with minor changes to the order of presentations.

#### 3. Message from the Co-Chairs

BL invited Carlos Rincón (CR) to make an announcement regarding water issues. CR commented that a few weeks ago the Border governors met in Austin, TX to discuss several issues of common interest. Points include working in rural areas, improving funding for border related activities to identify and investigate hazardous materials issues, and improve the surveillance regarding cross-border movement of such materials. During this meeting the California Governor commented CA will develop laws & rules to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and CA will lead this initiative.

CR took the opportunity to recognize the communities of El Paso, Doña Ana and Juárez for coordinating and cooperating with cross-border communications required in July 2006 during the recent catastrophes caused by torrential rainfall over the region. CR provided positive recognition for the manner in which the community and governmental agencies

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worked together during these difficult times. Without these coordinated efforts major problems could have arisen had the cross-border communication not taken effect. While this had nothing to do with air quality, these efforts had more to do with addressing cross-border, state-to-state issues of communication and coordination in the event of a more serious emergency.

Ana Maria Contreras (AMC), SEMARNAT, indicated that on 16 August SEMARNAT began reporting on its website the Toxic Release Inventory (TRI). The documentation is still in preliminary form awaiting comments from industry and the public. Mexican Law provides for a 30 day comment period to identify reporting mistakes after which SEMARNAT may submit the modifications and publish the report. The website is currently available for viewing. Valuable information is now being reported. All industrial information under federal jurisdiction is available. The idea behind this effort is to invite all the Mexican states to be involved in this reporting effort.

In Cd. Juárez there is a great opportunity, and we have undertaken 5 workshops at the national level regarding the TRI reporting methods. Substances included are greenhouse gases, materials considered toxic which can cause land contamination or air pollution

Another theme that has considerable importance is the Pro-Aire Air Quality Program for Cd. Juárez. Pro-Aire has moved forward in Cd. Juárez through a series of meetings to discuss activities contemplated under this program. More complete development of this program requires greater commitment from a diverse number of members of the community. Among the programs we look forward to develop are installation of gasoline vapor recovery systems in Cd. Juárez gas stations. The local and state governments will be invited to assure these initiatives are implemented and all proper mechanisms are in place to assure their continued implementation.

AMC added that the Secretary of the Environment will be in Mexicali on 8 Nov. to address NORMA 086 regarding motor vehicle fuels.

#### 4. Public Participation

Pamela Aguirre, TCEQ Small Business Assistance Program, announced an EPA grant had been obtained by the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to distribute at least 50 high-volume - low-pressure (HVLP) paint spray guns to auto paint body shop owners in the region. The project will be undertaken jointly with Home Depot where training sessions will be given to local paint body shop owners from both El Paso and Cd. Juárez. This project has ability to build through the Border 2012 program. It has private sector seed funds to initiate, but this type of project needs to build through grant funding. As these projects grow and develop we will begin to observe tangible results.

Pam continued by announcing the nominating period for the Texas Environmental Excellence Awards ends Nov. 3. The TCEQ website ( [www.tceq.state.tx.us](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us) ) offers more information.

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## 5. JAC Discussion on Public Comments

No Comments were provided.

## 6. Air Quality Report

Victor Valenzuela presented the air quality report. From Jan 1 - Sept 12, 2006, there were no exceedances of the 8-Hr CO standard. There were no exceedances of the 1-hr ozone standard although the 1-hr standard is no longer in effect and El Paso now is in attainment of the standard. Mexico still has an 1-hr O3 standard.

The 8-hr ozone standard was not surpassed to the extent a violation of this standard occurred. There were 2 exceedances of the PM10 standard in Dona Ana County, but both were high wind events. The PM10 TEOMS identified several exceedances. Further research must be done to determine to what extent the PM10 standard could have been violated. Regarding hydrogen sulfide, between Jan1-Sept12, there were 1286 exceedances of the 30-minute H2S average of 80ppb for a fence-line measurement. The monitor is located about 3/4 miles east of the Cd. Juárez North Wastewater treatment Plant. It is widely considered this plant is the cause for elevated H2S concentrations in this region.

### Comments on Air Quality Report

The committee indicated the need to take whatever measure necessary to begin to reduce the H2S emissions. JAC members need to become more involved to address this problem which seems to be chronic and impacts people living in the region where the high H2S concentrations tend to pervade. Bob Currey indicated that we must be careful with the terminology we use. He added that residents of many communities are not concerned about the local emissions or if the air quality presents an elevated risk.

AMC recommended the formation of a committee to discuss these issues. VHV indicated the need to develop some type of NORMA to limit H2S emissions and reduce the concentration of this pollutant. AMC added that México will likely take up the issue during the upcoming Presidential term albeit the concentrations seem to be declining. BL commented that data are what promote the priorities of the JAC. While CO and O3 have been high priorities for this region, it seems the concentration of these pollutants is under control. El Paso is the only city in the US which **was** in nonattainment for the 1-hr O3 and 8-hr CO standards and is now able to be redesignated as an attainment area primarily due to the efforts of this committee and reduction of those pollutant concentrations. The JAC must be able to now pursue the H2S issue to achieve similar results.

In many cities across Texas there is strong evidence of results due to early action. There is a risk and the public is placed at risk if a region is not designated as a nonattainment area and industries are required to take appropriate steps to reduce those emissions which make a region a nonattainment area, present a nuisance, and pose a possible risk to public health. It appears San Antonio is one of the new cities which will be in nonattainment of the new 8-hr O3 standard.

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Arch Clouse mentioned an upcoming National Events Action Plan which is being developed to help El Paso come out of nonattainment for PM10. AMC asked if there is a criteria for a NEAP. AC replied it is similar to a State Implementation Plan, but it's more informal and addresses actions that can be undertaken when elevated PM concentrations occur primarily during high-wind events.

AMC took the opportunity to present Ing. Marco A. Quezada M., Secretary of Urban Development and Ecology for the State of Chih. Ing. Quezada commented that the State government is interested in participating in activities of the JAC. He is interested in learning more about the JAC and how issues of common interest are addressed.

## 7. Presentations

- RETC. Biol Gerardo Tarin presented the new Registry of Emissions and Pollutant Transfer (RETC) indicating there are issues SEMARNAT is working on to improve this reporting system. The purpose of the presentation is to report that on 16 August SEMARNAT published the format of the Annual Statement of Operations (COA). This is an important achievement for SEMARNAT. All industrial data can now be provided via online electronic data entry instead of the earlier paper-based system. The website provides a section listing toxic substances used or emitted by industry.

The site also provides two specific regions for data entry; one is by emissions and the other by material inputs. The objectives of the site include communicating industrial information to the public and at the same time invite public participation in commenting on measures to control emissions and prevent pollution of both air and land. By providing a public platform for reporting pollution and industrial activities SEMARNAT is helping Mexican industry comply with the new Law on Transparency. The website was developed by both SEMARNAT and Academic institutions. Biol. Tarin added that local government can also integrate themselves by reporting into this platform.

Industry and the public will have until 30 September to review this website and provide comment to SEMARNAT. Tarin added this is a great move forward which has taken at least 10 years to develop and become reality. SEMARNAT at the national level invites the State of Chih. to participate in developing this database to include industries under State jurisdiction. The website is user-friendly and many other states are becoming involved in developing the national RETC database. Lic. Quezada indicated the user-friendly platform and national application of a single database is worth looking into and would like to meet very soon to learn more.

- Smartway for México. AMC reported that Smartway is a program in which México has become very interested. The program developed from the energy sector and has great applicability in the transportation sector. This program initiated in México in 2004 was developed by EPA as a step forward to conserve fuel, achieve energy independence and reduce emissions that contribute to soot and smog.

The purpose of the program is to install equipment to capture exhaust PM emissions, reduce sulfur content in diesel fuels using ultra low sulfur diesel (ULSD), reduce idle-time

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emissions, among other activities. ULSD was imported into México for the duration of the initial program evaluation. SEMARNAT will enter into voluntary partnerships with industry, other governmental institutions and the transportation sector. SEMARNAT will adjust the SMARTWAY program pending results from the preliminary program evaluation.

The program Sustainable Transportation Alliance is also part of SMARTWAY which addresses aerodynamic properties of heavy duty over-the-road tractor trailers. By installing equipment on the tractor and trailer to reduce wind resistance fuel savings can be achieved. Through these fuel savings air pollution reductions will follow. A workshop will take place in México from 13-17 November where EPA staff will provide greater information on this program. During these workshops we hope to obtain a fairly large number of transportation businesses which would like to volunteer for participation in SMARTWAY México.

- PRO-AIRE follow up. Biol. Gerardo Tarín provided an update on activities taken to date in support of the Pro-Aire program. The new program will run from 2006-2007. 24 activities are contemplated under the current program which were developed through a series of meetings that included both the public and private sectors. Several indicators were developed to help track the program. Monthly meetings are taking place, and the next meeting takes place 5 Oct. By that date a letter of participation should be signed where partners commit to participate in the areas in which they volunteered.

AMC congratulated Tarín and all the participants in Pro-Aire. A synergy has evolved through this process and activities partners have committed to participate. She appreciates the continuity of this program and SEMARNAT is ready to sign the aforementioned agreement letters among the participants and welcomes the very important participation of the State and Municipal governments.

## 8. JAC Subcommittee Reports and Discussion

-Ways and Means - Jose Mario Sanchez, Chair, No Report.

-PM - Alba Corral, Ph. D., Chair

Alba Corral reported on an effort to use GIS to identify regions of Cd. Juárez where brickmakers could be relocated. A thorough project was undertaken using GIS to identify regions which had low economic development and sparse population to reduce exposure to brickkiln emissions. The ArcView GIS platform was used for this study. Once all the factors were integrated into the GIS database, areas of interest were identified where the kilns could be located. No specific location has been identified, however, the intent is to obtain property where all brickmakers could be relocated. One issue not considered is the political rivalries / issues which exist among the different brickmaking communities.

Victor Valenzuela reported an initiative reduce PM levels in the Anapra region by planting at least 1000 trees continues under development. This initiative will help create a dust barrier between Anapra and Sunland Park and perhaps reduce PM emissions in that area. The West Texas Urban Forestry Council and Texas Forest

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Service are actively involved in developing this initiative.

Another program under development by the PM subcommittee is the search for entities which can donate street sweeping equipment to Juárez. CR added that there are plans to develop a workshop addressing street paving initiatives in Juárez. The workshop should take place sometime in February 2007.

-Mobile Sources - Ing. Ives Figueroa, Chair

Ives Figueroa mentioned that the vehicle verification program continues in effect. Another activity to reduce vehicle emissions includes looking at the international bridges. This activity considers a "diamond lane" or "high occupancy vehicle" HOV lanes where only vehicles with 3 or more passengers are allowed.

-Data - Mariana Chew, MPA, Chair

Presentation by Maria Sisneros, EPA-The data committee is gathering the air quality data to incorporate into the JAC website. The idea is to provide air quality data as a resource for other groups. Various meetings have taken place to view the information that can be provided / obtained.

The information has been reviewed which already exists in the JAC website. Some of the actions include communicating with agencies to obtain information and have data that is more user-friendly. Development of this website involves not duplicating efforts currently underway at TCEQ.

-Emerging Issues - Bob Currey, Chair

Mr. Bob Currey reported the H2S report has been reviewed in collaboration with Border 2012.

9. Observations and Comments from the Public

No Comments were received.

10. Highlights and consensus items of the meeting

BL reviewed the following highlights.

-The Chih. state government agrees to work in conjunction with UACJ to help develop the program to relocate Cd. Juárez brickmakers to a region of the municipio which is adequate for all activities.

-Vapor Recovery in Ciudad Juárez. SEMARNAT will work in coordination with the State of Chih. to help develop an implementation program for this technology.

-The JAC needs to gather more details in regards to the paving workshop scheduled for February.

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-The JAC needs to gather air quality data to develop the website.

-JAC participation is needed on the subcommittees at all levels.

-All members need to extend greater effort regarding punctuality and attendance at JAC meetings, pay attention to their own schedules to keep members from leaving before meeting ends when agenda items are still pending.

-Comments continue being made in regards the ambitious agenda items since there still are too many items. We also need to improve time management .

-The Ways and Means committee needs to review the possibility of replacing those members who do not attend two consecutive meetings to give opportunity to others to participate in the JAC.

11. Next meeting date: February 18, 2007 in Doña Ana County

12. Adjourn at 2:50 p.m.

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