

**Minutes of the Air Quality Task Force Meeting
Mexicali / Imperial
May 3rd, 2018
UABC Mexicali**

Co – chairs: Margarito Quintero; Reyes Romero

I. Attendance:

Belen Leon, Imperial County Air Pollution Control District; **Fernando Amador**, California Air Resources Board; **Jeremy Bauer**, USEPA; **Ray Askins**, environmentalist; **Helen Salazar**, Sonoran Institute; **Margarito Quintero**, SPA; **Reyes Romero**, Imperial County Air Pollution Control District; **Carmen Muñoz**, Fundación Hélice, A.C.; **Oscar Romo**, Municipio de Mexicali; **Gabriela Ruíz**, OBSERBC; **Fabio Carlos de la Cruz Díaz**, Mexicali Technological Institute; **Alma Rosa Morales**, Por tu Salud y Nutrición; **Meozotiz Torres**, Municipio de Mexicali, **Rebecca Corella**, Traducciones Corella, **Fernando Flores**, OBSERBV,

II. Welcome and Initial Comments

Margarito Quintero and **Reyes Romero** welcomed everyone in attendance and said they had a very detailed agenda, which they hoped they would all enjoy.

III. Revision of Minutes from Prior Meeting

Margarito Quintero said it was the time to share any comments or make any requests with regards to the minutes from the prior meeting. **Ray Askins** made some comments, they were noted and the minutes were approved.

IV. Presentations / Questions and Answers

Exploration of the relationship between the Riparian Forest in the Laguna Grande Restoration Zone and Mexicali's Valley Air Quality; MS Helen Salazar, Colorado River Delta Program.

Reyes Romero asked if the Colorado River was not already completely dried.

Helen Salazar said that some parts of the river were completely dried, indeed. However, some areas such as ejido Francisco Murguía, still have water that returns from agricultural zones.

Margarito Quintero mentioned there was a program called Flujo Pulso and asked **Helen** to talk about the program with the group.

Helen Salazar mentioned that the Colorado River water has been shared among users to be used for agriculture as well as for people's use. She explained that through this program, which was carried out in 2014, a certain amount of water was designated to be returned to the river in order to observe its course, the system's reaction and whether this would help regenerate some trees, as well as to observe if this water would get to the estuary.

Ray Askins mentioned he was not aware of this project. He congratulated **Helen Salazar** on her presentation and said he would like to take that tour and find out how he could get involved. He also said this is something that could be carried out into the city.

Margarito Quintero mentioned that some research has been made by UNAM, on which they have evaluated how city tree leaves catch dust on their surface acting as filters, and he said there were some publishing on this topic for those who were interested.

Reyes Romero asked what the distance was between these forests and the city of Mexicali.

Helen Salazar said there was a distance of approximately 60 to 70 kilometers.

Reyes Romero asked what the reason was for the IBWC to be involved in this project.

Helen Salazar explained that this was a part of some agreements included on Minutes 319 and 323 to return water to the river for the benefit of plants and animals as well as people, she added that after having taken some measures, the plan is to completely open this site to the public. However, she said that some public events were already taking place, such as Family Saturdays during which, guided tours of the site are offered, and at the end of these tours they can hang out and have picnic, or even take a kayak ride on the river. She also mentioned that they extend an invitation to the general public to participate on the reforestation of the site very year.

Reyes Romero asked if all the water in the river was agricultural waste water.

Helen Salazar said that most of it comes from water that filters from agricultural fields, and that also as a part of this project, some water rights have been bought in order to release a little bit more water to the river.

An Attendee asked if any tests had been done to find out the water characteristics with regards to norms 001, 002, or 003.

Helen Salazar said she did not know anything on that regard.

The same Attendee asked if the IBWC might have any of that data.

Margarito Quintero mentioned that the agency, which should have this kind of data would be CESP. He explained that IBWC is in charge of anything that has to do with water limits between the U.S. and México, while CES P is in charge of interior waters.

V. Border 2020 Projects and Updates; Jeremy Bauer / USEPA

Jeremy Bauer said that the Border 2020 Action Plans that summarize all of the Border 2020 Projects are posted on their website and that they are currently going through an exercise to update those projects so that everyone can see the status of each project as well as what the preliminary results are. He said he had a hard copy with him and that they could also see them online. He also mentioned that the air quality projects for EPA for Border 2020 are not only funded through the Border 2020 grant, but also through the Clean Air Act grants. He said they were coordinating with their grantees such as the Air District and CARB on projects they hope to have funded for this fiscal year, and that there would be more to come on that. He also said that some of the projects that were funded last year would be progressing soon and he mentioned that under last year grant through CARB, they are funding an emissions inventory update for Mexicali and that those results should be very useful and interesting. He said that on the Imperial side they are moving forward with a couple of efforts on the Salton Sea to see what areas are the most vulnerable due to the exposed playa. He said this project would be starting soon and that it would be interesting to see those results. He added that there is another project testing the PM 10 levels and other toxics in the air that should also be progressing soon. He mentioned they had already had a presentation on the Salton Sea projects and that if it was of their interest they could have a presentation on the update of that study.

Margarito Quintero said that it was his understanding that CARB was going to do a Mexicali emissions inventory, and said there is one from 2014, done by a private Company directed by Suara Martínez and that in his opinion it was done very professionally. Having said that, he asked why they were planning on doing another similar study.

Reyes Romero said that CARB was planning to do this study even though they already have this inventory because the information is contained in a format that is not compatible to do air modeling at the air shed with the system in place in the U.S.

VI. Updates from Federal, State, and Local Governments

Fernando Amador said he wanted to let the group know that the Mexicali PM 2.5 study concluded on April 20th, and that he expected for the next meeting to bring a representative from CARB in order to present the results. He added that there is speciation done at UABC, and 2.5 monitoring done at COBACH and UABC. He also mentioned that they were trying together with EPA and SPA to get the study going again for possibly another 2 years. He also shared that together with INEC and SPA to do audits of stations in Tijuana, Tecate and Mexicali this year in June.

Margarito Quintero mentioned he had been to the Third International Congress on Air Pollutants Continuous Measuring in Queretaro. He said they attended this congress because they plan on buying equipment and accessories for a project waiting to be approved by CONACYT and the state government. He also mentioned that during the congress there were very interesting presentations on different subjects in addition to noise and PM 2.5 pollution monitoring equipment exhibit, among others.

Reyes Romero said he wanted to mention that they had presented their PM 2.5 State Implementation Plan on April 24th. He said this plan establishes that the main reason for not being in compliance with the USEPA federal standard is the PM 2.5 transportation from Mexicali to Imperial Valley. He explained that by establishing this they are avoiding stricter rules to be imposed to the industry in the U.S. and at the same time, they are helping create a closer collaboration with the state and local government to try to solve this air pollution issue in Mexicali. He added that in order to do this participation from this group is vital because this is the table on which projects are proposed. He said it was time to propose ideas to be submitted to the U.S. federal and state governments for this purpose.

Margarito Quintero said he would like for **Gabriela** or **Fernando** to speak a little bit about a campaign that is currently being carried out by ISSESALUD.

Fernando Flores explained this is a project that includes 6 working tables regarding environmental monitoring, the smog check program in México and industrial pollution, among other related topics. He said each table was under review of the Health Ministry and that the results are being made available to the public as well as to the local government representative systems because they are of vital importance in order to come up with an administrative solution to the pollution issues that the city of Mexicali faces. He also mentioned been a part of the smog check table and that what has been done at this table had already been shared to the group through **Gabriela Ruiz**. He added that their feedback would be very useful to improve the smog check program in Mexico.

Margarito Quintero added he is a part of the environmental monitoring table. He said that at this table they had discussed the idea of starting a spore's pollen monitoring soon in order to counteract the impact from elements generated by agricultural practices in the region.

Ray Askins said that with regards to the smog check program in Mexicali, he would like to comment that the municipal vehicles, the buses and some of the commercial vehicles are legalized polluters and that in order to make the smog check program work they would have to be included in the loop.

Fernando Flores He said he agreed with him. He said that is what his working tables are for. He explained their purpose was to assess and improve the different programs in order to reduce pollution rates in the region, and he extended an invitation to everyone who would be interested on participating at any of these tables.

Ray Askins said that one of the major problems they have in Mexicali is that there are no air monitors to measure the air quality index.

Fernando Flores said they were trying to work with business men and universities in order to solve this problem by giving direction to the measures that should be taken.

Fabio de la Cruz said that the local state and federal governments in Mexicali have done some studies and have put some efforts, which have been reflected on binational agreements and that even if it is not to the extent that everyone would like have mitigated pollution to some degree in the region. He mentioned that the community as well as educational institutions has also collaborated on this matter. He said they should focus on what is urgent, and that at this time they needed income to pave Mexicali, but that unfortunately they did not have the resources to do so. He also said that the awareness campaign programs have shown to have good results and it would be ideal to continue with them.

An Attendee mentioned that within the Core Committee there is a working table to review agricultural burning. He said the Agricultural Development Secretariat, SEMARNAT and SPA participate on this table. At this table, he said a sign has been designed to be delivered to all the irrigation modules, firefighters and the Mexicali Valley educational system. He presented and explained the content of the sign and indicated it would be given out during the month of May because by the end of this month and the beginning of June is when the agricultural burning season begins in Mexicali. He also mentioned that they were working on generating a normativity for agricultural burning. He added that the local monitoring station is currently working 24 hrs. a day, except when it is given maintenance, and that the information is updated every hour. He also said that this station is going to be moved by the end of June to be located at Plaza Centenario because it is the closest location to the agricultural valley.

Carmen Muñóz mentioned that the Fundación Hélice has a project with the North American Development Bank and the EPA since the month of February to develop green spots, which are containers similar to the ones handled in the U.S. in order to recuperate recyclable solid waste, including special handling waste such as electronic waste. She said the initial project has two sea containers for the collection of paper, plastic, aluminum, and also electronics. She finished saying they would start working directly with the local government through this project.

VII. Wrap Up/ Date of Next Meeting

Belen Leon said that the next meeting was programmed for September 6th at San Diego State University in Calexico.

Reyes Romero invited everyone to the next meeting and mentioned that tentatively they were going to have a presentation on the Mexicali PM 2.5 concluded study results. He said this was key information in order to find out what is causing the PM 2.5 pollution issues and he encouraged everyone, but particularly local and state government representatives to attend this meeting.

Margarito Quintero mentioned they had preliminary results on this study for those who were interested on getting them prior to the presentation they hoped to have at the next meeting.

Reyes Romero and **Margarito Quintero** thanked everyone for attending this meeting and said they hoped to see everyone again in Calexico.

Meeting adjourned