

**Minutes of the Air Quality Task Force Meeting**  
**May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017**  
**Mexicali / Imperial**  
**UABC Mexicali**

**Co – chairs: Reyes Romero; Margarito Quintero**

**I. Attendance:**

**Reyes Romero**, Imperial Valley Air Pollution Control District; **Margarito Quintero**, SPA; **Belen Leon**, Imperial Valley Air Pollution Control District; **Ray Askins**, environmentalist; **Juan Serrato**, CESP; **Claudia Cristerna**, La Voz de la Frontera Newspaper; **Rebecca Corella**, Corella Translation Services; **Diana Coronel**, Meinchen Brown School; **Fernanda Martínez**, Meinchen Brown School; **Raul Tovar**, SPA; **Leticia Ramirez**, UABC; **Judith Ley Garcia**, UABC; **Jose Landeros**, CYASC; **Alejandra Alvarez Carrillo**, OBSERBC; **Fernando Flores**, OBSERBC; **Jeremy Bauer**, USEPA; **Marina Zavala**, OBSERBC; **Dagoberto Calderon**, observer; **Inocencio Cuellar**, OBSERBC; **Michael Schorr**, UABC; **Edith Perera**, Meinchen Brown School; **Meozotiz Torres**, SPA; **Temoc Avila**, Social

**II. Welcome and Initial Comments**

**Margarito Quintero** y **Reyes Romero** welcomed everyone and explained that unfortunately, the speaker programmed for this meeting was unable to come. **Reyes Romero** said he would present their State Implementation Plan for Attainment of Ozone Level Standards in the Imperial Valley.

**III. Review of Minutes from Prior Meeting**

**Reyes Romero** said he hoped everyone had had a chance to review the minutes from the prior meeting and that now was the time for any comments or suggestions regarding the minutes. Since there were no comments or suggestions, the minutes were approved.

**IV. Presentations / Questions and Answers**

**State Implementation Plan for Attainment of Ozone Level Standards in the Imperial Valley; Reyes Romero, Imperial Valley Air Pollution Control District**

**An Attendee** asked how they could access to the app to be aware of the air quality conditions in the region as well as to receive the appropriate alerts.

**Reyes Romero** explained that this application generates information based on the data given by the air quality monitors located in the Imperial Valley, and they do not have a similar app for Mexicali, yet.

**Belen Leon** added that in collaboration with the EPA, they were trying to find a way to do the same with data from the Mexican monitoring system. She said they were also trying to implement the flag alert program in schools in Mexicali because despite being a voluntary program, it had shown good results in the U.S.

**Reyes Romero** mentioned they were also working together with the state government through **Maragarito Quintero** to obtain funds to have a similar app in Mexicali.

**Margarito Quintero** mentioned that they have a web page with access to air quality information in the region in almost real time, and that they can request to receive e – mails with color coded information with regards to the air quality so that they can plan their day accordingly.

**An Attendee** insisted on the importance of having automatic access to this kind of information and added that they have Young people with the ability and skills to come up with these kinds of apps and that they could participate in this project.

**Belen Leon** gave out the link online to access this information and request receiving alerts on the Imperial Valley side and reiterated the fact that they are already working on implementing it in México as well.

**An Attendee** mentioned that the local government webpage has a link that offers air quality information through the mobile monitoring station. She said the only problem with this was that it is representative exclusively of the zone on which the monitoring station is at the moment

**Margarito Quintero** asked why they have a monitoring station in Niland, which is a very remote zone from Imperial Valley.

**Reyes Romero** explained that when all this monitoring system was designed back in the 90s, the main issue they were facing was exceedances on PM 10 in other words, fugitive dust, which back then was transported mostly from Mexicali. For this reason, they placed the monitor there in order to observe how this dust was transported from the south to the north part of the region. He added that they currently plan on keeping it there because they think it will be useful due to the issue they now have to address due to the drying out of the Salton Sea, which now generates transportation of PM 10 from the north to the south part of the region.

**Margarito Quintero** thanked him for his answer and indicated the Meinchen Brown School students who were attending the meeting that they would now open the floor for questions and answers.

**A student** asked why they didn't implement a regulation so that any citizen caught throwing trash on the streets would be fined for it.

**Margarito Quintero** responded saying that in the U.S. such regulation already exists, but that unfortunately that was not the case in Mexico, but that it was indeed a great idea to implement it in Mexico.

**Ray Askins** added that this is the hard part that people do not accept. He said these laws do exist in Mexicali, but there is no enforcement.

**Another student** asked why people throw trash at the beach instead of throwing it in trash cans. He mentioned he had been on vacation recently and said he had found a lot of trash at the beach.

**Margarito Quintero** explained that there is a local commission in charge of cleaning the beaches in the region. However, he also explained that sometimes strong rains drag water flows from the canals that end up in the ocean bringing used tires and a lot of trash, which unfortunately ends up in the ocean and at the beaches.

**Another student** asked why they do not fine cars that pollute the air with smog.

**Meozotiz Torres** said that this had a lot to do with culture and education of each individual. She said that regardless of having or not regulations for this, driving a car that pollutes the air with smog speaks of your culture and of the education you received at home. She finally said that each and one of us should try to generate the less amount of trash and pollution possible

**Another Student** why if they know there is so much pollution, they keep building more factories.

**Margarito Quintero** explained that these factories contribute to the agricultural and industrial development of the region and that this is how Jobs are created. However, he said that when these kinds of companies carry out transformation matter processes as is the case of thermoelectric plants, these should be under strict surveillance so that they comply with the regulations in place in order to minimize environmental impacts, but at the same time, continue contributing to the development and progress in the region

**Another student** asked how much pollution affects our deserts.

**Margarito Quintero** explained that according to wind flow studies, there is a natural sand transportation from the Sahara desert all the way to Brazil. He explained that some scientist state that this sand is made up of minerals and that it has contributed to the grow of the Brazilian forest, so in this case, it would be a positive impact

**An Attendee** mentioned that according to studies from the Vienna Technological University, deserts contribute 27% of global pollution caused by carbon dioxide. He said that another 27% of carbon dioxide pollution is caused by plants, and that the oceans contribute with a 41.5%, while humans contribute with only a 3.5% of this kind of pollution. He added that the carbon dioxide pollution caused by humans is caused through power plants at a 25%, household activities and commercial kitchens at a 23%, industry at a 19%, agricultural burning at a 15%, trucks at a 6%, private owned vehicles at a 5%, and the rest through other kinds of transportation. He finished saying that you can mathematically see that carbon dioxide pollution cause by cars is barely 5% of the 3.5 % produced by humans. Therefore, according to this data, automobiles generate less than 1% of the carbon dioxide pollution generated in our planet.

**Michael Schorr** said it was important to make sure that the children visiting this forum today did not leave with the idea that chemists and professionals in general are polluting the world because this would be a wrong perception. He explained that without power plants, industry or roadways there would be no progress or even life as we know it. He said all children should be educated in a way that they can tell right from wrong and said that without carbon dioxide he would not have education, medicine, or public health. He said pollution was a natural process and that they should not allow for young generations to become accusers of the adults

**A student** suggested that every time a child is born, that family should be given a tree for them to adopt, take care of, and take advantage of the benefits it would bring to them.

**Reyes Romero** said his idea was great and exhorted the students to keep on asking questions and making comments.

**An Attendee** thanked all the experts participating at the meeting, and said that being a professional in education as well as his colleagues would make the commitment to educate children with the appropriate balance there should exist between paving the way for progress and taking good care of the environment.

## **V. Border 2020 Projects Update; Jeremy Bauer/USEPA**

**Jeremy Bauer** said that the Border Environment Cooperation Commission had lounded a request for proposals on April 27<sup>th</sup> for projects or ideas regarding the environment at the border region. He said the deadline to submit proposals is May 31<sup>st</sup>. He also invited them to look at the list of air quality projects made by the request for proposals indicating the kind of projects they are looking for among which you will find conducting assessments to prioritize area sources of particulate matter in order to identify which areas are the highest priorities to either detain or to install emission control practices for areas of nonattainment which have never been assessed or have been assessed before, but need updating. They are also looking for projects that will reduce emissions at the ports of entry in California or Baja California, as well as projects that will reduce PM 10, PM 2.5 or ozone emissions in Imperial County or Mexicali. He said that the last priority area for air quality is to develop or implement innovative control measures for fugitive dust, which would align with a local, state or tribal air quality program already in place. He also

said that if you to the COCEF or BECC website, you can download the description of the solicitation for projects because there is a specific format for the proposals that has to be used. Finally, he informed that there was a meeting taking place at the moment addressing this same subject and that people from COCEF would come to this meeting at 1:00 PM to answer any questions regarding the request for proposals for any of the attendees who were interested on submitting a proposal.

## **VI. Federal, State and Local Government Updates**

**Margarito Quintero** informed that core committee had made an assessment on strategies for the Mexicali Pro Aire 2011 – 2020 and that for those who were interested on this topic, they could give them their contact information and that they would gladly send all the information by e-mail.

**Reyes Romero** informed that regarding Imperial Valley, on May 16th they were supposed to present their State implementation plan for ozone standards to their board of supervisor for their approval, but that due to agenda conflicts this meeting would be reprogrammed to be held in June. He said they were all cordially invited to be there and show their support.

## **VII. Wrap Up / Date for the Next Meeting**

**Belen Leon** said they had the next meeting scheduled for September 14<sup>th</sup>, unless there was any problem on the Mexican side due to the closeness to their Independence Day Commemoration.

**Reyes Romero** said they would further evaluate the date and that they would keep them informed in the case of any changes. He thanked everyone for being there, and he especially thanked the teachers who were there today and made it possible for their children to participate in this meeting.

**Margarito Quintero** thanked **Ray Askins** for his effort to give these students the opportunity of participating in this meeting and learning about environmental issues in their community.

**Ray Askins** invited all the attendees from this region to participate in adopting a tree. He explained they would have to name their tree, sign adoption papers and commit to taking good care of it in order to take it home with them, and for this purpose they would each get a paper with appropriate instructions on how to plant your tree and take appropriate care of it.

**Meeting adjourned**