

**Air Quality Task Force Meeting
Mexicali / Imperial
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
February 4th, 2021**

Co-chairs: Belen León; Saul Guzmán

I. Attendance:

Isadora Clark Ordoñez, Environment Protection Directorate; **Lilian García**, National Border Patrol Council; **Margarito Quintero** Interested in the topic of air quality; **Oscar Romo**, PERSIS; **Raúl Tovar** AQTF, **Iván Martínez**, RESPIRA; **Alberto Mexia**, RESPIRA; **Patricia Torres**, RESPIRA; **Fernando Amador**, CARB; **Ryan Atencio**, CARB; **Juan Serrato**, CESP from Mexicali; **Marco Antonio Vargas**, Agricultural Producer; **Alicia Botello**, Citizen Committee of Ecology and Environment of Mexicali; **Oswaldo Leyva**, UABC Faculty of Architecture and Design; **Adriana Arias Vallejo**, UABC Faculty of Architecture and Design; **Alejandra Álvarez**, OBSERBC; **Daniel Yanez**, PROFEPA Industry Sub delegation; **Laura Lawrence**, EPA **Marlene Flores**, Imperial County Transportation Commission; **Meosotis Torres**, Environment Protection Directorate; **Luis Olmedo**, Comité Cívico del Valle; **Sandy Ian**, American Consulate in Tijuana; **Arturo Castro**, Environmental Control Engineering; **Rodolfo Castro**, Environmental Control Engineering; **Ray Askins**, Environmentalist.

I. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Belen León welcomed everyone to the task force's third Zoom meeting. She commented she has **Marco Peroni** who is helping her.

Jesse Diaz de Leon mentioned the different ways the public can access interpretation services.

Belen León thanked everyone for joining and hoped everyone was healthy and in good spirits. She offered her condolences to anyone who has lost loved ones due to COVID. She commented that **Reyes Romero** and **Amy Zimpfer**, two key people of Border 2020, have retired. She congratulated them and mentioned they have been a part of the since its inception. She said they will be deeply missed and thanked them for their passion and their time.

Saul Guzmán thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He mentioned that there are a lot of topics to go through.

II. Revision of Minutes from Prior Meeting

The minutes from the November meeting were reviewed and there were no observations.

Belen León mentioned she sometimes does not get all the names of the people that attend the meeting. She said if anyone does not see their name in the minutes to please contact her so she can add them to the minutes. She mentioned to anyone new to the AQTF to please give her their contact info so she can add them to the email list.

III. Presentations / Questions and Answers

The Calexico East Port of Entry-Mexicali Breach Widening Project; Virginia Mendoza.

Before the presentation began, **Belen León** mentioned that there is a lot of questions regarding the infrastructure on both sides of the border however they might not have all the answers regarding the emissions that have been occurring. She said in 2015 the AQTF did an idling study on the old Port of Entry and the estimated particulate matter of nitrogen emissions on the north-bound traffic. She mentioned the data they received was less than significant but that does not mean that the issues are not there.

There were no questions after the presentation.

Border Infrastructure; Carlos Lopez & Victor Rangel, SIDURT.

Belen León asked if the entrance for SENTRI users found by the International road was temporary.

Victor Rangel mentioned that it is indeed a provisional entry. He commented that some provisional measures have been taking place on the boulevard el Río Nuevo. He said that the purpose of this is that the entrance of the New River will be for SENTRI lanes.

A participant asked if the new entrance has good drainage because she has seen that it is common for water to stagnate.

Victor Rangel said that observation is especially important. He commented that this job had already been completed but due to the issue of the stormwater in the area, it had to be rehabilitated and the job had to be extended.

Margarito Quintero asked when the inauguration will be.

Victor Rangel understands that the job will be completed in that same month and that it will come into operation in March.

A participant asked if the pedestrian bridge currently there is also temporary.

Victor Rangel commented that it is indeed provisional. He mentioned that that bridge was originally used for the employees.

Cal Recycle Waste Tire Recycling Management Program; Matt Hanigan, Deputy Director of Cal Recycle

Jett Thomason asked if they have a rough estimate on how many illegal tires are being brought to Mexico from California.

Matt Hanigan mentioned he understands it is a minor amount. He asked **Kyle Pogue** if he has a better understanding of this.

Kyle Pogue said the bulk of tires that come into Mexico come through legal means. He mentioned there is a portion of tires coming in outside of the legal system, but it is an exceedingly small amount.

Alberto Mejia commented that the Mexican side should reflect on what they are doing to avoid the problem. He mentioned that based on these statistics it can be shown that it is not only the income of used tires but also the new tires that are brought into Mexico. He requested the state and the city council to urgently address the issue since last year saw an increase in the burning of tires.

Saul Guzmán commented that the idea of this discussion was why the Mexican side is associated with bad handling of the tires. He said that it must be recognized that the problem is economic but has environmental consequences. He commented that they have a used tire market of 3.5 million tires per year. He mentioned that a large part of the used tires in Baja California come from the north and added that this study recognizes that around 2 million used tires are moved from California to Baja California. He mentioned that since they do not have a robust economy on the Mexican side, a large part of the population prefers to buy used tires. He said that they have a legally authorized amount of 800 thousand tires imported to Baja California and San Luis Río Colorado. He added that there are other illegal entrances, such as junkyards. He mentioned that around 700 thousand tires are recollected per year. He said that due to the lack of infrastructure, a large part of the tires cannot be collected and used for other uses. He commented that the state is betting on a circular economy law where the state is a client to be able to take advantage of these materials. He said that they have not solved the problem due to the lack of infrastructure and resources, but they have tried to fix this situation.

Matt Hanigan said they are extremely interested in collaborative solutions and hopes that begins a conversation.

A participant asked **Saul Guzmán** if the recollection centers operate all year round.

Saul Guzmán said that the Mexicali recollection center operates all year round and has a capacity of $\frac{3}{4}$ million tires per year. The other collection center is in Ensenada but receives very few tires like the center in Tijuana.

One participant asked what could be done in Salton City with all the tires thrown on the land and used as garbage dumps.

Saul Guzmán added that in Baja California another problem is the cost to collect them and where the final product goes after they have been collected. He said that is why he mentions the creation of productive projects that take advantage of the material and return it to the market and be able to have resources to continue processing the tires.

Alberto Mexia mentioned that **Saul Guzmán** has extensive knowledge of the subject and asked him if he knows when this whole process begins.

Saul Guzmán mentioned that the state during the last 6 years has tried to collect as many tires as possible. He said that 5 million tires have been collected and processed in that time, but that they have gone to energy use in cement kilns in Hermosillo and this is not the most desirable option. He said that to develop a market you must talk to entrepreneurs.

Oscar Romo mentioned that an additional effort must be made because the cost of the 5 million tires goes to the importers themselves. He mentioned that the answer is to go with the tire shops union and there they will be able to find out which tire shops are legal and thus go to all the other tire shops to force them to give them a destination. He added that it is clear to him that it is a complicated issue due to its limitations. He said he liked the idea that **Matt Hanigan** raised that if a car is loaded with more than ten tires, it should be classified as illegal.

Saul Guzmán pointed out that several administrations have already passed without being able to fix this issue. He commented that it must be recognized that tire importers are responsible for about 40% of the problem.

Dr. Calderas commented that considering what was said about the number of used tires cross to Mexico, he asked how they could consider this amount in the graph on their presentation.

Matt Hanigan said that it is interesting the different statistics that are mentioned. He said anyone interested should see their tire flow study because that is the best information they have. He mentioned they should have another look at the methodology so they can have a concrete number. Regarding the comments about tire dumping in Imperial and Salton City, he said to please take advantage of the Cal Recycle programs and that they are happy to give introductions to the local conservation corps. He mentioned to please get in touch with them for any more information.

Bethlehem Leon asked if there were any clean-up efforts in Mexicali.

Matt Hanigan said he is not aware of clean-ups funded by Cal Recycle in Mexico.

Belen Leon asked if he could elaborate on the entities that can apply to these types of loans.

Matt Hanigan mentioned the local governments, also resource conservation districts are also eligible for their farm and ranch clean-up. He said even if the site is privately owned by the local government would have to apply for the funds and work with the site owner.

Bethlehem Leon said it was a good time to strategize a pilot program that could help the Mexican side.

Emily Pennetta mentioned that CalEPA secured funding that was authorized around 2017 when the last tire flow report was posted by Cal Recycle. She mentioned these funds were used to do a pilot program in Tijuana. She said it was good to meet **Matt Hanigan** and asked if they could speak after the meeting.

A participant said it was concerning for her as a community member of Imperial County to hear that nothing will be done if there is no funding. She mentioned the problem has been there for a long time and has been no initiative from the local government to tackle the issue.

Belen León said they are aware that there is a lot more awareness and education that can be done. She mentioned they will consider her comment.

Mark Baza shared that ICTC recently took on an agency as administrator. He mentioned one of the things that they do is collect random tires around Imperial County. He mentioned their website is ivrma.org and welcomed anybody to contact them and share locations where tires are.

IV. Border 2020 Project and Updates

Isadora Clark spoke about an educational intervention project based on the design of environmental educational intervention in the online modality for education basic with the financing promoted by the imperial valley.

Belen Leon said the EPA will soon be requesting the Air District projects for the next round of AQTF grants for the upcoming year. She mentioned she will have more information in the coming months. She said the members are welcome to propose projects in a simple paragraph for now. She commented she is interested in doing a pilot program for tires in Mexicali.

Ryan Atencio congratulated **Reyes Romero** on behalf of CARB for his retirement and recognized **Amy Zimpfer** for all the work before retirement. He said they just hired a new executive deputy for environmental justice **Chanell Fletcher**, and they also have a new chair, **Liane Randolph**. He mentioned their next board meeting is on February 25th. He commented they have a border project regarding motor vehicle emission in Baja California. He mentioned this project will update the emissions inventory information for Mexicali, Tijuana, and Tecate. He mentioned they are looking for a collaborator in Baja California that can find information regarding characteristics like the year, make and model for the vehicles. He welcomed the project manager **Stephanie Khan** to explain more about the project.

Stephanie Khan said the 3 major areas they are targeting are Tijuana, Tecate, and Mexicali. She mentioned the contract is still under development. She commented that the project's end goal is to collect vehicle fleet characteristics and incorporate them into the EPA database. She said they believe this information will help them constrain the emission modeling. She mentioned they are interested in finding an agency in Mexico that can help them find this data. She said she will type in her contact info in the chat.

Ryan Atencio mentioned CARB is conducting this project since it is a bi-national issue. He invited **Linda Cedillo** to say a few words about their Enforcement Division's Air Filtration Project in Imperial.

Linda Cedillo said that two projects that will implement filtration systems in 7 schools received funds totaling 650 thousand dollars. She mentioned that they are working with Imperial to see where they will be installed and will have the additional element of the flags program to identify the air quality in that area. She said the program is voluntary and very flexible. She mentioned that he will put his email in the chat for those who like to communicate.

Arturo Medina via the chat mentioned that the roads littered with tires are a real problem in Calexico. He said that he is recorded and posted several videos about the issue. He commented that regarding air monitoring, he had posted a video the day prior that showed the disparity of information shown by APCD and observable levels of pollution. He asked how that can continue to happen regularly.

Belen León mentioned a difference between the regulatory monitors and the community monitors. The regulatory monitors cover regional areas, and the community monitors cover a shorter range. She said they do have to educate on the differences between them. She mentioned **Emmanuel Sanchez** would answer him in writing regarding his other comments.

Astrid Calderas said that **Belen León's** comment regarding the difference between monitors is especially important because a regional report does not always resemble what is happening in more specific locations. She mentioned that it can endanger the health of citizens if they are relying on regional alerts.

Belen León said that she agrees with **Astrid Calderas**. She commented that they have already had several conversations about it.

Astrid Calderas mentioned that she is grateful to explore the topic further before it expands as it has been mentioned for years.

V. Updates from Federal, State, Local Governments, and Others.

There were no updates from Federal, State, or Local Governments.

VI. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

VII. Closing Remarks / Adjournment

Belen León mentioned the next meeting will be on May 13th. She said it will most likely be through Zoom.

Margarito Quintero asked **Saul Guzmán** if the periodic meetings he had with the core committee of Pro Aire Mexicali are still ongoing. He also asked if the environmental contingency plan that was approved in 2018 has already been carried out. As the last question, he wanted to know when the vehicle verification begins again.

Saul Guzmán mentioned that the committee is waiting to be taken up locally by the city council and said that this is within the agreement that was signed a few months ago. Regarding the contingency plan, he commented that it is especially important, but it is necessary to review it and regulate it because its operation has to be very practical to have concrete results. Regarding the vehicle verification, he mentioned that they are seeking to implement a more modern model which is being designed.

Margarito Quintero asked when the PM 2.5 Evaluation Project that **Fernando Amador** was directing was going to restart because they had mentioned last year that it was about to start.

Saul Guzmán said that according to him the project was continuing. He mentioned that it would be necessary to make a recount of which projects are being carried out. He said that should be discussed at the next meeting.

Ryan Atencio on behalf of **Fernando Amador** mentioned that the project came on board in October of 2020 and was refreshed. He said he believes there should be data from that project in the stations at COBACH and UABC.

Belen León thanked everyone that attended the meeting and encouraged new topics from the members.

Saul Guzmán thanked all the members.

Meeting adjourned.