

**Air Quality Task Force Meeting
Mexicali / Imperial
Mexicali, Baja California
April 4th, 2019**

Co-chairs: Belen Leon; Margarito Quintero

I. Attendance:

Juan Felipe Serrato Garcia, CESP in Mexicali; **Mariana Miranda**, SEMARNAT; **Nayeli Treviño**, SPA; **Norberto Ochoa**, Angeles y Guerrero; **Raúl Tovar**, SPA; **Ray Askins**, environmentalist; **Belen Leon**, Imperial County Air Pollution Control District; **Margarito Quintero**, SPA; **Elizabeth Melgoza**, CARB; **Fernando Flores**, OBSERBC; **Alejandra Alvarez**, OBSERBC; **Rene Acuña**, Mexicali Economic Development Council; **Fernando Amador**, CARB; **Reyes Romero**, Imperial County Air Pollution Control District; **Denisse Salgado**, Imperial County Department of Public Health; **Elisa Alba**, SPA; **Oscar Romo**, SPA; **Daniel Jiménez Ontiveros**, Ambiente Sano de Baja California; **Luis Flores**, SPA

II. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Margarito Quintero thanked CANACINTRA staff for allowing them to hold their meeting in their facilities and together with **Belen Leon** welcomed everyone in attendance and thanked them for being there.

III. Revision of Minutes from Prior Meeting

Margarito Quintero made some observations with regards to the minutes; note was taken of them and then they proceeded with the approval of the minutes. He also reminded the group to use the microphone and give their name every time they participate with a question or comment so that it can be included in the minutes

IV. Presentations / Questions and Answers

Mexicali Local Air Quality Monitoring; **Oscar Romo**, Mexicali Environmental Planning and Managing Department

Ray Askins said it would be helpful to specify the exact location of each monitor in order to identify who the bad actors are in that area.

Alberto Mejia from *Respira* mentioned that current platform is very technical, but that they are working on a new version, which will allow easier public consultation and through which any citizen will be able to file reports easily.

Norberto Ochoa from *Angeles y Guerrero* said places with the most pollution should be pointed out so that they are better observed and they can do something about the issue.

Oscar Romo said that was indeed their intention, thus all of the sensors are identified according to their location. He added that one of their objectives was to take on actions aimed for each determined area.

Daniel Jiménez Ontiveros mentioned he has noticed the presentation did not elaborate much on the industry issues. He said it was precisely on the industry where extremely dangerous and harmful pollution for the locals can be found. He added that it is the industry by not complying with the law requirements because there is no law enforcement, what is causing all this pollution and health problems. He said that was the case of companies such as

Zahori, Cerro Prieto geothermal energy plant, the steel industry, feed lots just to mention a few. Therefore, he asked what is being done about it.

Oscar Romo said he did not go into much detail on this matter because it is not an issue that they are addressing at this moment. He said the purpose of his presentation was showing the advance on the installation of sensors for air monitoring as part of this binational project. He mentioned that industry regulation was under federal jurisdiction and only in a few cases, under state jurisdiction. However, he also mentioned his concern could be the topic for a different presentation at a future meeting.

Collaborative Network Project Plan Respira; Alberto Mejía

Daniel Jiménez Ontiveros said he had noticed an air quality monitor at the Civic Center, which he thinks it is a waste of money since because of its location, he does not think it gives accurate information on pollution in the city of Mexicali. He also mentioned that as authority representatives they should approach industry doors because those are the most affected areas by air pollution.

Luis Flores from SPA in Mexicali mentioned that they as municipal authority, are a part of this network, but that this network is not their own, nor are they authority. He said the municipal authority decided to participate as part of this network as a result of an agreement made with CALEPA, under which CALEPA would contribute with 50 sensors and this network, while we would provide the labor and equipment needed to install these sensors as part of this network. He added it is important to point out that it is a community network, said to be thankful to **Alberto Mejía** for allowing them to be a part of an agreement, which allows them to form a part of this platform, which for what he has seen, it is the future envisioned by this task force.

Alberto Mejía said that as a business man, to take on these kinds of projects is risky, and that having been able to lounge this one, had required a lot of strategy, and that the first step taken to achieve it had been approaching **Margarito Quintero** and **Luis Flores** asking for their support and authorization in order to have access to reference data and to strengthen their network through the regulatory monitors. He added they did not know how to determine the location for these new monitors so they placed them on locations suggested by citizens who expressed their interest in placing a monitor, and that their strategy was simply to fill the city with sensors. He said the next step was having consensus in order to locate the monitoring stations at the best locations, meaning where the source of emissions is, and that in order to be able to do this, they first need to have more accurate data. He finished saying they are taking this one step at a time, and that there already have companies that have joined this project.

Reyes Romero asked if the *Purple Air* platform sensors measure only PM 2.5.

Alberto Mejía informed that some of the sensors also measure PM 10, carbon dioxide (CO₂), volatile organic compounds, and meteorological conditions apart from just PM 2.5. He added that they want to add the capacity to measure the 5 Mexicali Valley criteria pollutants to the 25 sensors that measure PM 2.5, and that they needed their support to do so. He explained that the network will use the available sensors having the regulatory stations as priority because without them this project would not exist. He also informed that the *Purple Air platform* sensors had been evaluated by the South Coast Air Management District, and that sensor used by *Purple Air* is the same as the one *Respira* uses. However, he said that the data processing in *Respira* was being adjusted and that he was presenting their third version to them. He pointed out that all the data they obtain is useful, but at this time and because they do not have regulated criteria pollutants data, they cannot be used to sanction a company. He also mentioned that as you log into their platform, it is clearly specified to the user that their information is not regulated, and that is reference information, which is the service they are offering. However, he also pointed out that the data obtained from *Purple Air* and other civil organizations are included on their platform and are very valuable because they strengthen their map and having all this information compiled in just one place allows them to share it for research and evaluation purposes, and that this the reason for this platform to exist.

Ryan Michael Atencio asked if she could explained in more detail the comparative studies that they plan to conduct through the South Coast Air Managing District.

Alberto Mejía explained that what they do is placing 2 sensors next to regulated equipment for a determined amount of time and practice correlation studies on them.

Ray Askins mentioned he would like to see an air monitor on each school in Mexicali so that they know exactly what the air quality and they can observe how the performance of the students is affected by bad air quality.

Luis Flores mentioned that on top of what it had already been explained about this platform, its sensors and data they provide, they were interested on being able to get this equipment to considered in a regulatory manner through their legislators, congress men and representatives in the future.

Imperial County Work Plan Status / Mexicali; Elizabeth Melgoza, CARB

Ray Askins said that the improvement in the air quality at the beginning of 2019 was due to the good weather and good enforcement during that period of time, which shows we are on the right track. He added he hopes it stays that way after the upcoming change in government administration.

Ryan Atencio asked if the lack of the PM 10 data presented at COBACH was something they were looking into in a new work or plan.

Elizabeth Melgoza mentioned there are 13 filter sites for PM 10, but that the problem is that you have to process that data and it takes about 90 days after you record it to show up.

An Attendee mentioned they have an hour PM 10 monitor at UABC, and that as soon as they get connected to the Sonoma system, the data would start showing up.

Daniel Jiménez Ontiveros asked who controls pavement quality in the city of Mexicali.

Luis Flores said the Department of Municipal Public Projects is the one in charge of that, and that the person in charge of management of this department was **Francisco Reynoso**.

Margarito Quintero asked what the status was on the agricultural burning video from the municipality that **Elizabeth Melgoza** had mentioned because it was this understanding that it was supposed to be shown before the month of May.

Luis Flores said they already had it ready, and that it had been sent for its review. He said he would send him more details on this regard.

Margarito Quintero said with regards to the concern about rickettsia conditions being related to pollution caused by the thermoelectric plant located in La Rosita area in Mexicali that **Luis Tinoco**, who is an expert n this matter, had never mentioned anything that would indicate such relationship exists. He further explained that is an issue related to ticks carried by dogs. Having said this, he said he would discard the idea of a direct relationship between generation of energy and rickettsia cases in the community

Air Quality Analysis on PM 2.5 and Meteorological Data in Calexico and Mexicali; Elizabeth Melgoza, CARB

Ray Askins asked where people can dispose of plastic waste other tan plastic bottles. He added that the government promotes recycling plastic, but in order for people to do so, they should also provide recycling sites.

Norberto Ochoa said to agree with **Ray Askins** as far as the importance of having places where to be able to recycle plastic waste because if it cannot be processed, it becomes a problem, and he said he would like to know what is being done with regards to this issue as far as public policy goes.

Luis Flores mentioned that the local government held some meetings with the City Hall on which they addressed this issue, and said that the idea is not to offer any more plastic bags made out of non-recycling polymers to the public within a year. However, he said that one of the issues they are facing at this time is that there are companies that offer plastic recollection, moving and disposal services, but they do not offer waste management.

Ray Askins suggested that companies that generate plastic be required to buy that plastic back in order to put the burden on them and incentivize for them to generate biodegradable products.

Margarito Quintero asked **Elizabeth Melgoza** to explain the relationship between thermal inversion and the mixture height.

Elizabeth Melgoza said it was the same. She also mentioned with regards to the burning of garbage that another advantage of getting another study done would be to see how effective the recent ordinance that went into place with the city last August has been.

Belen Leon mentioned she would like to meet with the local government in order to find out what thoughts they have with regards to the flag program such as the one they have in the Imperial Valley.

Public Health Correlation of Health Conditions and Air Quality; Luis Flores, OBSERBC

Norberto Ochoa asked with regards to the smog check program in Mexicali, why they don't require foreign vehicles coming into the country to have their smog check current.

Luis Flores said he was going to respond to that question as a citizen, and that first and foremost, he would extend an invitation for him to participate at the work table to be held on this matter on April 10th in order for him to express his concerns to the proper authorities. On the other hand, he said there is a policy with regards to that, but that it is not being enforced. He added that the smog check centers should show their processes with transparency and public information access

Daniel Jiménez Ontiveros asked why the smog check in México was required to be done so frequently and if was done this way for collection purposes. He also asked why there was a need to go to international banks in order to funding for repaving programs. He said that in his opinion this only generates an unnecessary debt to the state. He added that the money collected from tax payers should cover these kinds of expenses and that if road paving is done efficiently, and with the necessary quality with money from the state, he does not see the need to ask for funding elsewhere.

Luis Flores pointed out that the Transparency Institute empowers the citizens, and that he wanted to extend an invitation not only to ask about his concerns at this work tables, but also to have the precise information at hand in order to be able to do an accurate analysis on what he was referring to.

V. Border 2020 Projects Update

Margarito Quintero informed that **Jeremy Bauer**, who represented the EPA within this task force and was in charge of giving these updates, was no longer a part of this Group. He explained that since they do not have a person on his place yet, they would not have these updates until further notice.

VI. Updates on Projects from Federal, State, and Local Governments

Belen Leon stated that the projects they have currently in place with the local government in Mexicali were already included during the prior presentations.

VII. Closing / Date for the Next Meeting

Margarito Quintero indicated that next meeting would be held in Calexico on June 13th. He thanked everyone in attendance and said he hoped to see all of them at their next meeting.

Belen Leon also thanked everyone in attendance and said she would send confirmation on the venue for the next meeting via e-mail once the date was closer

Meeting Adjourned.