

**Air Quality Task Force Meeting
Mexicali / Imperial
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
May 16th, 2021**

Co-chairs: Belen León; Saul Guzmán

I. Attendance:

Izadora Clark Ordoñez, Environmental Protection; **Lilian García**, National Border Patrol Council; **Margarito Quintero** Interested in air quality issues; **Oscar Romo**, PERSIS; **Raúl Tovar** Air Quality, **Iván Martínez**, REDSPIRA; **Alberto Mejía**, REDSPIRA; **Patricia Torres**, REDSPIRA; **Fernando Amador**, CARB; **Ryan Atencio**, CARB; **Juan Serrato**, Mexicali Utilities Commission; **Marco Antonio Vargas**, Agriculture; **Alicia Botello**, Mexicali Ecology and Environmental Committee **Oswaldo Leyva**, UABC Architecture and Design School; **Adriana Arias Vallejo**, UABC Architecture and Design School; **Alejandra Álvarez**, OBSERBC; **Daniel Yáñez**, PROFEPA; **Laura Lawrence**, EPA; **Reyes Romero**, Imperial County Air Pollution Control District; **Marlene Flores**, Imperial County Transportation Commission; **Luis Olmedo**, Comité Cívico del Valle; **Sandy Ian**, US General Consulate in Tijuana; **Arturo Castro**, Environmental Control Engineering; **Rodolfo Castro**, Environmental Control Engineering; **Ray Askins**, Environmentalist.

I. Welcome and Opening Remarks

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

Belen León welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting. She mentioned **Idalia Perez** from US EPA and **Saul Guzman** have joined them.

Saul Guzmán thanked everyone for attending. He mentioned that he hopes that the issues addressed in the meetings leave a context for what they are doing.

Idalia Perez mentioned it was asthma awareness month. She said she had planned of time to have speakers talk about indoor air quality and asthma. She commented she hopes they learn a lot.

II. Revision of Minutes from Prior Meeting

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

III. Presentations / Questions and Answers

Asthma Wellness Program, ECRMC Respiratory Therapy Department; Torrie Staten, Director of Cardiopulmonary Services.

William, via Zoom, asked if asthma is more prevalent in high airborne dust environments.

Torrie Staten said they never compared that to the air quality of the day of a visit from a patient. She mentioned that would be interesting to see.

A participant mentioned that it is an important challenge that exists in both countries. He shared an infographic through the chat about the relationship between asthma and COVID on the Mexicali side.

Torrie Staten mentioned they were slammed with COVID patients. She said they didn't see a lot of asthmatics but did see a lot of diabetes and obesity problems. She commented that they never saw asthma as being the main component of triggering COVID.

Belen Leon mentioned they will have some follow-up questions at the end of the meeting.

Improving Indoor Air to overcome COVID-19, Controlling Exposure; Marisa Jimenez, Air-Care de Mexico.

Belen León asked **Marisa Jimenez** to please share her presentation. She mentioned someone asked in the chat if they could share the links in the minutes.

Alberto Mejia asked if guidelines like those presented for the reopening of activities are being developed.

Saul Guzman said that a greater effort must be made together with the health sector to send clear messages to the public who are the ones that suffer the effects of contamination. He asked if the council had any suggestions.

Izadora Clark said there is no initiative to improve the ventilation of confined spaces. She mentioned that ISSE Salud publicized and sent their own indications to the sectors so that they can return to relative normality. She commented that it is important to maintain all the strategies in line with Health Protection, which includes the use of face masks, keeping a healthy distance and hand rinsing. She said she has not seen in any of these strategies the promotion of ventilation. She mentioned they can contact ISSE Salud to include the improvement of ventilation in closed spaces in their guidelines ~ 1.35.00

Belen Leon mentioned they are doing air filtration at schools through the AB 617 and Supplemental Environmental Programs they have. She said the whole point of having **Marisa Jimenez** and **Torrie Staten** is because they want to implement a project like this in Mexicali. She commented they could set up a meeting later to talk about what types of programs they could do.

Izadora Clark mentioned they are promoting an educational intervention project and have begun to train teachers. She said they could include in this the filtration project inside classrooms. She commented that she would appreciate AQTF sharing the necessary material so they could take advantage of the training they have with teachers.

Saul Guzman commented that they must take advantage of the inertia and hold a meeting with the health sector to attend to the most essential topics.

Marisa Jimenez said that she is a member of the committee in charge of 52.2 standard, which is the one that measures the efficiency of filters. She mentioned she is passionate about the subject and would love to collaborate on the project.

Idalia Perez mentioned to **Izadora Clark** that she would post some links from the EPA page in Spanish that has information on keeping schools healthy for children and how to maintain indoor air quality.

Belen Leon said they will keep in contact with **Marisa Jimenez** and **Torrie Staten** for future meetings. She asked **Torrie Staten** how people are referred to their El Centro Clinical Center program for asthma.

Torrie Staten said that if a patient has Medi-care they have to pick their primary care provider and if their care provider is them, they get them in their clinic. If their care provider is someone else, they to refer them back. She mentioned when it's an adult they can be referred to Dr. Cohan. She commented they don't have a pediatric specialist now but are working on changing their workflows so they can bring in outside providers.

Belen Leon mentioned she has chronic asthma as well as her kids. She said she needs to learn more about other care providers. She thanked **Marisa Jimenez** and **Torrie Staten** for their presentations.

IV. Border 2020 Projects and Updates

Jorge spoke about the goals of the Border 2025 program and mentioned the current position of the program within its goals. He offered reports on the 13 projects that are being carried out under the Border 2020 program. Finally, he presented the different stages of the project on air quality, transportation, and environmental justice for Mexicali. He mentioned that the first two stages of the project have already been carried out. He asked **Belen Leon** if they could invite **Dr. Sergio Castellanos** to give a summary of the proposal.

Belen Leon mentioned that they will contact **Dr. Sergio Castellanos** to see his availability.

Idalia Perez mentioned the U.S Courts recently upheld EPA's approval of the Imperial County APCD/s 179B(a) attainment plan for the 2008 ozone NAAQS. She gave a brief explanation of the Targeted Airshed Grant including the due date for applications which was June 24th. She said if anybody wanted more information to please visit EPA's website. She mentioned the deadline for the Environmental Justice Grants for the US has been extended to June 1st.

Belen Leon mentioned AQTF submitted a few projects and is waiting for a response from EPA. She said they received 3.3 million for alleyways in Calexico. She commented they're planning on submitting more projects for El Centro and Calexico.

Alberto Mejia congratulated **Idalia Perez** for the awareness week event. He mentioned that thanks to this event, it was possible to realize that the concept of environmental justice had another meaning. He asked how a regional project could be proposed to the Mexicali area on environmental justice.

Idalia Perez said that it is an issue that has been taken up in other countries in Latin America. She mentioned she does not have an answer on how to approach the subject in Mexico but made herself available to discuss the subject at another time.

Maria Magdalena Cerda said she works for an environmental justice organization in San Diego, and they have a sister organization in Tijuana called Colectivo Salud y Justicia Ambiental. She mentioned that she would provide her data in the chat to be able to talk more in detail with **Alberto Mejia**. She commented that the community they started with is below the industrial city in Otay mesa.

Salina Vega said he's doing something similar for his community in San Ysidro. He asked how they approach this in Mexico.

Belen Leon said they didn't have the answer at that time but would get back to him if he could please write his information in the chat.

Saul Guzman said that environmental justice is a very complex issue. He commented that they should make a special section in the meetings for it. He mentioned that they have committed 4 million pesos to rehabilitate air monitors in Mexicali and Tijuana. He said that it is necessary to create a joint strategy to send clearer messages to the community about health effects.

Ryan Atencio mentioned CARB was awarded 3 projects for Border 2020. He said one is to continue the Imperial Air Quality website. The second one is Purple Air sensor replacements in Mexicali. He mentioned he will be in contact with Izadora Clark regarding this project. The last project is a pilot project for diesel monitoring where they have a website called AQView that visualizes NOx, PM, and Black Carbon.

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

Belen Leon said they have two requests for proposals. One was for urban greening and the one was for paving. She mentioned the due date is May 27th, 2021. She commented if anyone needed more information to please contact her.

VI. Public Comments

Alberto Mejia attached the link to the platform for citizen complaints that REDSPIRA created. He mentioned that the idea is that the users can generate simple reports or fill out a more complex format with which the user goes to the environment offices to file a formal complaint. He said that one of all the regulations was made and they

socialized it with the City Council and tried with PROFEPA. He commented that the idea is to encourage people to report on the platform instead of on Facebook. He mentioned that they did a one-week pilot test where they obtained 8 reports with which they have already identified an area that had 4 reports.

Izadora Clark said that they will continue with the educational intervention project with the training of teachers. She commented that after the training they will have a forum to promote school modifications for the better use of natural resources, energy, and waste management. She mentioned that to establish the REDSPIRA initiative on open burns, they began a work route in places where frequent open burns occur in coordination with public security, urban administration, and civil protection. She commented that they have around 160 sites where 40 administrative processes have been initiated. She mentioned that they are promoting a video to carry out agricultural burning considering a series of weather criteria of the time.

VII. Closing Remarks / Adjournment

Saul Guzman waited to see comments on topics for upcoming meetings.

Belen Leon mentioned one of the pending items is contacting **Dr. Castellanos**. She said the next meeting will be on September 9th.

Meeting adjourned.