

Minutes of the Air Quality Task Force Meeting

Mexicali/Imperial

April 3rd, 2014

Calexico

Co-chairs: **Martha Fonseca; Reyes Romero**

Attendance:

Reyes Romero, Imperial County Air Pollution Control District; **Belen Leon**, Imperial County Air Pollution Control District; **Martha Fonseca**, SPA; **Margarito Quintero Nunez**, UABC Engineering Institute; **Marco Antonio Reyna**, UABC Engineering Institute; **Raúl Tovar**, SPA, Baja California; **Ray Askins**, Environmentalist; **Claudia Cristerna**, citizen; **Michael Schorr**, UABC Engineering Institute; **Tom Kear**, presenter (Tom Kear Transportation Consulting); **Jorge Hernández**, COCEF; **Carlos Angulo**, California EPA; **Virginia Mendoza**, Imperial Valley Transportation Commission; **Fernando Amador**, California Air Resources Board; **Dave Fege**, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; **Luis Olmedo**, Comite Civico del Valle; **Michael Kuljacha**, CDEM; **Luis Carlos Castro**, CDEM.

I. Welcome and Initial Comments

Reyes Romero welcomed everybody and introduced **Martha Fonseca** from SPA as the co-chair from Mexicali for this Group.

Martha Fonseca introduced herself to the group and said that at the SPA they were concerned about air quality issues and that they were willing to work on that matter.

II. Revision of Minutes from Prior Meeting

Reyes Romero asked to make any comments or suggestions with regards to the minutes from the prior meeting. **Margarito Quintero** asked to review the spelling on Michael Schor's last name, the translators took note of it and the minutes were approved.

III. Presentations; questions and answers

Idling Impacts at the Calexico East and West Ports of Entry; Tom Kear, Transportation and Planning Management

Luis Olmedo mentioned that when he was talking about the east and west points of entry, something that comes to mind is that in the southeast there are populated centers on the Mexico side, and that just that whole entire area is populated from homeland security, to the transit that occurs, the vendors, and the houses that are out there, and that those are very sensitive receptors. He finished saying that in his opinion the level of importance should be the same on both sides.

Tom Kear said that he agreed with him a hundred percent.

Dave Fege mentioned that this study was EPA funded. He explained that their office gets some funding for border related projects, and that they have a cooperative agreement with the BECC, which is a binational border institution that focuses on the environment, and infrastructure projects and other environmental issues. He mentioned that they managed the whole Grant program, and that they issued a request for proposals not only for air quality, but for other environmental issues on the border as well. He also explained that the BECC together with EPA, SPA, and CALEPA reviewed the proposals. In this case,

it was Imperial County Air Pollution Control District who actually applied for the Grant, they are the grantee, they have direct responsibility to the BECC to fulfill this project, and they are doing this in partnership with the Imperial County Transportation Commission. IPCD has subcontracted to Tom Kear's firm to perform this study, who has also subcontracted to Cross Borders to do the field work. He also mentioned that they were going to be able to obtain data of emissions at the ports of entry, which they had never had before. He said they had a study that was done at El Paso – Juarez funded by the Federal Highway Administration, and that Tom was using that model because that model has been tested and the FHWA agrees with it so there should not be any arguments at the government level about the model that is being used. He said that the most important thing to come out from this study was that the data information that they are going to be able to share with the agencies in charge of planning renovations to new ports of entry, as well as the creation of new ones on both parts of the border.

An attendee asked if the Zaragoza study Tom Kear mentioned was a previous study that he had done.

Tom Kear said that was the study that Dave Fege had just mentioned.

Reyes Romero asked about the emission factors that they were going to use on this study.

Tom Kear explained that emission factors would be generated by the 2011 California Motor Vehicle Emission Factor Model used state wide in this case, unless the 2013 came out fast. He explained that the California Motor Vehicle Emission Factor Model doesn't just produce an emission rate, but it brakes the vehicle fleet down into around a hundred and forty different technology groups such as, the evaporative engine certification standards, exhaust certification standards, etc., and it accounts for the type of smog check program that the vehicle is subject to.

Reyes Romero also asked about the emission factors that they were going to use for Mexico.

Tom Kear said that they were going to characterize the age of the vehicles, the kind of fuel that they are burning, etc. He said they were also going to do surveys to get this kind of information from the drivers at the ports of entry.

Michael Schorr said that first of all, he wanted to express his appreciation on the project being presented, which was basically administrative and organizational work. On the other hand, he mentioned that this research was lacking 2 very important central aspects, which had not been mentioned. He said one of them was the weather aspect, and the other one was the chemistry of the system, without which this project could not be concluded.

Tom Kear said that the model they were going to use was designed to account for different weather patterns. He mentioned there was a set of patterns to represent Imperial County and that if there was a sense that the Imperial County data was not reflective of the border specifically, they could revise it. However, he said his assumption so far, was that the Imperial data was probably fairly representative of Calexico and Mexicali. He also mentioned that the model has both an annual average and a temperature profile by hour per season. It produces emission rates that are reflective of the temperature and the weather in terms of variation and humidity.

Martha Fonseca asked if they were taking into consideration wind direction for this project, and if they were also considering measuring on the American side. She also mentioned that both governments could carry out joint actions to improve air quality. Finally, she said that on the Mexican side perhaps they could participate with current information on the Mexican vehicle fleet at crossing times because in her opinion, it was complicated to get accurate information based only on vehicle age, model and technology.

An attendee said with regards to the impacts in local communities, that there was a station at the Calexico High School where they measure PM and NOX. He said they could probably correlate the data to those periods where you actually see those vehicles do long hours of line during certain holidays. He also said

that it would also be a good idea to compare data from other key stations on both sides of the border to see how that affects the local communities.

Marco Antonio Reyna said it would also be interesting to know what the emission impact was from vehicles with American license plates compared to the Mexican vehicles to have an idea on what the impact of the Baja California smog check program is.

Carlos Angulo asked if they were considering evaluating custom agents as well as vendors under this program since they spend all day at the border crossings, and evaluating them would allow measuring the impact that this has on human health.

Luis Olmedo asked if they were going to use air monitors.

Tom Kear said there wasn't a plan to use air monitors in this study at the moment, and that they were focusing on emissions rather than concentrations because emissions give you the ability to look at the change in health effect. He said that one of the things he was hoping to add to this study after they got all the data, was doing some dispersion modeling because this has not been done in this environment and he would like to add that to the information from this project to be able to pursue real funded models and real budget to do some of the types of additional work that they had been mentioning at the meeting.

Dave Fege added that what the district and Tom had responded to was the specific request for proposals to do emissions modeling at the port of entry because they were aiming to reduce emissions from those vehicles waiting to go across.

Luis Olmedo said he could see the value in this project with the cautions that at the end not everything will have gotten the same level of project review.

Tom Kear said that the goal of this project was to help identify what some of the solutions are and which are not. He mentioned that there were additional items that they were still going to need to address after this, and that he was hopeful that this was the beginning of a series of studies to see how the different strategies can directly affect people on close proximity to the queuing traffic.

Michael Schorr said he would like to know what the functions and responsibilities of the California Environmental Protection Agency (CALEPA) were on this subject.

Dave Fege explained that the CALEPA is the umbrella agency for the state and it monitors and manages several agencies such as the California Air Resources Board (CARB), which has a lot of responsibilities for air quality on the California side. He also mentioned that the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District has the main responsibility for managing air quality and doing what is required to reduce emissions in Imperial County. He explained that those rules and regulations have to meet CARB requirements, as well as EPA requirements. He also said that in this issue of trucks coming across the border specifically, EPA had taken the major lead because pollution that crosses the border in either direction is a federal responsibility. In this particular project CARB has looked at Tom's plan and has commented on it; Tom will be sending draft reports to CARB, but they're not going to be monitoring what Tom or the District is doing.

Michael Schorr suggested having a presentation on the CALEPA activities at the border for the next meeting.

Reyes Romero said he would invite them and see if they could come.

Carlos Angulo said that they would gladly invite the correspondent department. He also mentioned that the technical area on which the understanding memorandum was integrated for the monitoring system, which is also one of the binational support activities, was under the management of the department to which Fernando, who was at the meeting was a part of. He also mentioned some other binational activities such as their participation on different air quality activities through the Border Governors Conference.

Marco Antonio Reyna asked if it would be possible to advance by prohibiting highly pollutant vehicles seen in Mexicali, and if they could ask the US migration department not to let them cross into their country because the advance through the smog check program in Mexico was very slow.

Martha Fonseca said that they fortunately had a very good relationship between SPA and CALEPA, and that they were already discussing this issue with state and federal authorities since it would be an important compliment to the Baja California Smog Check Program.

IV. Border 2020 Projects and Updates; Dave Fege

Dave Fege said that the project that **Tom Kear** had presented was the only project going on under the Border 2020 Program right now.

V. Updates from Federal, State, and Local Governments

Marta Fonseca Mentioned that governor from Baja California had made a presentation of the projects to be established regarding air quality. She said that some of those projects were already being developed with in coordination with CALEPA. She also mentioned that because of the issues faced in Mexicali, they were aiming their efforts as a state government to find the mechanism through which accomplish an improvement on air quality especially in this city. She finished saying that they would be giving updates on each one of those projects.

Raúl Tovar mentioned that a training workshop on emissions forecast for the smog check centers was going to take place in Mexicali. He also mentioned that another one on transportation was going to be held in May.

Margarito Quintero asked when their monitor was going to be installed since it was supposed to have been installed two months ago. He also asked when the chemistry laboratory was going to officially be in operation, and when they were going to relocate the monitor in Progreso because it was determined that it needed to be relocated five years ago because it was located on a semi-rural area. He continued asking about the validated data for the data base which collects data for all of the US and some monitoring stations in Mexico. He finished asking the date for the presentation of the Tijuana 2012/2020 Pro Aire Program, which should have been presented two years ago.

Martha Fonseca said with regards to the monitoring station at the UABC that this had been delayed due to the change in government, but that they were already working on it. Regarding the relocation of the monitoring station in Progreso, she said that the technical recommendation from SEMARNAT was not to move it since it's located near the thermo electrical plants and other important companies such as Sucarne. However, she said that they were trying to eliminate external agents near the monitor that might cause unreal measurements. As far as the laboratory is concerned, she said they were about to begin working with the necessary mechanisms so that the lab could be in charge of the filters. She said that a public meeting for the Tijuana Pro Aire Program had been cancelled because of the lack of opinion on each one of the three municipalities, but that another one would be scheduled soon.

Ray Askins said that SPA didn't have an appropriate program to encourage people to plant trees.

Martha Fonseca said that the SPA currently has two tree nurseries, and that they are giving away free trees to every school in the estate. She also explained that any citizen who wished to acquire a tree could do so simply by committing to take care of it and that an adoption certificate would be issued.

Luis Olmedo mentioned a program called IVAN (Identifying Violations Affecting neighborhoods) through which people can submit environmental reports and that he was going to pass around some information on this program. He also mentioned that they had gotten funded from NIH (National Institutes for Health)

to deploy 40 air monitors throughout the Imperial Valley. He said they hoped to collaborate with CARB, EPA and others to bring in other resources to help improve air quality in the communities. He also mentioned that they had received another grant to do an asthma research in Imperial Valley.

Virginia Mendoza said that the Imperial County Transportation Commission was carrying forward a pedestrian and bicycle transportation access improvement project of the California/Baja California land ports of entry.

VI. Wrap Up/Date of Next Meeting

Reyes Romero suggested June 12th, 2014 as the date for the next meeting. Everyone agreed so Reyes Romero thanked everyone for being at this meeting, and said he hoped to see everyone in Mexicali for the next one.

Meeting Adjourned.