

**AB 617 Community Air Protection Program
Minutes of the Steering Committee Meeting
IVC Junior College
Imperial Valley, CA
November 13th, 2019**

Chair of Meeting: Luis Olmedo (Alternate: Christian Torres)

Facilitator: Megan Wylie from Cal State in Sacramento & Daniela Flores of Harder Co.

I. Attendance:

Mersedes Martinez, Community Corridor; **Matt Dessert**, Air Pollution Control District; **Luis Olmedo**, Comité Cívico del Valle; **Rene Felix**, Community Corridor; **Mireya Diaz**, Community Corridor; **Sergio Cabañas**, Community Corridor; **Mary Salazar**, Community Corridor; **John Hernandez**, Community Corridor

Alternates: Reyes Romero; Rosa Guerrero, Bob Fischer; Sandra Mendivil; Chris Gomez-Wong; Steven Snow; Michael Moore

II. Welcome and Opening Remarks by CSC Members

Megan Wylie mentioned she will be the facilitator for the Community meeting portion of the evening. She reminded everyone there are several avenues for public comment including verbal public comment, post-it notes, and posters that will be explained later in addition to comment cards. She added that there is a public comment portion in the steering committee meeting as well. She said that they will be speaking on the Community Emissions Reductions Program (CERP). She reminded everyone of the location of the restrooms, emergency exits, and invited everyone to grab some food. She invited everyone that they have translation services available. She added that time is limited and asked if everyone could limit their comments to 2 to 3 minutes. She mentioned there will be a brief overview of the Community Air Protection Program and the CERP. She said the remaining hour will be a Q&A.

Heather Arias from CARB thanked everyone for going to the meeting and for letting them move the meeting there. She pointed at the CARB staff in the meeting and invited everyone to talk to them if they had any questions. She added that **Andrea Juarez** is the liaison for the community and that she attends most meetings. She mentioned that **Dave Salardino** is also at most meetings and that both will be back in the December meeting. She announced that the CARB board will be in the community on January 15th at around 4 pm at the Old School House for an evening meeting so that they can hear everyone's concerns or questions and added they have flyers in the registration table.

Megan Wylie commented that they do not have a quorum for the CSC members and invited alternate members to join them around the table.

Luis Olmedo welcomed everyone in the meeting. He commented that it has been a journey since AB 617 was signed into law in 2017. He reminded everyone that the purpose of the meeting was to share the information gathered by CARB and the Air District. He thanked **Megan Wylie**, CARB, and the steering committee for joining the meetings. He added that they are one of the 10 communities that the government has invested to create an Emissions Reductions Program.

Matt Dessert welcomed everyone to IVC Junior College. He thanked CARB, CCV, and the steering committee for assisting. He said that they have reached a quorum.

Andrea Juarez thanked everyone for coming that night. She commented that they have CARB staff in the meeting that is interested in hearing everyone's concerns regarding heavy-duty diesel idling in your community. She invited everyone to go talk to Tom after the presentation is over so he can hear everyone's comments on idling.

III. Overview of the State Community Air Protection Program and the Emissions Reductions Program; Andrea Juarez from CARB

Megan Wylie said that CARB posed 3 questions around the CERP so that they can have an organic conversation, the questions are: (1) what are the key strengths of the CERP? (2) What do you want CARBs governing board to know about the CERP? And (3) what lessons learned would you like us to share with other communities or CARBs governing board? She commented that the questions are also included in the back of everyone's packet including a copy of the slides if they want to reference them. She noted if anyone has a thought or idea that would like for it to be captured in a visual format to please take a post-it note located in the window frame and stick their response to one of the three corresponding questions. She commented that after the meeting they will take pictures of the responses and will be uploaded to the CARB website. She noted that there will not be a formal transcription of these notes but they will be all uploaded to the website for transparency. She said that there are also comment cards that will be reviewed by CARB staff. She added that CARB will take all the discussion from the evening and that they will consider it in their staff report.

Matt Dessert said that when the board of supervisors voted to approve these documents, the local board of supervisors also act as the local air pollution control board. He then invited everyone to attend the January 15th CARB meeting because it is highly significant to have this powerful board in their community. He commented on Tier 1 and 2 project and said the CSC committee was successful in accomplishing an early emissions reduction project in both categories, the Calexico high school parking lot that was paved was funded partially by the 617 money that is still yet to come but that the project is already completed, he mentioned that the Air District paid upfront and that they will be reimbursed half the cost. He added that under the Tier 2 projects they have updated the ad burn policy which is yet to be signed but will be done before the January 15th meeting.

Mireya Diaz mentioned that one of the things she liked about the Tier 1 Projects is that not only the board has great ideas but they've had a lot of input from their community and that this is reflected on the projects they've come up with. She said that air filtration projects in schools are the priority. She commented that she is amazed by how proactive everyone is and how everyone has come together very well to move forward and that she's excited and proud of what they have achieved.

Bob Fischer said that the progress they've made validates the whole concept of AB 617 because instead of having a top-down approach, they've done a bottom-up approach to regulating air quality with useful input from the community. He added that specific needs are being addressed that will directly impact the air quality in the community. He commented that they've worked hard to focus on the reductions they can achieve given that they're close to the border and are exposed to the overwhelming impact of the air quality in Mexicali.

Luis Olmedo commented that it's clear it's been a lot of work and that they face a lot of challenges. On the questions asked by CARB after the presentation, he said that the key strength has been coming together as an organization that works with the community. He mentioned that the government has passed a lot of laws that give them the ability to elevate the issues that they face and that AB 617 is one of these laws. He added that whenever the legislature designates money they are normally selected last and that this is clear because the Valley is largely under-invested. He mentioned they breathe the same air as Baja California and they are yet to convince the state that they have a migrating community on a daily basis. He mentioned AB 617 needs more

equal because the funding normally goes to cities with a larger population and not necessarily the severity of the air quality. He commented that a lot of good actors in the industry want the equal application of policies because if businesses circumvent these policies it creates an unfair advantage in the business sector and he thinks enforcement should continue to be a part of the strategy. He said that there is a lot of tourism in the area, and a lot of the profit doesn't go back into the community because they use federal lands.

René Felix, answering the question asked in the presentation about the strengths of the CERP, said that he considers the region to be in an exceptional moment since it is difficult to have the economic resources to invest in environmental problems and to have the human resources within Government agencies and organizations are not easy either. He commented that on the 8th the county approved the work done by the committee and 10 days later a binational meeting was held with senior officials from both nations. He mentioned that they subsequently had the Civic Committee Summit and commented that all these events have been extraordinary for Imperial County. He added that the problem must be solved together with Mexico since they will not be able to solve it alone.

Mireya Diaz said that one of the key strengths of their plan is the voice of their community. She said that one of the things she would like CARBs board to know is that it is extremely important to have the flexibility to come up with ideas that will work with their community. She commented that this has been a great opportunity to expand its horizon because the community hasn't been big on change for many years. She added that some of the lessons they have learned in all these proposed timelines need more wiggle room because not everyone is an expert in air quality thus needing more time to understand everything so they can make a wise decision. She also wanted CARB to know that it's a great opportunity to teach and empower the community on air quality, but that CARB also needs to make it easy for them to understand.

Megan Wylie asked the public with a show of hands if they agree that the CERP is reflective of the community and that there are unique solutions to their community, she then asked if anyone strongly disagrees with the statement, followed by if anyone is unsure on issuing an opinion.

Matt Dessert said that the community steering committee saw the indoor air filtration project at the Grace Smith School in Niland and commented that he's optimistic they will see more of those types of projects within the corridor. He added that Sealy school would also receive the same indoor air filtration project by mid-December. He commented that that money is coming from the state of California and thanked **Mark Silver** and **Linda Cedillo** for CARBs efforts to explain to them the funding opportunities. He mentioned that **Luis Olmedo** and he have been in discussions talking about the expansion of the IVAN network through AB 617 and having better locations for those monitors for better coverage, they want to make sure those monitors are spaced out even if that includes bringing in additional expertise. He said that additional expertise will come in regarding toxic monitors around the New River near the Calexico area. He then asked CARB if they can give an update regarding the binational activity including the Border 2020 Project in the January 15th meeting because there has been a big interest in the Mexicali valley over air pollution concerns, he'd also like to add the New River activities to the meeting as well.

Megan Wylie asked **Matt Dessert** if he thought that the migration that happens in the community is reflected correctly in the CERP.

Matt Dessert answered that it is correctly reflected in the Tier 2 projects. He said they are very fortunate to have this designation with the amount of funding going to the community but they are different than the other urban cities that have this designation. He added that they appreciate everyone's input. He said he feels that there are eyes and ears on the ground on these important environmental concerns.

John Hernández asked if anyone wanted to say something in Spanish before making his comment. He then said he agreed wholeheartedly on what he has heard regarding the strengths that AB 617 brings to the

community. Referencing what he'd like CARB's board to know, he said that they appreciate their help regarding bringing in professionals and scientists that are going to provide them with what they want to know about the air quality. He also noted that he'd like to know what the budget will look like. Regarding the question about lessons learned, he said that if anyone raises their voice CARB will be listening and that they are prepared to protect and serve their community if called upon to do so.

Miguel Hernandez mentioned that Sacramento has overlooked Imperial County for several years until this funding but he still believes this amount of funding is not enough because out of the 30 public schools in the corridor, only 12 have been given priority regarding the indoor air filtration systems. He commented they should ask for more in this document instead of settling for less.

Mercedes Martinez said that some of the strengths of the program are the co-chairs because she believes that they've taken into consideration what each profession would bring to the table when selecting the committee members. She said she wanted CARB to know that they've been educating the county correctly. She mentioned that the lesson they have learned is that they've learned to listen to the experts so they can make educated decisions.

A resident of Calexico emphasized the importance of the binational talks; he said that without the collaboration of Mexico they will not achieve much. He suggested researching the possibility of paving highly transited dirt roads that the Border Patrol uses to eliminate all the dust that this generates.

Megan Wylie concluded the public comment and invited everyone to use the post-it notes and the posters so they can attendance can provide their feedback on the 3 questions asked by CARB in their presentation. She added that she will be synthesizing the comments made that day and said she will be in the back of the room polling whether the attendance was in agreement with these comments or not so they can collect more feedback. She mentioned the CARB staff will be there for another hour to answer questions.

Luis Olmedo asked if the CARB representatives will be accepting comments during the entire time they are there. He then asked the advisory group if it was OK to ask the audience if there are any additional comments because he thinks that this is the most important part of the agenda. He asked for a show of hands and it was in favor. He asked the audience if there is more comments or concerns.

Johnny on wheels said that the planet is being scorched and the state should start buying the water now and not 5 years from now because planting trees is a 50-year project that takes too long. He commented that they should empower the younger generation to plant trees and have a garden in their backyard. He added that it's important to plant trees that give the most reduction of air pollution and not all the cheap trees that grow fast and have a small reduction in air pollution.

Luis Olmedo said as a closing comment that they need additional monitors in Mexicali and they need to expand the type of monitors they use. He added that they need a more robust mobile strategy and that an additional workshop is necessary because he believes they can achieve more meaningful engagements with the community if they can walk to a meeting near them; he suggested El Centro, Heber or Calexico would be appropriate additions. He mentioned that they need a new binational plan that is consistent with the CERP. He then added he'd like the environmental justice program to be consulted regularly so they can play a more prominent role in what committee does.

Belen Leon asked if there was going to be more time for CSC members or the public to submit more comments.

A CARB representative commented that they showed **Andreas Juarez's** email and phone number to contact her with more comments. She said she really liked **Luis Olmedo's** suggestion on CARB participating in the

upcoming steering committee meetings. She mentioned that the tentative date for the posting of the report would be December 12th because they want to be sure the community has 30 days to submit any more comments.

IV. AB 617 Community Air Protection Counsel Program Steering Committee Meeting.

Luis Olmedo welcomed everyone and invited everyone to stay for this part of the meeting.

Daniela Juarez started a roll call. She then mentioned they are over time and asked the audience if they can keep their comments under one minute.

V. Approval of the Minutes for August 28th and October 2nd.

Luis Olmedo mentioned that the Minute of September 11th is still under review due to some technical challenges. He asked for a motion for approval of the minutes. **John Hernandez** made the motion and **Sergio Cabanas** seconded it. The motion passed.

VI. Discussions Items

Discussion on Tours for CSC Members.

Belen Leon mentioned that CARB will arrive on January 15th for the CERP meeting, but they also want to do a tour open for CSC members. She said that they will give out more information in December, but that the tour will be early in the morning given that the CERP meeting is at 4 o'clock.

Discussion of Agricultural Burning Enforcement;

Matt Dessert said that this is an early emissions reductions project that has been put together in conjunction with the Air Pollution Control District. He commented that the policy has been reviewed, vetted and it's now just waiting to be signed by him. He added that there's more information on the website about this activity.

Discussion on AB 617 Community Monitors Installation; Christian Torres

John Hernandez commented that what was presented was a good idea and that he supports it.

Michael Moore commented he's on the other side of the fence than **John Hernandez** because he thinks there is value in the differing data between the two monitors that are in close proximity. He said that he does not mind these two monitors being that close because there is a business close by that could potentially create different air quality.

Christian Torres said that he was only suggesting changing these two monitors so that they can have more coverage, but it's the committee's decision to make.

Luis Olmedo mentioned these sensors only pick up PM10 and PM2.5 and they won't be indicative of every contaminant that may or may not exist in the area. He said that the District will hopefully have the resources to expand the monitoring to be able to do a larger suite of measurements. He highlighted that he'd like to prioritize where the community is living and not necessarily at the source, but he leaves that to the experts to give them that analysis.

Christian Torres responded by going back to the question of why do you want to do the monitoring, he said that if you want to find a leak you monitor the source but if you want to monitor the effect that it has on the public

you monitor the communities. He gave the example of the Grand Plaza Outlets where there is a lot of traffic especially in the holidays and said if you want to monitor the source the monitor would be closer to the road instead of the location of the people.

Mireya Diaz said she agreed with **Michael Moore** and asked if they could get more information on how one monitor would work instead of two in that critical area.

Bob Fischer said they need to get some clarity on their monitoring objectives and to reach a consensus on what they're trying to achieve with the monitors. He added that they need more education and discussion so everyone can be on the same page on the achievements the goals of the monitors.

Bill Plourd mentioned that in Heber there is already an existing monitor in the Heber School which is 100 yards from the El Toro Feedlot. He added that the geothermal plant is about half a mile from the feedlot. He commented that 4 monitors within half a mile of each other in an area where they already have a good idea of the air quality would be overkill.

Mercedes Martinez suggested adding in the presentation the site of the monitor and who owns the location, and for the sake of the deadline what would be a turnaround to place the new monitors.

Christian Torres said those are things that they can bring forward at the next meeting.

Matt Dessert suggested adding the same type of concentration as Heber in El Centro, particularly in the Eastside around the Washington School area.

Luis Olmedo asked the CSC Members by a show of hands if they would agree in expanding more monitors in Mexicali because he thinks there is value in adding more monitors in there.

John Hernandez asked if they would be adding more monitors to the 15 they have and send those to Mexicali or send an amount of the ones they already have.

Luis Olmedo commented that if they feel there's already enough saturation in the area, they could send some monitors to Mexicali. He said they can bring it back to the discussion later.

Matt Dessert said they've had discussed this and that they should take a look at the secondary sites. He noted that everyone should know they have budget constraints and they already have a budget allocation for the monitors. He reminded everyone that the Air District is working with CCV to establish two additional IVAN monitors not associated with AB 617 money in the San Pasqual School District. He said the Air District would like to focus on the budget they have before them and then approach new funding from CARB if they are going to do additional monitoring in Mexicali.

VII. Public Comment

Ray Askins said he hasn't heard a plan to find out the hotspots in Mexicali but that he has a list of bad actors in the industry. He said they should focus on these bad actors and that they should find a way to make them do business better. He suggested adding sensors on both sides of the companies as to the way the wind blows

Doctor Shavonne Borchardt asked if they are trying to target businesses and catching them emitting pollutants in the air or protecting the community. She also asked what was so special about Washington Elementary.

Luis Olmedo said that those are very technical questions and given the limited time he will refer them to the regulators in the Air District.

Matt Dessert said that Washington Elementary was brought up in previous steering committee meetings as an area of interest. He commented that the IVAN monitors that track PM10 and PM2.5 also track what the regulatory monitors report and that there is a direct correlation.

Abraham Campos voiced his concerns about adding the monitor in the Wastewater Treatment Plant in El Centro and that this location is subject to all the winds coming from the west and that this will lead the public to believe that wastewater plant is the source of all the dirt.

Luis Olmedo said that given the time constraints they will not be able to respond to **Abraham Campo** but they are documenting it. He added that everyone's comments are highly important to the committee because they do not know every corner in the community as they do.

Reyes Romero said that the committee should make a very informed decision on the addition of monitors in Mexicali, he goes on to say that they already have a very robust monitoring plan and that given the budget they have they should concentrate all their efforts in Calexico, Heber, and El Centro.

Mireya Diaz said she is very happy about hearing the public asking the why in the decisions they make. She said it's extremely important for the public to hold the committee accountable.

VIII. Agency Updates

Christian Torres mentioned the Border Relations Counsel will meet in Calexico in the city chambers in two weeks and once he gets confirmation of the date he will forward it to **Belen Leon**. He said they will talk on the work that's being done binational regarding air and water quality including Border 2020.

Matt Dessert gave an update on behalf of the Air District and said there will be a meeting at the city council chambers at el Centro the next day, he mentioned the State Water Control Board will come down for a meeting and a tour that starts at 10 o'clock. He commented that they will talk about environmental issues that tie into the toxic air monitors at the New River.

IX. Agenda Topics for Next Meeting

Belen Leon said they have a Border 2020 meeting in Calexico on December 5th from 11 am to 2 pm. She commented this is a joint meeting with CARB and will talk about the work plan they have binational. She mentioned one of the next agenda topics will be the monitor location discussion, another topic will be CARB and APCD enforcement discussion on ad burning pending confirmation, and they will possibly revisit the workshop in a low scale for the next December meeting pending confirmation. She said that the next meeting will be December 11th in Calexico or El Centro.

Luis Olmedo recommended one more topic for the next meeting and said that there is a lot of material being moved to the border and said that will increase of emissions in the Heber area asked APCD if they can bring a conversation about that.

Matt Dessert said they will look into that and bring back any information.

Daniela Flores asked the committee members if they wanted to suggest any topics for consideration.

John Hernandez said there is a lot of discrepancies regarding adding more monitors in Mexicali and asked the committee if they can get a unified stance on this topic.

X. Closing Remarks / Adjournment

Mary Salazar said she was impressed with the Environmental Health Summit she attended and that she learned a lot of information regarding how bad the situation is. She said that the long waits in the border is something that is hugely affecting Calexico's air quality.

Luis Olmedo asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, **John Hernandez** seconded it.

Meeting Adjourned.