

Action Summary Minutes
San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY GROUP (EJAG)

Central Region Office, Governing Board Room
1990 E. Gettysburg Avenue, Fresno, CA

Thursday, August 26, 2021
5:30 p.m.

Meeting held via video teleconferencing with the Central Region Office (Fresno). This meeting was also webcast. Given the international COVID-19 pandemic, and consistent with the California Department of Public Health's recommendations and Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29-20, no physical location was provided for public attendance.

1. CALL TO ORDER – The Chair, Keith Freitas, called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.
2. ROLL CALL – was taken and a quorum was present

Member Name	Membership Category	Location
Keith Freitas, Chair	Kings County At Large Representative	VTC
Thomas Helme, Vice Chair	Stanislaus County At Large Representative	VTC
Nayamin Martinez	Fresno County At Large Representative	VTC
Jasmeet Bains, M.D.	Kern County At Large Representative	VTC
Laura Gutile	Madera County At Large Representative	VTC
Dennis Brazil	Merced County At Large Representative	VTC
Esperanza Vielma	San Joaquin County At Large Representative	VTC
Derek Williams	Tulare County At Large Representative	VTC
Rechima Dean	Ethnic Small Business Owner	VTC
Richard O'Brien	CAC City Interest Group (Primary)	VTC
Ned Leiba	CAC Environmental Interest Group (Alternate)	VTC

3. APPROVE MINUTES FOR JUNE 24, 2021 – Mr. Freitas asked if there were any comments regarding the Minutes for June 24, 2021. Hearing none, he deemed the minutes as approved.

Public Comment: None

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None
5. CHAIR COMMENTS – None

6. APCO/DEPUTY APCO COMMENTS – Morgan Lambert, Deputy APCO, provided updates on the following:

- The District's Governing Board accepted \$5.5 million from the federal EPA under the highly competitive Diesel Emission Reduction Act program to replace diesel agricultural tractors and heavy-duty trucks. With this funding it is estimated that the District will be able to fund projects reducing approximately 400 tons of NOx and 45 tons of PM emissions.
- The Governing Board accepted \$178.2 million in state funding for utilization in the District's Alternatives to Ag Burning Incentive Program. The program plays a vital role in effort to provide feasible alternatives to open agricultural burning. The Board also adopted an additional \$100 per acre incentive for small operations (less than 100 acres) and added a new incentive option for the expansion of chipping capacity/fleets.

Mr. Helme asked if the 30% of funding set aside for smaller operations has been sufficient for the need. Mr. Lambert said affirmatively.

Ms. Gutile asked if there was an end date for the Alternatives to Ag Burning program. Mr. Lambert said the program would be available until the funding is exhausted. He said technically, the state funding expires in 2026, but staff is confident they will be able to use those funds prior to that date.

Ms. Vielma requested staff present an update on the Alternatives to Ag Burning Program for smaller farmers attending the 2nd annual Agriculture and Technology Summit on September 11, 2021. Mr. Lambert said the District's Outreach and Communications team would contact her.

Ms. Martinez asked how the District would ensure that small farmers receive information on the Alternatives to Ag Burning Program in other languages. Mr. Lambert responded staff was currently working on the outreach strategy and plan for this program. He said it would definitely be multilingual and said staff has worked with several groups in the past on targeted outreach and suggested staff could report back at a future EJAG meeting with a status on outreach for this program and get input from members.

Mr. Leiba requested information on the cost per ton of abated emissions and said that was always a very important metric to keep track of. He said at other meetings it was determined the cost to abate was about \$1 thousand per ton of PM2.5 primarily. He said they did not get good cost numbers for PM10, NOx, or VOCs which is fundamental for any compliance or incentive measure. Mr. Freitas agreed with Mr. Leiba.

Dr. Bains echoed Ms. Martinez' comments on outreach and asked more information on incentives for chipping companies. Mr. Lambert responded there

are companies who offer chipping services across the Valley but do not have the capacity to be able to handle the amount of agricultural material that needs to be transitioned away from open burning. To help facilitate this, the District is looking at using some of the state money to help those businesses purchase additional equipment. Dr. Bains voiced agreement with the earlier sentiment that cost effectiveness needs to be carefully looked at.

Mr. O'Brien expressed concern at the lack of planning for attrition, including felled trees. He suggested utilizing the Farm Bureaus in each county to conduct outreach for this program.

Mr. Williams suggested building an inflation index into the grant awards.

Mr. Helme said it would be too complicated to be required to adjust grants for inflation. He said as an environmental justice group, they should also be looking at the social cost or savings of the District's various measures and incentive programs, such as a reduction in emergency room visits.

7. UPDATE ON ATTAINMENT PLANS AND RULES – Jessica Coria, Program Manager, provided an update on the District's attainment plan and rule making efforts.
8. ELECTION OF OFFICERS – Mr. Lambert said the purpose of this item was to elect a Chair for the next two-year term. He thanked Mr. Freitas for serving as Chair for the past two years. He explained that under the EJAG Bylaws, the Vice Chair serves a one-year term. He added Mr. Helme was elected to that position in January 2021, and would be eligible to be nominated as Chair. Lastly, Mr. Lambert said the EJAG Bylaws require a majority vote of the EJAG body. Since there are currently 13 members serving on EJAG, any action by the group would require 7 affirmative votes.

Mr. Freitas opened the floor for nominations. Ms. Martinez clarified that there were only 11 members present at this meeting, and 7 affirmative votes were required. Mr. Lambert responded affirmatively. Mr. Freitas confirmed there was nothing preventing the Vice-Chair from accepting a nomination and subsequent election as Chair. Mr. Lambert responded affirmatively.

Mr. Brazil nominated Mr. Helme as Chair for a two-year term. Ms. Vielma seconded the nomination. Mr. Helme declined the nomination.

Mr. O'Brien nominated Mr. Leiba as Chair for a two-year term. Mr. Leiba declined the nomination.

Mr. Helme nominated Ms. Martinez as Chair for a two-year term. Ms. Vielma seconded the nomination.

Moved: Helme
Seconded: Vielma
Ayes: Martinez, Baines, Brazil, Vielma, Helme, O'Brien
Noes: Gutile, Williams, Dean, Leiba
Abstain: Freitas

Motion failed by a vote of 6-4 with 1 abstention to elect Nayamin Martinez as EJAG Chair for a two-year term

Mr. Williams nominated Mr. Freitas as Chair for another two-year term. Ms. Gutile seconded the nomination.

Moved: Williams
Seconded: Gutile
Ayes: Freitas, Gutile, Williams, Dean, O'Brien, Leiba
Noes: Helme
Abstain: Martinez, Bains, Brazil, Vielma

Motion failed by a vote of 6-1 with 4 abstentions to elect Keith Freitas as EJAG Chair for a two-year term

This item was continued until the next meeting by concurrence. Mr. Leiba requested each candidate provide information on their background to members before the next meeting.

9. NEW URBAN GREENING AND VEGETATIVE BARRIER INCENTIVE PROGRAM – Todd DeYoung, Director of Grants and Incentives, presented an update on the District's new Urban Greening and Vegetative Barrier Incentive Program.

Mr. Helme said there was a study conducted in South Central Los Angeles about the testing of different plants and which filtered PM2.5 and PM10 most effectively. He offered to share information on that study with District staff. Mr. DeYoung responded affirmatively and said a lot of the tools used to evaluate potential plant species and location take into account the latest research information.

Mr. Williams suggested looking at options for vegetative barriers that do not require water.

Dr. Bains said drought conditions would definitely be an issue and said the District should also consider fire resistant vegetation due to the huge impact from wildfires. She added that cost effectiveness is another main concern.

Ms. Martinez said that this program is one of the many tools in the District's toolbox and is not meant to solve the wildfire problem. She said it was important

to consider the locations in the AB 617 communities and especially those that lack tree canopies. She said this program will allow the mitigation of air quality issues in AB 617 communities for residents, especially children with asthma.

10. AB 617 UPDATE – Ryan Hayashi, Deputy APCO, provided an update on recent activities in the District's AB 617 communities.
11. POTENTIAL FUTURE EJAG MEETING AGENDA ITEMS
 - Environmental Justice training for EJAG members and staff
 - Ethics and Brown Act training for members
 - Update on wildfire
12. PUBLIC COMMENTS (2ND Opportunity) – None
13. EJAG MEMBER COMMENTS – None
14. VOLUNTEER TO PRESENT REPORT DURING CAC MEETING ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2021 (TENTATIVE AT 10 A.M.) – Mr. Williams volunteered to present the report if needed.
15. VOLUNTEER TO PRESENT REPORT DURING GOVERNING BOARD MEETING ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2021 (TENTATIVE) AT 9 A.M. – Mr. Lambert said there will not be a report during this meeting.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Next Meeting – The next EJAG meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 28, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. The meeting will be held via video teleconference (VTC), with the Central Region Office (Fresno), the Northern Region Office (Modesto) and the Southern Region Office (Bakersfield) participating.