

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, June 24, 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 5:30 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
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
Manuel Cunha	CAC Industry/Ag Interest Group (Alternate)	VTC

**Arrived at 6:29 p.m.*

3. APPROVE MINUTES FOR APRIL 22, 2021 – Mr. Freitas asked if there were any comments regarding the Minutes for April 22, 2021. Mr. Leiba noted that the county designation for his and Mayor O'Brien's entries on the attendance log were incorrect. Deputy Clerk of the Boards, Michelle Franco, said that information would be corrected before the Minutes were published. Hearing no additional comments, Mr. Freitas deemed the Minutes as approved with the noted corrections.

Public Comment: None

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None
5. CHAIR COMMENTS – Mr. Freitas commended members and staff for their great work

throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, keeping operations and public meetings running smoothly. He added it has been an honor to serve as EJAG Chair over the past two years, and said he was committed to offer his services to do whatever it takes to help clean air efforts in the Valley

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

- The District's Governing Board approved a \$7 million agreement with Valley Clean Air Now for implementation of the Tune in Tune Up program. The funding will be used to provide residents with financial assistance for smog-related repairs. The District will be resuming weekend events as allowed for by public health and safety recommendations.
- The Governing Board approved the Supplemental Report on the District's 2020 Staff Report and Recommendations on Agricultural Burning. He added that CARB took action on June 18, 2021 and issued full concurrence.

Mr. Freitas asked about the timeline for phasing out agricultural burning. Mr. Lambert responded that categories are being phase-out in accordance with the scheduled included in the report, with the final phase-out date on January 1, 2025.

Ms. Vielma commended staff for all of the efforts being done and asked if District staff would be available to present on the agricultural burning phase-out for the 2nd annual Agricultural and Technology Summit that will take place on September 10 and 11, 2021, sponsored by Café Coop and Environmental Justice Coalition for Water. Mr. Lambert responded a member of the District's Outreach and Communications team would contact Ms. Vielma for more details.

Mr. Williams asked about the economic impact numbers for citrus production. He said there were only a few places in the world that can grow the quality of citrus grown in the Valley. He said it was important to try and keep the family agricultural growers in business and asked if the state would subsidize other forms of agriculture waste disposal. As part of the California Air Resources Board action on the District's report, they have recognized the need for significant resources to facilitate the transition and have committed to work to secure the resources through the state budget. There was significant money that was identified as part of the Governor's May revise budget and staff is hopeful that significant funding will be coming to the Valley.

Mr. Cunha voiced appreciation for Mr. Williams' and Mr. Lambert's comments. He said the agricultural burn phase-out will be a very expensive mandate to implement, but the agricultural community in the Valley is committed to working to find viable solutions and tools that our growers will be able to use.

Mayor O'Brien said the City of Riverbank is beginning construction on an ethanol plant that will take up to 19 million tons of agricultural waste per year. He added they plan to have multiple plants up and running by 2027.

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. UPDATE ON FINAL 2021 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES – Mr. Lambert presented the final version of the 2021 EJAG Goals and Objectives which were crafted after robust discussions by EJAG members at the last two meetings.

Mr. Leiba asked where he could locate the foundational environmental justice principles. Mr. Lambert said the District's Environmental Justice Strategy and EJAG Bylaws capture the principles under which the EJAG operates.

Mr. Helme suggested that a training on environmental justice be provided at a future EJAG meeting. Mr. Lambert that additional training for both staff and EJAG members was added under objective number ten in the Goals and Objectives and staff would work with members to pull a training together at a future meeting.

9. UPDATE ON 2021 WILDIRE SEASON – Jessica Olsen, Director of Community Strategies and Resources, and Jaime Holt, Chief Communications Officer, presented an update on the upcoming 2021 wildfire season and potential impacts on the Valley's air quality and outreach strategy to protect public health.

Mr. Freitas suggested the District, EPA and CARB should play a role investigation and enforcement of wildfires, since they have such detrimental impact on air quality. Mr. Lambert responded in terms of enforcement, the fire agencies and law enforcement were best suited to handle those investigations.

Mayor O'Brien said the state has failed at managing the forests by failing to properly cut back timber that are sick and dying. He suggested that the state and US Department of Forestry work together to figure out the proper way to manage the forests because it costs more to fight a wildfire than it does to manage the forests.

Mr. Leiba agreed with Mayor O'Brien and the Valley always has periods of drought. He said the most important thing to remember is that emissions from wildfires can be more than all sources of anthropogenic emissions in the Valley. He said the problem is exposure more than emissions, and the Valley will never be able to overcome the emissions that occur from nature.

Mr. Helme asked about the latest recommendations for wearing masks to protect against the smoke impacts from wildfires. Mr. Helme suggested the District create an infographic on recommendations for masks. Ms. Holt responded that

CARB is currently working on this and it would be added to the District's website when approved for release.

Ms. Dean arrived at 6:29 p.m.

10. REPORT ON 2020-2021 WINTER RESIDENTIAL WOODSMOKE REDUCTION STRATEGY – Ms. Holt and Ms. Olsen provided an update on the District's 2020-21 Winter Residential Woodsmoke Reduction Strategy.

Mr. O'Brien asked why the District does not eliminate wood burning completely. Ms. Holt responded that has come up on numerous occasions, and the District continues to ratchet down the amount of burning that is allowed every time this rule is amended. She said she receives just as many calls from residents complaining that the District is stepping on their rights, as she does from residents complaining that the District is still allowing wood burning. She added that the rule is structured, there was very little wood burning allowed, especially in Hot Spot communities. Mr. O'Brien added that the wood burning restrictions are only in place for three months, and residents are allowed to burn freely for the rest of the year. He suggested the District's Governing Board should adopt a strong policy to restrict wood burning for the entire year.

Mr. Helme said another reason the District does not completely ban wood burning is because there is still a small amount of residents that live in places where they do not have alternatives for heating their homes.

11. AB 617 UPDATE – Ms. Holt provided an update on recent activities in the District's AB 617 communities.

12. POTENTIAL FUTURE EJAG MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

- AB 617 updates
- History and principles of environmental justice

13. PUBLIC COMMENTS (2ND Opportunity) – None

14. EJAG MEMBER COMMENTS – Mr. Williams thanked staff for the great and informative presentations at this meeting.

Mr. Cunha thanked staff for the great presentations at this meeting.

Mr. Gutile voiced appreciation for the efforts that staff puts in and said she learns something new at every meeting.

15. VOLUNTEER TO PRESENT REPORT DURING CAC MEETING ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2021 (TENTATIVE AT 10 A.M.) – Mr. Williams volunteered to present the report if needed.

16. VOLUNTEER TO PRESENT REPORT DURING GOVERNING BOARD MEETING ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 2021 (TENTATIVE) AT 9 A.M. – Mr. Lambert said there will not be a report during this meeting.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Next Meeting – The next EJAG meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 26, 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.