

Final Minutes



Clean Air Strategy Governance Subgroup meeting #3

Date: November 10, 2008

Time: 10.00 – 3.30

Place: CASA Offices

In attendance:

Name	Stakeholder group
Tricia Bell	Alberta Environment
Gerry Ertel	Shell Canada / CPPI
Jillian Flett	Alberta Environment
Steve Kennett	Pembina Institute
Bettina Mueller	Alberta Environment
Manuel Figueroa	Alberta Environment
Jennifer Allan	CASA

Steve Kennett chaired the meeting, which convened at 10.15 a.m. Quorum was achieved.

Action Items:

Action items	Who	Due
2.3 All subgroup members will update their matrices.	All subgroup members	Ongoing

1) Administration

- a. Approval of the agenda: Agenda approved by consensus
 - o Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting: The minutes of Meeting 1 were approved by consensus. The minutes of Meeting 2 were approved with the addition of “as it relates to industrial emissions” on page 2.
- b. Review of action items:

Action items	Who	Due
2.1 Subgroup members will forward comments on the meeting one minutes to Jennifer	All subgroup members	Done
2.2 Create an initial grouping of the gaps identified and an initial draft of the introduction section	Jennifer	Done
2.3 All subgroup members will update their matrices.	All subgroup members	Ongoing

2) Identifying problems, goals and potential actions

The subgroup worked from the problem categories identified via email since the last meeting. These categories provided common themes that emerged from the problems identified in the specific issues. The themes that initially stood out were:

- Multiple jurisdictions can be involved in air quality management, but coordination is lacking
- There are issues without a clearly identified and accountable body

- Accountability mechanisms are in some cases, but can be strengthened
- The current air quality management system does some things very well, but could be improved. There are numerous players with different functions. These roles could be evaluated to look for ways to efficiently meet outcomes.

The subgroup discussed and identified goals and potential actions for each.

A. Coordination of multiple jurisdictions

There are multiple jurisdictions that make decisions that impact air quality. These decisions should fit into an overall, integrated air management approach and decision-makers should be held accountable. Issues with a single point of accountability are often more successful.

However, these decisions have to be considered in the context of the Land Use Framework – regional plans will involve decisions that impact regional air quality and will involve multiple jurisdictions. A provincial coordinating mechanism will have to consider the regional plans as well.

There will be competing demands which impact air quality. The purpose of a coordinated body will be to make decisions how the ‘air quality pie’ is divided among these interests. This could be at a regional or provincial level.

One option is to enshrine the Ambient Air Quality Objectives (AAQOs) into the regional plans. No activity undertaken in the region could push the regional ambient air quality beyond an objective. This would work well for the “big” projects that require approvals. However, smaller projects without an approvals or project review process (e.g. roads, agriculture) would be more difficult.

Goal 1: Alberta has a coordinated decision-making mechanism that:

- Integrates decisions that impact air quality
- Ensures decisions consider air quality
- Holds decision-makers accountable for air quality outcomes
- Applies the principles of pollution prevention, keeping clean areas clean and continuous improvement.

Potential actions:

a) At the regional level, ambient air quality objectives (AAQOs) are enshrined in regional plans and apply to all activities within a region

b) Create a single point of accountability for air quality outcomes and integrated decision-making.

This can be accomplished by either:

- Empowering one department (AENV) with the authority to review, revise and permit all provincial decision impacting air quality, or,
- Creating a multi-department, high-level council that will oversee the integration of provincial policies and tradeoffs to ensure air quality outcomes as part of its mandate.

The council will:

- Establish a review committee for significant provincial policies as they relate to air
- Resolve conflicts or unanticipated issues
- Report to the executive council of Cabinet.

The multi-department, high level council in 1b could be the Sustainable Development Coordinating Council. This council was created by EPEA and includes the Deputy Ministers of the applicable agencies for our purposes: Environment, Energy, Agriculture Food & Rural Development, Sustainable Resource Development, Community Development, Economic Development, Health & Wellness, Infrastructure, Innovation & Science, Intergovernmental and International Affairs, Municipal Affairs, Alberta Justice & Attorney General, Alberta Research Council, Public Affairs Bureau, Transportation, ERCB and NRCB. Alberta Environment is the chair. The DMs on the council report to their ministers, who in turn report to the Executive Council of Cabinet.

The committee could make recommendations on what projects should go ahead and explicitly state tradeoffs. It would provide direction and high-level, provincial decision making. It might be useful to also report to the LUF cabinet committee.

This committee is currently reviewing its mandate given the creation of other groups such as the Land Use Secretariat. Traditionally, the council provided information and updates to each other, rather than operational decision-making. It does have the ability to create committees.

Other options could include enhancing the LUF Secretariat (or making an air equivalent secretariat) or using market-based tools (although these tools could be applied in conjunction with a coordination body or super-department).

B. Issues without a clearly accountable body

There were issues identified without a single point of accountability, such as indoor air quality, energy efficiency, renewable energy and transportation demand management.

Goal 2: The Government of Alberta identifies an accountable body for policy development and decision-making for indoor air quality, energy efficiency, renewable energy and transportation demand management.

There are some issues without a clearly identified accountable body. In some cases, there may not be a responsible department in the province and in others, there may be multiple groups working in silos. The issues identified here require a lead agency to be accountable for clean air as it relates to this issue.

Potential actions:

- a) [By 2012] the appropriate accountable bodies are identified.
- b) [By 2015], the identified body creates policies, plans and implements tools to improve air quality related to these issues.

C. Accountability mechanisms

Decisions not made in accordance with regional plans or environmental outcomes should be held accountable. There are mechanisms in place, such as the Environmental Appeals Board, but the jurisdiction of that board is limited in terms of the issues it can address.

Goal 3: Alberta has an independent appeals body to hold decision makers accountable to the air quality outcomes specified in provincial and regional plans.

This will be accessible to all Albertans.

D. "Classic" air quality management system

At the operational level, there are decisions made to manage air quality. The subgroup discussed the functions of the air quality management system (standard setting, policy development, permitting, compliance and evaluation) and which groups fulfill those roles.

Two groups the subgroup would like to discuss are the airsheds and CASA. The airsheds provide monitoring data and some take on management and education roles in their areas. There have been issues concerning the consistency and timeliness of reporting as well as resource concerns. CASA does policy development and data storage but does not have a strong role holding groups accountable. One possibility is that CASA could do the state of the environment report (knowledge & information section: Goal 2).

The subgroup discussed the standard setting function of the current AQMS. There is an issue that some standards are unclear, outdated or are missing. Standards can mean objectives for a pollutant or industrial, technological standards. The reasons are that some groups have abandoned standard setting and there is significant time and resources required to create standards. Standard setting is both a technical and a policy issue. There is a significant amount of technical work to assess levels that are achievable and safe; however, there is also a risk-management component. Standards already exist, e.g. US EPA, but they may need to be adapted to Alberta. There are also activities that occur only in Alberta, meaning standards would have to be developed here.

Goal 4: Alberta has an effective air quality management system

Alberta's air quality management system consists of several components including standard setting, policy development, compliance, permitting and evaluation, economic tools and incentives.

Potential actions:

- a) The Government of Alberta will conduct a needs assessment and identify gaps in the standards that currently exist.
- b) The Government of Alberta will provide the infrastructure for the implementation of national standards and development of Alberta-specific standards where necessary
- c) The Government of Alberta will work to re-invigorate the national process for settings standards.

3) Next steps and meeting date(s)

The subgroup discussed future issues to be addressed:

- Other elements of the current AQMS: policy development, permitting, evaluation, compliance
- Pollution prevention: decision makers should be held accountable for implementing the principle of pollution prevention, keeping clean areas clean and continuous improvement.
- Priority setting mechanisms to anticipate issues, rather than react after there are problems
- Implementing the Clean Air Strategy: there is a placeholder in the table of contents for this section. What governance structures (who, how they will be accountable) will implement the CAS?

Date	Time	Place
November 25	10.00 – 3.30	CASA

4) Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 3.20 p.m.