

# CASA

## COMPLAINTS TASK GROUP

### Final Report Presentation to the OMT



*Tanya Moskal-Hebert, Alberta Agriculture*

*Jennifer Fowler, Hinton Pulp*

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# BACKGROUND



- ❑ The Complaints Task Group was formed in November 2013 to carry out the work listed under “Complaints” in the Odour Management Team (OMT) Project Charter (March 2013).
- ❑ The dedication and engagement of the Complaints task group members to complete deliverables is acknowledged and appreciated.
- ❑ Each deliverable of the Complaints Task Group was achieved through consensus agreement of the whole group.
- ❑ The complaints management process can be part of larger, more complex issues, including non-point sources and cumulative effects, but that these issues could not be addressed by this task group due to limited time and resources.



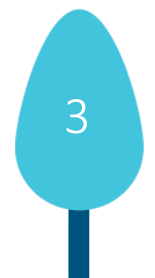
# MEMBERSHIP



- Ron Axelson, Intensive Livestock Working Group
- Ann Baran, Southern Alberta Group for the Environment
- Mike Bisaga, LICA
- Roxane Bretzlaff, Canadian Natural Resources Ltd.
- Francisco Echegaray, NRCB
- Jennifer Fowler, Hinton Pulp
- Zaher Hashisho, Alberta Health
- Joseph Hnatiuk, Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists
- Carolyn Kolebaba, AAMDC
- Jim Lapp, City of Edmonton (SWANA)
- Dalene Meier, Alberta Energy Regulator
- Tanya Moskal-Hébert, AARD
- Ludmilla Rodriguez, Alberta Health Services
- Merry Turtiak, Alberta Health

## FORMER MEMBERS:

- Keith Denman, ESRD
- Christian Felske, EWMC
- Sandi Jones, AARD





# TASK GROUP OBJECTIVES

The Charter outlines two objectives for the 'Complaints task group' work:

1. To effectively manage odour complaints.
2. To monitor long-term trends in odour complaints.

# WORKPLAN OVERVIEW



## Vision:

*“Alberta regulatory agencies, facility operators and municipalities all may receive complaints related to odour concerns, and a great deal of time and resources are expended by Alberta’s regulatory agencies in addressing odour-related concerns. When odour issues are not satisfactorily addressed, it may result in more protracted issues where complainants and proponents are more polarized and entrenched.”*

# TASK GROUP RESULTS



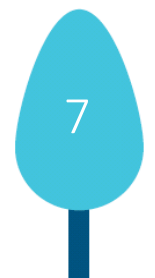


# TASK GROUP IMPLEMENTATION & BUDGET



To meet their objectives the Complaints task group:

- ❑ Met 18 times,
- ❑ Spent over 1150 hours in and between meetings developing and reviewing deliverables, and,
- ❑ Came in under their allocated budget from the OMT.





# TASK GROUP DELIVERABLES

Task Group Deliverables	Completion Status and Details
<p><b>Understand the current mechanism(s) in place to manage odour complaints.</b></p>	<p>Complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The task group received presentations and discussions from various agencies utilizing a complaints process in Alberta and developed an informational report reviewing odour complaint management. Appendix I contains the backgrounder report titled: Alberta Odour Complaints Overview.</li> <li>– Cross-jurisdictional review (not comprehensive)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop a complaints management process including information on communications and information exchange and roles and responsibilities for responding to odour complaints.</b></p>	<p>Complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The task group worked with a consultant to develop a complaints management process guidance document that includes a variety of customizable tools for organizations to use to develop a complaints process. Appendix II contains the booklet titled: Odour Complaints in Your Area: A Guide for Developing an Odour Complaint Process.</li> <li>– The task group also provided a presentation to the OMT summarizing their work.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Monitor long term trends in odour complaints.</b></p>	<p>Not complete.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Is a potentially valuable piece of work but the task group agreed that they did not have time or resources to complete and have provided advice to the OMT for future work.</li> </ul>



# TASK GROUP DELIVERABLES

## □ Intended Audience

- **Background Report:**
  - intended audience for the complaints processes information report is internal to the task group and OMT.
- **Complaints Guidance Booklet & Tools:**
  - focus of the deliverables to provide non-experts that handle odour complaints, such as employees at municipalities and industries, with the tools they need to handle the complaints themselves or to refer the caller to the appropriate agency.



# WORKPLAN METHODOLOGY

## □ Step One: Background Report

- Heard presentations from a variety of agencies that handle complaints.
- Presenters were asked to speak a list of questions prepared by the task group and provide any policies/forms that they use.
- The Complaints task group acknowledges the following:
  - Alberta Airsheds Council (AAC)
  - Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC)
  - Alberta Energy Regulator (AER)
  - Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (AESRD)
  - Edmonton Waste Management Centre (EWMC)
  - Alberta Health Services (Environmental Public Health (EPH))
  - Hinton Pulp a Division of West Fraser Mills Ltd.
  - Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB)
  - Oil and Gas (CNRL)
  - Transportation (Altex Energy)

# WORKPLAN METHODOLOGY

## □ Step Two: Cross-jurisdictional Review

- Were directed to take advantage of existing research as much as possible and consider application in the Alberta context.
- The task group located and reviewed an existing report developed by a third party consultant and used this as a basis for a cross-jurisdictional review as it contained information from several other jurisdictions.
- TG made a consensus decision to utilize all the information that was gathered to that point as their basis to create useable tools in their final step.



# WORKPLAN METHODOLOGY

## □ Step Three: Develop Tools - Determination of Appropriate Tools

- The task group created a customizable suite of tools that can be used to effectively manage odour complaints including:
  - A guidance booklet outlining complete process-related information to design and development a complaints process.
  - The decision tree includes a reference guide and call log (will assist call operators to refer callers to appropriate agencies).
  - A comprehensive 'data collection' form, and a public handout for organizations to use to increase public awareness of complaints management.

# REFLECTIONS ON DELIVERABLES



## Odour Complaints in Your Area: A Guide for Developing an Odour Complaint Process

- ✓ The Complaints task group is very satisfied with their deliverables (the guidance document)
- ✓ The task group recommends including the guidance document and tools with no modifications within the good practice guide.

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### Reporting Odours in Your Community

If you are troubled by an odour in your community, do you know where to report it? Do you know how to describe it?

Before you call, have the following information ready:

Location: Where you were when you noticed the odour  
 Description: Words you would use to describe the odour  
 Frequency: Dates and times you noticed the odour  
 Duration: How long the odour was noticeable  
 Weather: Conditions when you noticed the odour

Here are some words used to describe odours. Which matches the odour you're reporting?

Chemical	Lathry	Fruity	Offensive	Floral
<input type="checkbox"/> Acetic	<input type="checkbox"/> Greasy	<input type="checkbox"/> Citrus	<input type="checkbox"/> Garbage	<input type="checkbox"/> Flowers
<input type="checkbox"/> Bleach	<input type="checkbox"/> Hay	<input type="checkbox"/> Fermented	<input type="checkbox"/> Fertilizer	<input type="checkbox"/> Fragrant
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue	<input type="checkbox"/> Musty	<input type="checkbox"/> Fruity	<input type="checkbox"/> Foul	<input type="checkbox"/> Herbal
<input type="checkbox"/> Mouthwash	<input type="checkbox"/> Moldy	<input type="checkbox"/> Over-ripened	<input type="checkbox"/> Fruit	<input type="checkbox"/> Perfumy
<input type="checkbox"/> Nail polish	<input type="checkbox"/> Mushroom	<input type="checkbox"/> Rotten	<input type="checkbox"/> Sweet & sour	<input type="checkbox"/> Spicy
<input type="checkbox"/> Parfume	<input type="checkbox"/> Peaty	<input type="checkbox"/> Rotten egg	<input type="checkbox"/> Sour milk	
<input type="checkbox"/> Petroleum	<input type="checkbox"/> Pine	<input type="checkbox"/> Rotting meat	<input type="checkbox"/> Spoiled	
<input type="checkbox"/> Petrol	<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic	<input type="checkbox"/> Rotting vegetables	<input type="checkbox"/> Stinky	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rubber	<input type="checkbox"/> Rubber	<input type="checkbox"/> Skunky	<input type="checkbox"/> Urine	
<input type="checkbox"/> Solvent	<input type="checkbox"/> Tar	<input type="checkbox"/> Vinegar	<input type="checkbox"/> Vomit	
<input type="checkbox"/> Turpentine	<input type="checkbox"/> Urine	<input type="checkbox"/> Yeast	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood	
<input type="checkbox"/> Varnish	<input type="checkbox"/> Varnish			

Smoky	Medicinal	Fecal	Puñid	Fishy
<input type="checkbox"/> Burnt	<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/> Manure	<input type="checkbox"/> Burning	<input type="checkbox"/> Dead fish
<input type="checkbox"/> Camphor	<input type="checkbox"/> Benzene	<input type="checkbox"/> Sewer	<input type="checkbox"/> Cansoles	<input type="checkbox"/> Perm solution
<input type="checkbox"/> Coffee-like	<input type="checkbox"/> Menthol		<input type="checkbox"/> Dead animal	
<input type="checkbox"/> Exhaust	<input type="checkbox"/> Urine		<input type="checkbox"/> Decay	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grass smoke	<input type="checkbox"/> Vinegar		<input type="checkbox"/> Decay	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood smoke			<input type="checkbox"/> Rotting	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blood smoke				

Other (describe):

**Where to call**  
 If you smell natural gas (rotten eggs), leave the immediate area. Once safely away, call 911.

For other odours, if you know the source, you can call the organization directly. This will help your complaint to be acted on more quickly. Or you can call one of the following provincial or municipal numbers:

- Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) – Oil and gas  
1-800-222-6514
- Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (AESRD) – Environmental  
1-800-222-6514
- Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) – Agricultural  
1-866-383-6722
- Inimton – Municipal for Edmonton and Calgary

**!** If at any time the odour is causing physical symptoms or illness, call:  
 • Your family doctor  
 • Health Link Alberta (1-800-400-0495)  
 • 911 (for emergencies only)

### Appendix A – Sample Odour Complaint Form

Odour Complaint Form

Reference number: \_\_\_\_\_

Call date: \_\_\_\_\_ Call time: \_\_\_\_\_ Call received by: \_\_\_\_\_

Caller name: (May remain anonymous) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Location where you experienced the odour: \_\_\_\_\_

Odour description (check all described by caller):

Chemical	Fruity	Offensive	Floral
<input type="checkbox"/> Acidic	<input type="checkbox"/> Greasy	<input type="checkbox"/> Citrus	<input type="checkbox"/> Garbage
<input type="checkbox"/> Bleach	<input type="checkbox"/> Hay	<input type="checkbox"/> Fermented	<input type="checkbox"/> Flowers
<input type="checkbox"/> Blue	<input type="checkbox"/> Musty	<input type="checkbox"/> Fruity	<input type="checkbox"/> Fertilizer
<input type="checkbox"/> Mouthwash	<input type="checkbox"/> Moldy	<input type="checkbox"/> Over-ripened	<input type="checkbox"/> Fruit
<input type="checkbox"/> Nail polish	<input type="checkbox"/> Mushroom	<input type="checkbox"/> Rotten	<input type="checkbox"/> Sweet & sour
<input type="checkbox"/> Parfume	<input type="checkbox"/> Peaty	<input type="checkbox"/> Rotten egg	<input type="checkbox"/> Spoiled
<input type="checkbox"/> Petroleum	<input type="checkbox"/> Pine	<input type="checkbox"/> Rotting meat	
<input type="checkbox"/> Petrol	<input type="checkbox"/> Plastic	<input type="checkbox"/> Rotting vegetables	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rubber	<input type="checkbox"/> Rubber	<input type="checkbox"/> Skunky	
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Smoky	Medicinal	Fecal	Puñid	Fishy
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<input type="checkbox"/> Exhaust	<input type="checkbox"/> Urine		<input type="checkbox"/> Decay	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grass smoke	<input type="checkbox"/> Vinegar		<input type="checkbox"/> Decay	
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood smoke			<input type="checkbox"/> Rotting	
<input type="checkbox"/> Blood smoke				

Other (describe): \_\_\_\_\_

Frequency and duration

When did you first notice the odour? Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_  Don't know/No answer

How often have you noticed the odour? How long does it last?

One time Start time: \_\_\_\_\_ End time: \_\_\_\_\_  More than once a week

Continuous since Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_  Once or twice per month

Daily Time of day: \_\_\_\_\_  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Intensity (How strong is the odour?)

Faint: Odour is barely detectable, need to stand still and inhale while facing into the wind to notice it.

Moderate: Odour is easily detected while walking and breathing normally but it is not overpowering.

Strong: Odour is penetrating, you can't get away from it and it can easily be detected at all times.

No answer.

Continued on next page

# ADVICE & RECOMMENDATIONS

## Guide for Developing an Odour Complaint Process

- The group worked together with the consultant to refine the content of the guidance document to align with their overall vision.
- Agreed by consensus to accept the complete booklet and tools for inclusion in the Good Practice Guide.





# ADVICE TO THE OMT - COMMUNICATIONS



Considerations for OMT for the distribution of the groups' deliverables.

1. Identified key audiences for the distribution of their guidance document and tools.
  - The group highlights the Public Handout (Reporting Odours in Your Community) should be broadly distributed – a likely target would be municipalities and applicable branches of government (AUMA, AAMDC) and other umbrella organizations (Synergy Alberta).
2. Identified advice related to communications/education and outreach of the deliverables.
  - OMT should pursue umbrella organizations and 'hot spots' for odour complaints.
3. Highlights the OMT should pursue increasing the awareness of central contact telephone numbers for odour complaints like the CIC, as they do not have the resources.



# ADVICE - CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



The Complaints Task Group discussed the following areas of advice to the OMT about CI and future work for complaints and the groups' deliverables.

1. A province wide complaints framework review should occur within a 5-year timeframe to discuss the complaints process in Alberta and further areas of work.
  - The tools (decision tree/call log/complaint form) should be reviewed. Task group recommends the umbrella agencies that are provided their deliverables agree to a review of the usage of the tools to allow for continuous improvement and updates.
2. The task group recommends further work be conducted on the advice, revised processes and tools for 'hot spots' in the province.
3. The task group recommends future work include a province-wide information gathering system for odour complaints that allows for analysis and trending based on the information collected from the call logs and complaint forms from the organizations using the tool(s).
4. The task group acknowledges there should be continuous sharing of complaint-related information between groups/organizations.





# LINKS TO OTHER TASK GROUPS

Overall integrated nature of the seven topics of work, the Complaints Task Group identified linkages between their information and tools to support the complaints response process and the **Health and Odour Assessment** task groups.

- The group considered the link that often a complainant will also report a health concern or issue when reporting an odour.
- The use of common language to describe odour was identified as a gap, as well as what data needs to be collected and how it should be interpreted.



# LESSONS LEARNED

The task group discussed lessons learned for the OMT to consider in regard to their work on this topic, their task group final report, and deliverables.

- ❑ The task group recommends their deliverables receive some graphic design.
- ❑ Further pilot testing should be conducted on the tools and referral process.
- ❑ Future work could occur on odour management and complaints and could consider cumulative effects.
- ❑ Future work should be undertaken to improve training for staff that take odour complaints. There could be consideration for information training sessions that discuss soft skills training.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## **Recommendation 1: Accept the Task Group’s Guidance Document and Tools.**

The task group recommends the OMT accept the complaints guidance document and associated tools for inclusion in the Good Practice Guide as a complete document.

## **Recommendation 2: Accept the Task Group’s final report.**

The task group recommends the OMT accept their final report with the advice and recommendations for consideration as the OMT develops their deliverables.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## **Recommendation 3: Disband the Complaints Task Group, after review of the GPG.**

The task group recommends they have an opportunity to review their applicable sections within the Good Practice Guide, after which the group may be disbanded as their workplan will be complete.

## **Recommendation 4: Increase the profile of the Coordination and Information Centre (CIC).**

The task group recommends the OMT establish a plan/resources to increase the awareness and profile of the CIC 1-800 contact number specifically around odour and odour complaints.



# QUESTIONS?



**Sorry.** Yesterday  
was the deadline  
for all complaints.