

AQAC MINUTES

January 3, 2019

Members/alternates present: Don Anderson, Dave Atkins, Bert Chessin, Chic Fitts, Kathy Tonnessen, Rachel Burmeister, John Ottman, Guy Hanson, Jan Hoem

Members/alternates absent: Beth Berlin, Ronni Flannery, Tom Roberts, Sue Spanke, James Stephens

Staff: Sarah Coefield and Benjamin Schmidt

Public: None

1. Bert Chessin called the meeting to order

2. Excused absences recognized – Dave Atkins and Guy Hanson were excused

3. Agenda approved as amended to remove the item “Approve December minutes”.

4. Public comment on non-agenda items.

None

5. Article Presentation

Don Anderson presented the journal article by Zhang et al., “The impact of exposure to air pollution on cognitive performance” (PNAS September 22, 2018 115 (37) 9193-9197) as well as a news article about the study: “Air pollution exposure harms cognitive performance, study finds” (NPR, August 27, 2018). In the study, researchers in China conducted math and verbal tests on more than 25,000 people in 162 Chinese counties. The results suggest air pollution leads to a decline in cognitive functioning that is more pronounced as people age, particularly for men and the less educated.

Don said the journal article itself had basically three figures, but there is an accompanying 60-page supplement with greater detail. He said if you read through the article there are a lot of references to the supplement. Don said the gist of the article is that air pollution is really bad for your verbal skills if you’re an uneducated male.

Jan Hoem asked if men would have been more likely to be outside where they were exposed to pollution.

Don said that’s very possible; manual labor is more likely to be outside.

Dave Atkins said that would be the correlation with education.

Don said that’s the type of exposure question you would answer with personal monitors.

Chic Fitts said the problem of inside versus outside is the inside air can be just as bad as outside.

Don said he thinks that in chronically polluted areas you’re more likely to get filtration for your home if you’re educated and have resources to do so.

John Ottman said that in the U.S., it’s been shown that uneducated people are more likely to smoke, so what does that mean for studies like this?

6. Action Item: Membership renewals

Rachel Burmeister, Dave Atkins, Jan Hoem, Chic Fitts and Guy Hanson’s terms are up for renewals. Don Anderson made the motion to recommend to the Air Pollution Control Board Chair that all five appointments

be renewed. Kathy seconded the motion and it passed with a unanimous voice vote.

7. Public comment on EPA's proposed amendments to the New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) for Residential Wood Heaters.

Ben Schmidt told the group that the EPA is soliciting comments on the 2015 NSPS for residential wood heaters. He said EPA is not proposing any specific changes.

Ben said the 2015 NSPS was under development for years. He said it was a long, drawn out process and overall it was done really well. He said since 2015, there have been several years for stove manufacturers to prepare to meet the 2020 Step 2 emission limit.

Ben said staff is requesting the council to recommend to the Air Board that they comment on the timing of the standards and what the standards are. Ben presented a letter prepared by staff that recommends EPA not change the 2015 NSPS.

Chic Fitts asked who wants EPA to open the 2015 NSPS to comment.

Guy Hanson said manufacturers, lots of groups.

Ben said there are several units that can meet the Step 2 standard but several manufacturers would still have a hard time making a product they could sell after 2020.

Ben described the contents of the letter prepared by staff. He said the letter encourages EPA to keep moving toward a cordwood standard. He said we don't want them to let it go, because it more closely resembles how people use their stoves.

Guy said some of the issues, to give color from an industry standpoint, are that manufacturers didn't anticipate stoves would have to be retested, even if they had been tested previously. He said testing sucks up lab time and costs a lot of money. He said there are also issues with the audit provision that says EPA can audit stoves from the sales floor. If an audited stove's emissions don't meet EPA's requirements, the manufacturer has 72 hours to pull every unit from sale. Guy said manufacturers think this is onerous. Why 72 hours? Why not give them time to retest?

Ben said staff does not have the expertise to comment on that.

Guy said 100 units are 2020-certified, and 53 of them are pellet stoves. He said of 88 manufacturers with Step 1 stoves, 53 don't have Step 2 stoves.

Chic Fitts asked if they will go out of business or if they just have not made the attempt to make new stoves.

Guy said that with every new standard you lose some businesses and see industry consolidation.

Ben said the industry knew what was coming before the 2015 NSPS went into effect. They've had time to prepare. He said there was the expectation that in 2019 retailers would start looking for 2020-compliant stoves.

The group discussed sell-through times for furnaces versus wood stoves.

Guy said that what industry is saying is you're being a little bit hard in that, if we radically increase the price of stoves, it will decrease the number of new stoves replacing old stoves. He asked if it would be better to replace high emitting stoves with Step 1 stoves in a prolonged sell-through than not have it replaced at all when only Step 2 stoves are available.

Dave Atkins said the tension point is the manufacturers who are ready for 2020 don't want the sell-through extension to happen. He said some in the industry didn't put effort into developing technologies to meet 2020 and instead put effort into delaying the standard. He said industry does not have a uniform voice on it. He said the 35 manufacturers who do have a unified voice have fewer models and were able to adjust and prepare with less money for 2020.

Jan Hoem said it sounds like companies are meeting Step 1. She asked if the Step 1-compliant stoves have to be taken off the market.

Guy said yes.

Dave said part of the concern is by May 2020 you have to stop selling Step 1 stoves, so sellers don't want them in their inventory and are now looking for a supply they could sell.

Jan said that, knowing the deadline is coming, why haven't the companies taken the steps to meet the 2020 emission limits?

Guy said it's harder than it looks. He said manufacturers were hoping there'd be extensions. He said there's only so much talent out there.

Dave said testing expenses will mean some retailers go out of business.

Guy said the question is not whether you should do this, it's the question of the speed of change and how to leave the fewest people behind.

Ben said the fears of people hanging on to older stoves is a little overrated. He said people already hang on to their stoves. Ben said we already have areas in Missoula County that exceed the PM2.5 NAAQS. He asked at what point do you say you have to have the best technology going in, so you don't have to keep coming back and redoing it?

Ben said we can't keep allowing things to go into our vulnerable airsheds that we have to look back at 10 years later and say it's not good enough and try again.

Jan said our charge is to protect the health of people in Missoula. She said she'd love to protect business and health, but health has to take priority.

Dave said the EPA has run the numbers of how many additional Step 1 stoves would be sold. He said that to him, that is more context for them to be thinking about. He said a number of states have testified against the 2-year sell through.

Dave said that by the time you'd get a rule actually published, it's 2020 and by then the retailers have made their orders.

Guy said he's not proposing a change to the letter. He said he just wants the group to have context. He said he thinks a lot of manufacturers gambled on the political environment changing more than it did.

The group made some minor edits to the letter.

Kathy Tonnessen made a motion to accept the letter as modified and forward it to the Air Board with the recommendation that the Board submit the letter as public comment to the EPA. Bert Chessin seconded the motion and it passed by voice vote.

8. Staff report

Sarah Coefield gave the staff report. She said Air Board increased Air Program fees to help make up for the budget cuts imposed by the state. She said the industry fees increased for the first time since 2009. Outdoor burn permit fees increased from \$5 to \$7. She said Ben is sending annual permit renewal letters out to industry. She said she is working on a bill to commission a legislative interim study on smoke-adapted communities. Sarah said she gave a remote presentation about smoke-adapted communities for the recent International Association of Wildland Fire conference in North Carolina. The EPA is talking with MCCHD about launching a wildfire smoke public health pilot project in the county. Sarah attended the recent Climate Ready Communities Workshop and found that many groups in Missoula view wildfire smoke as one of the most significant climate-related challenges the community is facing.

9. Public comment

None

10. Select AQAC representative for next Air Board meeting update

Ben Schmidt will give the update.

11. Announcements, other business

The group will need to find an alternate meeting space for February due to MCCHD's 2nd floor remodeling plans.

12. Adjourn