

AQAC MINUTES
February 5, 2019

Members/alternates present: Don Anderson, Bert Chessin, Chic Fitts, Kathy Tonnessen, Rachel Burmeister, John Ottman, Sue Spanke, Ronni Flannery, Jan Hoem, Tom Roberts

Members/alternates absent: Dave Atkins, Beth Berlin, Guy Hanson, James Stephens

Staff: 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.**
4. **No minutes ready for approval.**
5. **Public comment on non-agenda items.**
None

6. Article Presentation

Tom Roberts presented the articles “The State of Science in the Trump Era” and “Science Integrity Losses and Lessons for the 116th Congress” (Center of Science and Democracy at the Union of Concerned Scientists).

In the last two years, research funding has been cut, government appointees pick who is awarded grants, scientists have been removed from committees and replaced with people with industrial connections and enforcement by the EPA is at historically low levels. The Union of Concerned Scientists (Union) have documented 80 attacks on science and disbanded several panels that advise the EPA on such things as the health impacts of particulate pollution. Scott Pruitt also stated that scientists with current grants from the EPA could not serve on advisory panels or committees but industry professionals with grants from the EPA could still be members of EPA advisory panels.

Tom pointed out that the Union of Concerned Scientists has put out 10 articles on Trump’s attacks on science and the Union has put out recommendations to Congress on what should be done to protect science. The Union is encouraging the 116th Congress to take action. Science has improved the lives and health of all citizens of this country and the country cannot afford to go backwards on science.

Jan Hoem stated that she has been at the state legislature in Helena lobbying for climate change bills. While none of these bills have advanced out of committee, this year they do include the phrase climate change, which is move in a positive direction.

Bert Chessin felt that the government shutdown and the attacks on science are causing long-term harm to the government because of all the government employees leaving government or being driven out.

Tom re-iterated that the Union has concrete recommendations for Congress. We will just have to wait and see what Congress does with these recommendations.

7. Action Item: Select 2019 Chair and Co-Chair.

After a brief discussion, Jan Hoem nominated Bert Chessin and Kathy Tonnessen to continue as Co-Chairs. Chic

Fitts seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8. American Lung Association Recent Activities Update – Ronni Flannery

The American Lung Association has designated 2019 as the year of air pollution and health. Several organizations such as the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services have partnered with the American Lung Association on this project. The American Lung Association plans to emphasize something new each month of 2019 to keep air pollution and health near the top of people's awareness.

A recent webinar on climate change, air pollution and health had more than 300 health professionals on the call. In February, a webinar will focus on who bears the burden of air pollution. The February 27-28 webinar will be held on the Montana State University and the University of Montana campuses and will have multiple speakers.

Ronni pointed out that 2019 is the 20th anniversary of the American Lung Association's State of the Air Report.

Under the Trump administration, EPA no longer considers co-benefits when looking at potential environmental rules. This change makes it much more difficult to justify air pollution control rules. This change may be challenged in the courts.

There is research underway that looks at the health impacts from short duration particulate matter spikes in the air. Right now, the health consequences of particulate spikes are not known.

9. Staff report

Benjamin Schmidt gave the staff report. Sarah Coefield continues to give presentations about wildfire smoke and smoke-ready communities. Sarah, Tony Ward and Amy Cilimburg will submit a grant application to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to study the effectiveness of wildfire smoke preparedness communications.

At the last Air Pollution Control Board meeting, the industrial fees were increased and the outdoor burn permit fees were increased from \$5 to \$7. Industrial fees had not been increased since 2009 and needed to be increased to fund the industrial program. Federal rules specify that industrial fees should cover the expense on an industrial program.

10. Public comment

Jan Hoem stated that Northwestern Energy (NWE) is due to submit a 20-year plan and more specific 2-year plan to the Public Service Commission. NWE has resisted renewable energy and legal pressure has been necessary for them to take renewable energy suppliers.

NWE wants to run Colstrip 4 until the 2040s. NWE owns a 30% interest in Colstrip 4 and the other owners are setting aside money for cleanup, depreciation and closing. The other companies that own part of Colstrip 4 plan to cease using the power from the plant between 2027 and 2030 while NWE has set no money aside for cleanup, depreciation and shut down. Avista Corp.'s plan going forward is uncertain.

People can make comments to the Public Service Commission or the consumer protection services about NWE's plans.

11. Announcements, other business

Dave Atkins has the article presentation for the next meeting. Ben Schmidt will give the AQAC update at the February 21st Air Board meeting.

12. Adjourn