

Report on the NM Inter-Agency
EJ Task Force Meeting
held in Santa Fe, NM
20 May 2009

Presented to AQCB

10 June 2009

Margaret Menache

Vice Chair, AQCB

What is the NM Inter-Agency EJ Task Force

- The multi-agency Environmental Justice Task Force serves as an advisory body with the purpose of making recommendations to state agencies on actions to address environmental justice issues and concerns consistent with statutory and regulatory authority.
- www.nmenv.state.nm.us/Justice

Opening remarks by NMED Secretary Ron Curry from Lisa Jackson speech

- Secretary Curry focused his own comments on excerpts from a May 12th speech by the new US EPA Administrator, Lisa Jackson given at Princeton University. Her speech is available at: www.epa.gov/newsroom/index.htm (click on speeches; then on speeches by date)
- Like any kind of inequality, environmental inequality has profound adverse effects.

Opening remarks by NMED Secretary Ron Curry from Lisa Jackson speech

- Our concern is that in too many places in America, the burden of pollution and environmental degradation falls disproportionately on low-income and minority communities – and most often, on the children in those communities.
- We can't stand by and accept the disparities any longer. As EPA Administrator, I see it as part of my mission to show all Americans that this agency works for them.

Updates

- Updates from John Ruiz (NMED EJ Border Liaison) emphasized community involvement:
 - convenient meeting times
 - plain language
 - fact sheets
 - translators for Spanish and tribal languages
 - press releases for environmental violations

Updates

- Updates from Milton Bluehouse (NMED EJ Liaison) focused on training
 - Region 6 EJ meeting in planning for June or July (working with SNEEJ) for staff and community
 - ‘Grant writing 101’ (no time frame given)
 - web site: links out and link to report non-emergency environmental concerns
 - Tribal EJ Conference at Santa Clara planned for 10 June

Specific Issues

- San Clemente - concrete plant: air quality affected by non-air quality issues such as transportation infrastructure (unpaved roads). Community involvement uncovered other issues.
- Mesquite – air chilling facility with ammonia leak (May 2009): business doesn't need a permit so it's not covered by regulations
- grant proposal submitted to US EPA to fund SJM46 (2009) to develop a health and environmental exposure index in three communities: Grants uranium belt, Mesquite, Mountain View
(<http://www.nmlegis.gov/Sessions/09%20Regular/memorials/senate/SJM046.pdf>)

Water Infrastructure Report

- by working collaboratively, the Water & Wastewater Infrastructure Development Division is able to acquire more money for bigger projects and to provide assistance to communities to develop shovel-ready projects
- a possible model for expanding air monitoring capabilities and helping industries upgrade pollutant control technology?

Formation of Cumulative Impact Study Sub-group

- to improve communication among agencies so that they may work together informally to ensure consistent application of regulations and improved public health
- to understand issues of cumulative risk assessment
- to work to develop strategies/regulations that will clarify and strengthen New Mexico's commitment to a healthy and safe public.