



Farmington Community Working Group Summary Notes

Date: Aug. 13, 2019

In Attendance:

Director Len Hiebert, Area D, Peace River Regional District
Tony Wakelin, Air Emissions Specialist, BC Oil and Gas Commission
Maria Reschke, Manager Stakeholder Relations, BC Oil and Gas Commission
Laura-Lea Gibson, Community Relations Assistant, BC Oil and Gas Commission
Rod Strasky, Community Member
Jim Strasky, Community Member
Barry Critcher, Community Member
Toby Handfield, Community Member

Summary of Discussion:

Director Hiebert of the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) opened the meeting and provided the following update: the BC Oil and Gas Commission (Commission) attended the PRRD board meeting August 8 to discuss the outcome of the Farmington Community Working Group (FCWG) pilot project and the future of the group; summaries from the meetings are now easier to access on the PRRD site and can be found in 'Other' under the 'Agendas/Minutes' tab.

Maria Reschke provided a brief update of the Commission's work on issues discussed through the FCWG. The Lighting Guideline is in the final review process and will be sent out to the FCWG prior to being released publicly; outstanding action items from the group's discussions will continue to be a priority of our work; updates on FCWG discussions since the February meeting will be brought to the Producers Group.

The meeting was turned over to Tony Wakelin to provide a presentation on air emissions. These were the main topics and information presented:

Northeast Air Monitoring Project

- A study on air pollutants was conducted as a result of public concern on possible impacts from oil and gas activity on human health.
- The project took place between 2013-2017 and was a collaborative initiative of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (MoECCS), the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources (EMPR), the Commission and industry (Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers and Spectra Energy).
- Data was collected in two phases from six rural communities: Blueberry, Doig River, Taylor, Farmington, Rolla and Toms Lake.

- From January 2014 to April 2016 monitoring in Farmington included sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and total reduced sulfur (TRS), temperature, humidity, wind speed and direction.
- Eric Taylor, an air quality meteorologist for MoECCS, compiled his analysis on the [Northeast Air Quality Monitoring Assessment](#). Following the project, the provincial government deployed two of the three portable air monitoring stations within the broader B.C. air monitoring network.
- The third station was returned to Farmington for further monitoring due to the level of oil and gas activity in the area and community concerns regarding air quality. The Commission was a strong advocate for reinstating the Farmington air monitoring station.

Current monitoring

- The station in Farmington is currently monitoring SO₂, TRS, Nitrogen oxide (NO), Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and Ozone (O₃).
- Maintenance of equipment is through an independent contractor with funding from the BC Oil and Gas Research Innovation Society and oversight provided by the Commission and EMPR.
- Explanation was given on the four levels of validation that must take place to ensure results are accurate. The [State of the Air](#) report published annually by the BC Lung Association contains data that has gone through all four validations.
- The presentation package provided by Tony and included as an attachment to this summary, outlines data drawn from the Farmington station.
- Data results from the Farmington area reflect SO₂ numbers are low and NO₂ numbers are well below provincial ambient air quality objectives.
- Results for O₃ from the Farmington station are not included in the report. Complete data could not be recorded in 2018 due to a failure with the monitor. The Commission is optimistic a complete data set for O₃ will be collected in 2019, allowing Farmington data to be compared to other parts of the province.
- Other [tools](#) used by the Commission to monitor air quality:
 - The Commission Air Monitoring Mobile Laboratory (CAMEL) is a trailer based unit set up in a fixed location (e.g. Pouce Coupe near the Encana South Central Liquids Hub) where it can remain for a period of months to a full year.
 - The Roaming Air Monitoring (RAM) is a van based unit that can be deployed as a quick response unit.

Data access

- Ambient air and meteorological monitoring is currently performed at 12 locations throughout northeast B.C. Live data (not validated) can be accessed through [MoECCS](#).
- Some discussion took place regarding air quality and data collection during hydraulic fracturing. Tony is currently working to launch a project to collect this data. Considerable collaboration with industry, academics and funding agencies would be required.
- Tony provided a demonstration of data from monitoring stations across the province through the MoECCS website.

Compared to the rest of B.C.

- Charts on page 6 and 7 of the [State of the Air](#) report were referenced to demonstrate how Farmington data reflects in comparison to other locations throughout the province. These charts are also reflected on slides 14 to 16 of Tony's presentation.
- Community members asked about results from a monitoring program in previous years such as ELMS. Tony explained this program dissolved before results could be collected from the equipment.

- Community members expressed concern regarding emissions from facilities and flare stacks and asked if any analysis is being conducted on this type of dispersion. Benzene was noted in particular – Tony explained that benzene burns relatively clean.
- Other concerns of impact to air quality were raised, such as discoloration of snow. Community members are concerned that monitors are not detecting what they are seeing on a day to day basis. Tony encouraged them to check the readings on the MoECCS site on days when they observe extreme air quality conditions that cause them concern.
- Tony explained the cost to run air quality monitoring equipment is high, particularly to run them in accordance with standards set by provincial and federal governments. The process involved to ensure the data is accurate is also costly.

Commission Air Tool (CAT)

- A short demonstration was provided on the use of CAT to access copies of permits issued under the Environmental Management Act, and the levels of emissions they are authorized to release.
- Director Hiebert raised a question on notification provided for amendments and how land owners can better understand the need or reason for change.

As the meeting wrapped up, Tony offered to provide a quick look at the monitoring station located behind the community hall. Some of the community members took him up on his offer.

Next Steps:

Community members acknowledged they have seen some positive changes through the FCWG but that more work is needed. They restated concerns regarding seismic events with recent activity. The Commission has heard FCWG members say they would like to see the changes go beyond their community and at the same time are feeling some fatigue.

Maria explained, based on the assessment of the pilot project and learnings from the past year, the Commission will be establishing a working group at a regional level, inviting community members from a broader area to participate. The Commission will spend the next few months reaching out to other communities and establishing the terms of a regional working group. It was also noted the size of the group will remain manageable to ensure effective discussions. The Commission hopes to have representation from the FCWG members to share their learnings from the past year with the regional group. Details of this transition will be discussed at the final meeting in November.

Final Farmington Meeting: Nov. 5, 2019