



EPA'S SMALL COMMUNITIES ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE

FINAL MEETING SUMMARY

December 9, 2020 Meeting (Virtual)

EPA's Small Communities Advisory Subcommittee

Virtual Public Meeting

December 9, 2020

2:30 PM – 3:30 PM EST

I. Welcome/Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Administrator Brian Fulton introduced himself as the Chair of the Small Communities Advisory Subcommittee (SCAS), called the meeting to order, and welcomed everyone. He said this meeting is where small communities get their voices heard, collaborate, and make recommendations to the EPA. He stated that the main purpose of the meeting was to deliberate on and provide feedback on four draft letters of recommendation submitted for SCAS input by the Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) workgroups. The Subcommittee's input will then be presented at the LGAC meeting later in the afternoon. The meeting would also include a discussion of possible topics to be considered by SCAS in 2021. Administrator Fulton then introduced Britt Carter of EPA.

Britt Carter, Assistant Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Intergovernmental Relations (OCIR), thanked Administrator Fulton for his leadership as Chairman of SCAS. She thanked everyone for their input on the four letters. She reiterated how important it is for EPA to receive input from representatives of small communities. Their input is essential for EPA to successfully serve the unique needs of small communities.

II. Roll Call and Introductions

Administrator Fulton asked DFO Victoria Ludwig to conduct the roll call.

LGAC and SCAS Members Present:

- 1) Hon. Kitty Barnes (LGAC Chair) – Commissioner, Catawba County, North Carolina
- 2) Hon. Jeff Witte (LGAC Vice-Chair) – Secretary of Agriculture, State of New Mexico
- 3) Mr. Brian Fulton (SCAS Chair) – Supervisor, Jackson County, Mississippi
- 4) Hon. Bruce Bracker - Supervisor, Santa Cruz County, Arizona
- 5) Hon. Jose C. Aponte Dalmau (SCAS) – Mayor, Carolina, Puerto Rico
- 6) Hon. Vincent DeSantis (SCAS) – Mayor, Gloversville, New York

- 7) Hon. Mark Fox - Chairman, Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara (MHA) Nation, North Dakota (Represented by Lisa Lone Fight, Science Advisor to Chairman Fox)
- 8) Hon. Ella Jones (SCAS) – Mayor, Ferguson, Missouri
- 9) Hon. Joan Lee (SCAS) – Commissioner, Polk County, Minnesota
- 10) Hon. Carvel Lewis (SCAS) – Commissioner, Georgetown-Quitman County, Georgia
- 11) Hon. Ryan Mackenzie - Representative, District 134, Pennsylvania House of Representatives
- 12) Hon. Ann Mallek (SCAS) - Supervisor, Whitehall District, Albemarle County, Virginia
- 13) Hon. Bill McMurray – Mayor, St. Joseph, Missouri
- 14) Hon. Cynthia Pratt – Deputy Mayor Lacey, Washington
- 15) Hon. Carmen Ramirez – Mayor Pro Tem, Oxnard, California
- 16) Hon. Victoria Reinhardt – Commissioner, Ramsey County, Minnesota
- 17) Hon. Matt Surrency – Mayor, Hawthorne, Florida
- 18) Hon. Paul TenHaken – Mayor, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

III. Deliberation on Draft Letters of Recommendation

A. Letter on Office of Air and Radiation Proposed National Program Guidance

Administrator Fulton stated that SCAS members had participated in each of the LGAC workgroup meetings where the charges were taken on and initial recommendations were drafted. The letters of recommendation being deliberated on today include all input provided by SCAS members. He stated that today the members have a final opportunity to offer additional feedback from the small community perspective before the LGAC takes up the letters for a final vote later that afternoon.

Administrator Fulton began with the letter on the Office of Air and Radiation’s proposed National Program Guidance for 2022-2023. He reviewed the charge and summarized the recommendations. He then opened the floor for deliberation.

Supervisor Ann Mallek asked for clarification on the letter. She asked if the goal of the letter was to clear the books or is it to work harder to solve the problems that cause air pollution. She stated that previously in Virginia the Governor had avoided cleaning up buried leaking fuel tanks by closing the books on them, which was an enormous setback for contaminated areas in the state. Supervisor Mallek said that she wanted to make sure the letter clearly stated that LGAC wanted EPA to do its job and support local governments in protecting their local air quality.

Administrator Fulton said he believed the letter does accomplish what Supervisor Mallek asked, as it does emphasize the importance of clean air for the benefit of communities. He also noted that the recommendations point out that the EPA should consider helping with pollutants outside of local governmental control. For

example, pollution that comes from other jurisdictions that small communities are not responsible for have no control over. Such pollution also extends to naturally occurring pollutants that cross over from neighboring jurisdictions.

Deputy Mayor Cynthia Pratt wondered if the letter needed to be more specific about the importance of improved air quality. Secondly, she wondered if the EPA needed encouragement to utilize a variety of monitoring mechanisms to evaluate air quality and sources of pollution. She stated that smoke from various sources such as wood stoves and wildfires hurt her community's air quality. She didn't think that the letter was direct enough about cleaning up the air to make it healthier for people.

Supervisor Mallek (via chat) expressed thanks for the clarifications. She said she supported the focus on national source standards rather than burdening the recipient localities with the issue.

Chairman Carvel Lewis stated that the Air Workgroup wanted to emphasize the importance of healthy air for every American citizen. However, he did recognize there is an issue with pollutants being generated in neighboring states. He gave the example of how his region is on the Chattahoochee River in southwest Georgia, and winds from Alabama and Florida bring pollutants over. These pollutants are coming from outside his jurisdiction, but his county still has to deal with them. Due to these examples, he did not want to water down any of the points about improving air quality in the letter.

Administrator Fulton asked for any amendments that could be added to the letter due to the concern for stronger language expressing the members' support for cleaner air. He stated he believes the bulk of the letter adequately addressed their concerns but is seeking any amendments so the letter could be finalized.

Deputy Mayor Pratt suggested that a sentence be added at the beginning emphasizing the importance of healthy air quality. She stated that without this the letter implies that members favor exemptions to air regulations, which she doesn't agree with.

Lisa Lone Fight, Science Advisor for Chairman Mark Fox (via chat) stated that adding such a statement is reasonable as long as it doesn't obscure the anthropogenic causes of air pollution, both primary and secondary.

Mayor Jose Aponte asked for a specific amendment to the letter that addresses the high rates of asthma that affect his city. He strongly recommends that the local EPA office in Puerto Rico set up a program in his city that monitors air quality in relation to asthma.

Administrator Fulton stated that the group will take note of that recommendation but believes it may not be relevant to the specific content of this

letter. He stated the importance of the comment and that it should be noted by the EPA.

DFO Victoria Ludwig stated that a note was made about Mayor Aponte's concern and it will be followed up on. She then stated that she would draft an amendment to the letter reiterating the importance of air quality.

Commissioner Joan Lee stated that cross-jurisdictional pollution is a very important issue for Minnesota. Wildfires in Canada negatively affect the state's air quality.

Administrator Fulton asked for a motion to support the letter with the amendments. He stated that only SCAS members can motion and vote.

Supervisor Mallek made the first motion.

Commissioner Lewis seconded the motion.

Administrator Fulton called for a verbal vote. There were no nay's, so he stated that the letter would move forward as amended.

B. [Letter on Community-Based Environmentalism](#)

Administrator Fulton introduced the letter by reading it through, including the charge questions and draft recommendations. He asked for any questions related to community-based environmentalism. He said there is a lot in the letter and that in Mississippi small communities don't directly deal with EPA that often. Instead they interact with their state department of environmental quality. He believed that therefore federal programs should focus on reaching out directly to small communities and facilitating a relationship focused on grant programs and other funding.

Supervisor Mallek said she specifically liked the point about the "hammer," as local governments are often afraid to reach out to the EPA because of this.

Mayor Aponte agreed with all the points in the letter. He recommended that "local governments" be included in the recommendation about information dissemination, as they play a key role in this area since they are the first line of government contact with the general public.

Lisa Lone Fight stated that "tribal communities" should be explicitly incorporated into the letter as they are often overlooked if not specifically mentioned. She added via chat that it is a powerful and inclusive letter.

Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt stated that every recommendation does explicitly call out local governments. However, she recommended that tribal governments should be included.

Supervisor Mallek (via chat) stated that she supported adding tribal governments.

Administrator Fulton asked for a motion to support the letter with the amendments as just discussed.

Commissioner Lewis made the first motion.

Supervisor Mallek seconded the motion.

Administrator Fulton called for a verbal vote. There were no nay's, so he stated that the letter would move forward as amended.

C. [Letter on Sustainable Management of Food Waste](#)

Administrator Fulton reviewed the charges and recommendations in the letter.

Supervisor Mallek recommended the addition of a potential path for restaurants to receive a benefit for managing food waste effectively. She believed that this would incentivize more food donations and food waste composting by that industry.

Deputy Mayor Pratt stated that she agreed, and also would like that the bulleted recommendation about tribal college curricula specify that it refers to curricula focused on food waste. She also questioned whether the letter should mention other entities in addition to restaurants.

Commissioner Reinhardt stated that the main body of the letter clearly explains that tribal college curricula refers to food waste curricula. She also agreed that other private sector entities should be called out in the recommendation about incentivizing sustainable food waste management.

Administrator Fulton asked for clarification on how to amend the letter per these comments.

Commissioner Reinhardt proposed that the letter say "restaurants and the hospitality industry" in order to cover other private sector entities.

Mayor Aponte stated his support for the letter, but believes there is a need for funding to help small communities conduct public education campaigns on sustainable food waste management.

DFO Victoria Ludwig states that she could draft an edit that calls out funding for public education campaigns.

Administrator Fulton asked for a motion to support the letter with the amendments as just discussed.

Supervisor Mallek made the first motion.

Mayor Vincent DeSantis seconded the motion.

Administrator Fulton called for a verbal vote. There were no nay's, so he stated that the letter would move forward as amended.

D. [Letter on Financial Capability Assessment for the Clean Water Act](#)

Administrator Fulton reviewed the letter and highlighted the charges and recommendations. He emphasized the simplicity of the letter. He then opened the floor for discussion.

There were no comments raised by members.

Administrator Fulton asked for a motion to support the letter as written.

Mayor Aponte made the first motion.

Deputy Mayor Pratt seconded the motion.

Administrator Fulton called for a verbal vote. There were no nay's, so he stated that the letter would move forward as written.

IV. [Priority Topics for 2021](#)

Administrator Fulton asked members for feedback on what priority issues they would like to take up next year. He presented a list of possible topics that DFO Victoria Ludwig had compiled based on what LGAC and SCAS members had offered at the full meeting in May. Members did not comment on the topics or bring up other topics of concern to them. Administrator Fulton said that the subcommittee will try to take up a unique charge of its own in 2021, rather than only deliberating on charges that come out of the LGAC workgroups.

He wrapped up by informing members to stay tuned for information about the next meeting of SCAS, which will likely be held in late January or early February.

V. [Closing Remarks and Wrap Up](#)

Britt Carter said that she was glad to hear the recommendations from the SCAS and looks forward to their unique charge next year.

Administrator Fulton stated that the letters as amended by SCAS at this meeting will be presented to LGAC members for their deliberation at their meeting immediately following this afternoon. He also mentioned that the Administrator will provide video remarks at that meeting.

Administrator Fulton then adjourned the meeting.