

## **Clean Air Sarnia and Area, September 24, 2015**

### **Meeting Minutes – Round Table Discussion: Perspective Sharing**

Approximately 25 participants from the community, industry, First Nations and government shared their perceptions of air quality, air monitoring and how to be better informed during the Round Table Discussion session of the meeting.

Detailed qualitative responses in no particular order are listed below.

Overall, most participants indicated that the air quality in the Sarnia area was variable depending on the day, time or where you lived. Most agreed that it has improved over the last 10 to 20 years; however, there was a general feeling that more needed to be done.

Most people assess air quality based on how it smells, and the different types of smells; however, some rely on data provided to them by government and/or industry.

There was an overwhelming agreement on the need for real-time, transparent, easily accessible and easy to understand information on air quality in the Sarnia area. A number of participants also felt that the location (stationary, mobile and fence-line), quantity and quality of the monitors needed to be assessed as well as the compounds tested at each.

Better information is required so that community members and city personnel can interpret the source/cause of the different smells, and understand which ones have a health impact. Particulate matter and sulphur were mentioned as contaminants of concern; however, a number of participants said that all areas of air quality need to be addressed.

#### **1. What is your perception of Sarnia's air quality?**

- Improving (3)
- Good, making strides
- Better from when I was a child
- Sarnia area is better than Aamjiwnaang air, especially once you get to LaSalle Road
- Similar to other industrial communities
- Not very good
- Smells, but results not showing up on monitors
- I can't smell anymore
- Variable – worse in some parts
- Better than it used to be
- Highly variable but improving
- Improving overall, decline in smog advisories
- Public perception of Sarnia's air quality is poor
- Improvements in the last 10 years, consistent with other areas in Ontario
- General improvement

- Subject to wind direction
- Smells in some parts of the city
- You get used to the smell
- Odours from sulphur smell

## **2. How is your perception of air quality formed?**

- Media
- Attending BCAP meetings
- Experience in the community
- Personal experience, smells, my nose (7)
- SLEA data/industry
- I live here
- Health issues
- Reports
- Smog Advisory
- Public Health surveys
- Ambient network
- Complaints from residents
- Data

## **3. How could you be better informed?**

- Real-time information (4)
- More timely reports
- Better access and transparency (2)
- Want to be aware of all notifications
- Sound sirens at code 6 incidents
- Real-time information about plant problems – both in and out of the plant
- Info sharing on incidents, severity, products, health effects
- Epidemiology data on cancer risks
- Better informed system for real time info
- What are the measures taken by the companies? (2)
- Improve communication
- Community study, ie Alberta
- For a planned upset, what are the legal thresholds allowed?
- For an unplanned upset, what is the worst case scenario and are the companies able to handle it?
- Need info on inversions – is the threshold safe?
- City is not able to troubleshoot when they get odour complaints, where can they get the information?
- Transparency, ie Fort Saskatchewan in Alberta
- Get SLEA data and analysis
- Information on day-to-day operations
- Know what the smells mean (2)
- Information about incidents

- Adopted a 'Blue Flag' designation for air quality
- Information on cumulative effects
- More upfront information on what can be done to reduce emissions
- Increase community engagement
- What does the company do as a result of my complaint?
- A good website like Hamilton
- Information available all the time

#### **4. What areas of air monitoring need to be improved?**

- Event-based air monitoring
- Towards south end, different odours at different times
- Mobile air monitors respond more timely to events
- Shell phone line isn't working
- More stationary air monitors (2), ie around daycare and schools
- Should be the gold standard in air monitoring
- Assess placement and quality of monitors, geo-located
- Mobile air monitors stationed in Sarnia
- More monitors, determine best location
- Test for more compounds
- Reporting a smell shouldn't be seen as a complaint, rather providing information
- Need to check relief valves, ie on Vidal St.
- Spatial distribution of the monitors could be improved
- Ensure quality of existing monitors, ie is the monitor at Aamjiwnaang outdated?

#### **5. What areas of air quality do you feel need to be addressed?**

- Particulate matter
- Everything (2)
- Don't want to smell, hear or see industry
- Sulphur (2)
- Transboundary
- Impact on health – asthma
- Smells
- Fugitive emissions (recapture)
- Flares