



October 25, 2010

Meeting Report: Clean Air Strategic Alliance

Background:

The Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA) is a non-profit organization set up to manage air quality issues in Alberta. Alberta's 1991 Clean Air Strategy resulted in the creation of CASA in 1994 and the Alberta Airsheds Council.

Like the Alberta Water Council, CASA is a multi stakeholder partnership with members from government, non-government organizations and industry. CASA's mission is "to recommend strategies to assess and improve air quality in Alberta, using a consensus process."

CASA held a Coordination Workshop on September 29 in Calgary to bring together various stakeholders with interests in air management issues. A number of speakers presented information about their organization's activities.

Key Messages:

CASA at a Glance:

- CASA currently has seven project teams, most of which are in the implementation phase, including Confined Feeding Operations Implementation Review, Electricity Framework Review, Flaring and Venting, Human and Animal Health Implementation, Operations Steering Committee, Particulate Matter and Ozone Implementation, and Vehicle Emissions.
- CASA's Board of Directors includes government, non-government organizations and industry representatives. Environment Canada, Alberta departments of Energy, Environment and Health and Wellness, Municipalities, the Lung Association, Toxics Watch Society, Pembina Institute, Alberta Motor Association, Alberta Beef Producers, ENMAX, Weyerhaeuser Co. Ltd., oil and gas producers and TransAlta Corporation have a seat on the Board.

Alberta Airsheds Council

- The Alberta Airsheds Council's (AAC) mission is to support and advocate for the eight airshed zones in Alberta. The AAC formed in 2007 out of a recommendation by CASA.

- The airsheds carry out air monitoring activities and develop ozone management plans and implementation. They respond to local concerns and do outreach activities for schools and the general public on air issues.

Alberta Water Council

- The AWC provided an overview of the Water For Life goals and the activities of the AWC, including partnerships with Watershed Stewardship Groups and Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils.
- CASA and the AWC collaborate on issues of common concern including the Consensus Decision Making Toolkit document.

Integrated Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (IMER) Project

- Alberta Environment discussed the Cumulative Effects Management System (CEM) and the need for accurate data and information to enable them to set appropriate environmental outcomes.
- The IMER project is being driven by the CEM initiative and is all about doing a better job of monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- Alberta Environment is working on systems for improving these three activities and on how the IMER model will work in the regional planning process.

Federal Action on Air Pollution

- The federal government is proposing a Comprehensive Air Management System (CAMS) that addresses emissions from all sources and that will engage key stakeholders and communities in air quality management.
- They are working with CASA and AAC on setting up regional airshed zones.

Alberta's Renewed Clean Air Strategy

- Alberta's first Clean Air Strategy was developed in 1991 and changing approaches to environmental issues in terms of outcomes has led to a need for a renewed strategy.
- The draft Clean Air Strategy and Action Plan calls for airshed planning and management of non-point sources of pollution, shared responsibility and partnerships, the IMER system, and knowledge enhancement.
- Next steps include stakeholder engagement sessions (including with the agriculture sector) in January, 2011.

Air Quality Issues and the ERCB

- The ERCB provided information on the energy industries they regulate and their monitoring systems as well as dispute resolution mechanisms.
- They receive submissions and advice from Alberta Environment, CASA and others on emissions issues.

Summary

- Collaboration and partnerships are critical – how that takes place is not yet clear.
- Setting outcomes for environmental issues rather than prescribing methods for controlling environmental impacts is a step forward.