



**PIMA COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
**150 W. Congress Street, Suite 109**  
**Tucson, AZ 85701**

Summary Minutes – January 21, 2009  
Bank of America Building, Conference Room, 7<sup>th</sup> floor  
33 N. Stone, Tucson, AZ  
1:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Dr. Roger Caldwell  
Mr. Jeff Yockey  
Dr. Mark Witten  
Mr. Allan MacDonald  
Mr. Warren Thompson  
Mr. Curt Lueck  
Mr. Peter Livingston  
Mr. Ben Dorris  
Dr. Eric Betterton

Members Absent:

Mr. Daniel G. Rowe

Others Present:

Ursula Kramer, Director, PDEQ  
Richard Grimaldi, Deputy Director, PDEQ  
Vicki Bennie, Council Secretary, PDEQ  
Dennis Dickerson, PAG

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order and introductions were made.

Handouts:

Draft Buffelgrass Ordinance  
Beat Back Buffelgrass Poster  
Sustainability and Energy Expo 2009 flyer  
Solar City Designation and Solar Energy Background paper

**II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2009**

Mr. Lueck made a motion, seconded by Mr. Dorris, to nominate Warren Thompson for the position of Chair. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Dr. Witten made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lueck, to nominate Dr. Caldwell for the position of Vice Chair. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

**III. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 16, 2008, MINUTES**

Mr. Livingston made a motion, seconded by Dr. Betterton, to approve the September 16, 2008, minutes, as written. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

**IV. SOLAR ACTION PLAN**

Mr. Dickerson, Pima Association of Governments, distributed the Solar City Designation and Solar Energy Background paper, Sustainability and Energy Expo 2009 flyer and Beat Back Buffelgrass poster.

Mr. Dickerson stated that the City of Tucson received its solar designation in 2007. Part of the designation included a grant of \$200,000. PAG received a small portion of that to develop a number of activities, particularly a Solar Action Plan. They worked with the Arizona Research Institute for Solar Energy (AzRise) at the University of Arizona and the Clean Energy Corporation to help develop the plan. PAG created an organization called Solar Partnership and they reviewed the draft plan. The plan has 12 particular strategies to pursue. By far, the most important strategy is, "identify an appropriate public-private agency to implement the strategies outlined in this plan and designate a regional solar energy coordinator.

Even though Arizona has an abundance of sunshine, the state has lagged behind other states in aggressively moving to encourage the use of solar energy systems. The mission of the Solar Strategic Plan is "to foster and encourage a political and business environment in which solar energy is seen to be and becomes a major source of economic activity within Southern Arizona".

Mr. Dickerson stated that the Greater Phoenix Economic Council has highlighted solar as a top issue and there are going to be a number of bills in the legislature dealing with solar. Due to the current economic situation of the state, it may be challenging to get those bills passed. Mr. Dickerson stated he is convinced that in order for Arizona to take a leadership role in the area of solar, it is critical that the legislature adopt and accept many of the solar proposals. He sees this as one of the best opportunities that we have to change some of the economic conditions of the State for the future.

Mr. Dickerson made the following announcements:

- PAG Sustainability Energy Expo will be held on March 6 and 7, 2009; and
- Buffelgrass Eradication Day is planned for February 7, 2009.

**V. LEUKEMIA CLUSTER UPDATE**

Dr. Witten reported substantial progress on his work investigating leukemia clusters in Sierra Vista, Arizona and Fallon, Nevada. In addition to children developing leukemia in these areas, some adults are developing other types of cancers.

In early October, they infected mice with a virus that had been exposed to tungsten like the children in Fallon and Sierra Vista. The mice are developing a pre-leukemia condition that develops a huge number of immature blast (white blood) cells. Dr. Witten takes a monthly blood sample drawn from their tails while the mice are anesthetized. Next week they will kill the mice and remove their femur bone to examine the bone marrow. They will stain the cells and look for the blast cells. They are very close to developing a leukemia model due to tungsten exposure.

Dr. Witten's work also includes looking for critical gene pathways that are activated through tungsten exposure.

**VI. BUFFELGRASS ORDINANCE**

The County Administrator's Office asked PDEQ to draft an ordinance to deal with buffelgrass. The draft ordinance only deals with unincorporated areas of Pima County. The ordinance includes an enforcement component, but staff would rather focus on education and eradication. The ordinance went to the Board of Supervisors in December and was continued to allow PDEQ time to conduct broader stakeholder involvement with community groups.

Mr. Grimaldi stated that the draft ordinance was based on an existing state statute. There is a parallel city ordinance for buffelgrass. The ordinance covers a number of issues: weeds, trash, dilapidated buildings, etc. When staff modified the ordinance to include buffelgrass, we added the concept of an opportunity to correct which is similar to a warning. The latest version has a mandatory Opportunity to Correct and a subsequent Notice of Abatement if a satisfactory buffelgrass plan is not received in response to the Opportunity to Correct. Under a Notice of Abatement, the County would be able to conduct the removal and bill the landowner for the cost. This type of action would be appealable to the Board of Supervisors.

The intent of the buffelgrass ordinance is to address large areas, not individual homes. Staff plans to target high priority areas that pose a threat to public health (fire danger) identified in coordination with buffelgrass experts and fire departments.

Staff showed an educational video about buffelgrass and the danger it poses to the Sonoran Desert. There was a discussion regarding pulling buffelgrass by hand versus chemical eradication. The EQAC requested information from the Forest Service and the National Parks Service on how they plan to spray pesticides to kill the buffelgrass without harming native, desert vegetation.

The EQAC will hold a special meeting on February 18 at 1:30 p.m. to further discuss the buffelgrass ordinance. A revised draft will be sent to members after the County Attorney's Office has finished their review.

**VII. PDEQ STAFF REPORT**

**Environmental Quality Division Report**

Ms. Kramer reported that staff will be bringing a proposal to the Board of Supervisors to raise fees for the Hazardous Waste (RCRA) and Drinking Water Programs.

**Solid Waste Division Report**

Ms. Kramer stated that the downturn in the economy has affected the Tangerine Landfill, as the public is not bringing in as much waste as before. The life of the landfill could be extended but it is still costing the Department the same amount to operate the landfill even though revenue is down.

**V. CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

Mr. Thompson made a call to the public. There was no response.

**VI. NEXT MEETING**

The next EQAC meeting will be on Wednesday, February 18, 2008, at 1:30 p.m. in the 7<sup>th</sup> floor conference room, Bank of America Building, 33 N. Stone, Tucson.

EQAC Summary Meeting Minutes  
January 21, 2009

February agenda items:  
Buffelgrass Eradication Information  
Buffelgrass Ordinance

Future agenda items are:  
Sustainability Report – Tedra Fox  
Mobile Source Inventory Status – U of A  
Riparian Habitat Presentation  
AzRise, Solar Consortium at U of A - Ardeth Barnhart  
Phoenix Light rail – land use implication – someone from Phoenix  
SMART Growth – Arlan Colton

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

Having completed all meeting agenda items, the Council adjourned.