Message

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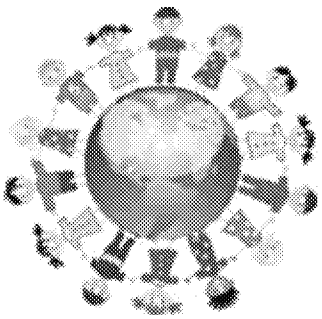
Sent: 10/2/2019 6:41:28 PM
To: Kasman, Mark [Kasman.Mark@epa.gov]; Almodovar, Lisa [Almodovar.Lisa@epa.gov]
CC: Hill-Macon, Cam [Hill-Macon.Cam@epa.gov]
Subject: OFFICE OF REGIONAL AND BILATERAL AFFAIRS (ORBA) WEEKLY REPORT: September 25 - October 2, 2019



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ISSUES OF NOTE

EPA HOSTS CHINA ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING STUDY TOUR:

- Technical experts from EPA HQ's Offices of General Counsel (Air Law), Water, and Enforcement and Compliance Assurance delivered presentations to a China Environmental Permitting Study Tour on September 26.
- Scott Voorhees of OAR's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards organized a study tour in RTP for officials from China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment and local officials to discuss the U.S. experience on pollution permitting. OAQPS addressed issues including the role of air quality management, operating permits, and State Implementation Plans. China discussed the status of the use of emission permits in China. The group connected to HQ via videoconference for discussions on the legal framework of the air permitting system; perspectives from OECA on permit source monitoring and reporting, supervision, oversight, and enforcement; and an introduction to wastewater permitting practices. [Chen, Novikoff]

CEC EXPLORATORY MEETING HELD ON VOLUNTEER OBSERVER NETWORKS:

- The North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) hosted an exploratory meeting in Mexico City, Mexico on September 25-26, 2019 on the use of volunteer observer networks to address information gaps for extreme events.
- The CEC supports cooperation among Canada, Mexico and the United States to foster the protection of the North American environment. Specifically, this meeting brought together governmental representatives from the US, Mexico, and Canada to address expansion of current networks under the project "*Using volunteer observer networks (VON) to monitor precipitation and wildfires*" funded under the CEC's operational plan for 2019-2020.
  Smoke Sense is one of the networks proposed for expansion.
- Experts presented on the impetus for providing air quality and health information in a coordinated fashion; as well as an overview on Smoke Sense, its outreach and engagement strategies, and some practical considerations for expansion.

- Participants appreciated the foundational features that make the project unique, including the two-way communication between users and organizational stakeholders, the smoke and symptom reporting, the integrated health risk messaging, and the behavioral-change features.
- By the end of the meeting, Mexico and Canada participants enthusiastically supported the expansion of *Smoke Sense*.
- Follow up activities will be coordinated by CEC, including a Workshop currently planned for Spring 2020, where specific recommendations will be developed and presented to the Parties by December 2020. [Correa]

DUTCH OFFICIALS VISIT EPA TO DISCUSS VEHICLE EMISSIONS:

- A Netherlands government Mobile Source Delegation visited on 9/26 and met with EPA (OTAQ, OECA, OITA) experts to discuss vehicle emissions and areas of concern in particular regarding certain Fiat Chrysler models. The Dutch have been conducting analyses, gathering information, and meeting with manufacturers and other parties and are considering next steps to take with regard to a potential defeat device case.
- Dutch officials from the Ministry of Environment as well as several technical institutes met with EPA mobile source experts and shared their concerns regarding findings in the Netherlands of increased emissions from certain vehicle types.
- While EPA experts were not able to go into specifics on vehicle details, they did provide helpful background on EPA's process and procedures for vehicle certification and compliance in the US. EPA experts also referenced publicly available information that might be of interest.
- EPA experts also raised awareness of the International Transport Compliance Summit Network, its meeting in the UK last spring and planned meeting in South Korea next spring in the event this valuable network was of interest to Dutch mobile source officials. European Union mobile source experts have regularly participated in this Network's annual meetings, although to date the Dutch have not been actively involved. [Buckley]

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Oct. 3, 2019: ORBA staff will participate in a Brazil Meeting with Business Members of the US Chamber of Commerce. ORBA will represent EPA in this meeting with other US Government Agencies to answer questions from the business community on Brazil issues. The other agencies participating include, the National Security Council, USTR and the Departments of State, Energy, Commerce and Treasury. The business participants include an array of companies, including DHL, Exxon Mobil, Bayer, Pfizer, Apple and FedEx.

October 9 – 17, 2019: ORBA Senior Advisor Brenda Doroski will present EPA's marine litter and other environment priorities at the Department of State Environment, Science, Technology and Health Training for the East Asia-Pacific Region in Beijing, China on October 9-10, 2019. Following the training, she will meet with counterparts at the China Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) on October 11 to discuss progress and next steps on the EPA-MEE 2019-2020 workplans on air, water, chemicals, waste, enforcement and legal. Brenda will also participate in the First International Forum of the G20 Global Network of the Committed in Dresden, Germany on October 15 – 17, 2019. The meeting will focus on opportunities to implement marine litter projects in the Mekong River region which includes China, Myanmar, Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam.