

Pollution Here and Your Health Forum

June 25, 2019

Summary and Recap of Important Points – George Guillen

Important points and concerns raised by the audience and speakers during this meeting are noted below.

1. There is a need for more environmental and public health related monitoring. This includes baseline and enhanced response monitoring of target analytes and combustion or breakdown products.
2. There is a need for better integration of citizen monitoring.
3. Greater transparency is needed when reporting data to the public.
4. Raw data in units of measurement along with ranks or grades (e.g. safe, action levels) need to be reported for use by technical experts as well. Below action level \neq no health or environmental effect necessarily.
5. Need to eliminate or reduce the propagation of errors in data reported to the public and use of unconventional or vague terms. Example: the volume of barge product spilled (petroleum barrel = 42 gallons).
6. Are the appropriate detection limits being used? Below detection limits \neq zero.
7. Greater transparency and use of correct exposure levels. E.g. longer term chronic, short-term acute, combination of levels?
8. Clearly explaining the strengths/weaknesses and proper application of various monitoring techniques and understanding the data they collect. E.g. aerial (ASPECT), mobile, stationary methods. Interaction and interference of media and target analytes (e.g. water vapor).
9. We need to do a better job of translating highly technical chemical and toxicological data into terms that decision makers, journalist and the public can understand and act upon, i.e. *Toxicology for the Public*.
10. How do we weight the need to act with releasing preliminary perhaps inaccurate data during emergency situations?
11. How do we improve the dissemination of timely accurate information to the public and local leaders? The role of the press, local governments, overlapping jurisdictions.
12. There is a need for education of the public on chemical disaster preparedness similar to hurricane preparedness. E.g. Who responds to what? What agency to call or report information to? What agency is responsible? Incident Command basics? The role of Community Advisory Panels? E.g. <https://pasadenacac.org/> The role of Local Area Planning Committee's (LEPC) e.g. <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/assets/public/permitting/tier2/LEPC-contact-list.pdf> With the continued growth of the Houston area, there will be a continued need to educate newcomers to the risks of living near dangerous chemical sources (e.g. petrochemical plants, railroads, commercial carriers on roads, ships etc.).