

**Volcano Discussion
Meeting Minutes
July 24th, 2008
PJJK Federal Building
Honolulu, Hawaii**

The following meeting minutes are considered an overview of the volcano discussion and exchange of information and are not verbatim. The meeting was facilitated by Chris Curatilo, EPA START contractor, to ensure that time, content and ground rules were adhered to.

Attendees:

Janet Yocum, EPA Region 9 OSC
Jeff Lusk, FEMA Region 9
Talmadge Magno, Chief Ranger, National Parks Service
Aaron Ueno, State of Hawaii Dept. of Health
Ed Teixeira, State Civil Defense
Chief Darryl Olivera, Fire Chief, Hilo Fire Dept.
Harry Kim, Mayor Island of Hawaii
Dan Meer, EPA Region 9, ORRT Co-Chair
Keith Kawaoka, State of Hawaii Dept. of Health, HEER office
1st LT Michael Kennedy, 93rd CST (by conference line)
Anne Stevens, State Civil Defense
Pat Port, DOI
Greg Bouie, NPFC
Chris Curatilo, ERRG Inc.
Lance Richman, EPA Region 9
Terry Corpus, State of Hawaii Dept of Health, HEER office
Mike Cripps, State of Hawaii Dept of Health, HEER office
Liz Galvez, State of Hawaii Dept of Health, HEER office
Barbara Goto, OSHA, Dept of Labor
Ruth Yender, NOAA
Janis Heple, UC Davis extension
Dixie Kaetsu, County of Hawaii
Vic Gustafson, State Civil Defense

Meeting begins at 0930:

Lance Richman, from EPA, kicked the meeting off by asking the group to follow the ground rules and introducing themselves and explained the role that Chris Curatilo will be serving at the meeting.

Chris Curatilo, from ERRG, introduced himself and explained his role for the EPA in this situation. He started by reemphasizing the objectives of the meeting and the unique opportunity that everyone here has to actively contribute towards an improved state. He

then started the meeting off by posing the question, “What were your expectations of federal assistance for air monitoring?”

Keith Kawaoka from the HEER office started out by stating that the request for federal assistance actually coincided with a pre-planned EPA visit to the Big Island. Since the CST was already on the ground with their air monitors, it looked like a good opportunity.

Pat Port, DOI, then asked what the Parks Service was doing at this point to conduct air monitoring.

Talmadge Magno, Chief Ranger, stated that they had their air monitoring systems in place since 2000 and that they hoped other federal agencies would come in to bolster the data already being collected in the park. At that time there were so many different agencies that seemed to be collecting air sampling data,

Dan Meer, EPA, asked if there was any policy regarding the Parks Service posture beyond the park’s fence line.

Talmadge Magno stated that they also asked that question, but were never able to come to any consensus. He also stated that they do not have the resources to go beyond the park fence line and would need assistance from other government agencies.

Chief Olivera stated that the Fire Dept was collecting data at this point but was concerned about the long term monitoring and interpretation of data because the Fire Department would not be able to support these long term initiatives since they are first responders.

Pat Port asked if USGS has any air monitoring equipment. Talmadge Magno responded for USGS by saying that they do conduct some remote monitoring but it is a joint process between the Parks Service and USGS.

Mayor Kim wanted to make sure that everyone understood that this was a new situation for hazard-risk evaluation. The county was seeking assistance for capabilities and expertise that they did have and that there wasn’t necessarily an expectation of assistance. He also stated that the county relies on the Parks Service as a Federal resource for identifying the hazard, but would like more real time data. He stressed that since they are working at a county level, they need assistance in setting up and maintaining a monitoring system as well as risk assessments and recovery, and effects on agriculture. He asked that the Federal partners provide information and assistance based on the hazard/risk.

Dan Meer pointed out that this is an issue that goes beyond emergency-based assessments. Looking back Dan felt that he limited the EPA’s ability to assist by focusing on the emergency response end and should have engaged the wider EPA community and thereby tapping into the agency’s broader expertise.

Pat Port asked whether there was any coordination going on between all the different agencies conducting the air monitoring?

Mayor Kim specified that there was coordination through the State Civil Defense Office. He stated that there were five DOH monitors and 2 Parks Service monitors in place near the source. Once it was discovered that the SO₂ levels were far reaching, more monitors were deployed with from CST into the most impacted areas. He also stated that each school will have portable monitors and that the county is working with DOH and EPA to get particulate readings. Additionally the county is working with the CDC and NIOSH to develop exposure levels to SO₂ since there appear to be none in existence for emergency exposure.

Janet Yocum, EPA FOOSC, stated that the EPA brought in more equipment for particulate readings and to collect samples. She stated that there is a lot more work that needs to be done.

Dan Meer took this opportunity to point out that there are limitations for the use of Superfund (CERCLA) authorities in this case since CERCLA contains an exclusion for natural contaminants and that SO₂ from a volcano would be considered a natural contaminant. The only exception would be if there is a public health emergency but a high level authority would have to make that call and in the history of the EPA that has never been done before. He also stated that there is another part of CERCLA that allows for initial assessments which could have been used in this case. He brought up that EPA's Office of Air and Radiation has a lot of expertise and resources. EPA should explore as to how the agency as a whole can do more to support Hawai'i on this issue, because everyone seems to be getting hung up on the CERCLA limitations. By working outside of the CERCLA process we would be able to work around those limitations.

Chris asked how these resources are accessed and it was discussed that the best method would be for DOH to get in touch with the EPA air branch or even better, that the county contact DOH who would contact the EPA Air Branch. The next steps should be more active engagement between the EPA Region 9 Air Branch (Debbie Jordan and Sean Hogan) and the state. EPA's Region 9 Water Branch and may be able to assist too.

Ed Teixeira brought up the Governor's Interagency Task Force created to focus on this issue and that the EPA's Region 9 Air Branch should get involved with the task force.

Dan Meer stated that there are additional air monitoring resources available through the EPA in Research Triangle Park in North Carolina.

Ed Teixeira asked if the state missed out on this key resource.

Dan Meer stated that this was a resource that could have been engaged early on but pointed out that they are not emergency responders and their resources would most likely take a long time to actually respond. Additionally, he pointed out that EPA's Office of Air and Radiation can help in the long term analysis and monitoring but they wouldn't

make any determination of exposure levels, they are better suited to provide the county money or grants to conduct the long term monitoring.

Pat Port asked who made up the Task Force.

Ed Teixeira explained that it was a result of a meeting between the Governor and the directors of the Department of Health, Agriculture and Defense. The Task Force was tasked to determine what the risks were, how the public is alerted to these risks, what the state/county communicate about the risks and identifying the immediate and long term issues.

Ann Stevens read the list of invitees to the first meeting held on July 18th. It was noted that EPA and FEMA were not at the meeting.

Jeff Lusk pointed out that FEMA was probably not involved since the response was not under the Stafford Act.

Ann Stevens said she could provide the list of agencies invited.

Federal OSHA expressed a concern regarding the workers who are chronically exposed to the SO₂ levels and asked if state OSHA was involved. She was concerned that workers who were redirecting/evacuating the public may be in a hazardous environment for much longer periods of time and asked if anyone considering that fact.

Keith Kawaoka stated that the State OSHA office was involved but that difference between the public exposure and the worker exposure was still undetermined. State OSHA continues to provide information on personal protective equipment and are very aware of the exposure to workers, the county, and the public.

Break: 1040

At this point it was decided that everyone needed a break and the meeting was reconvened after 15 minutes.

Start up: 1055

Chris Curatilo then asked the group, "How can we access air monitoring resources?" However, since this topic had already been discussed to some degree, the question was modified, asking "how does the county receive help on the hazard and risk assessments?"

Mayor Kim asked for assistance from any and all agencies stating that he doesn't know everyone's capabilities. The Mayor needs to know from the agencies what they can and cannot be providing to help combat this problem and its unknown hazards.

The question as to who are the agencies involved and how are they assisting was put forward for discussion.

The DOH mentioned that they are gathering information on hospital visits and a team from CDC will be coming to do an on-site assessment.

Pat Port also mentioned that this is a good topic for the Federal Regional Council in the San Francisco area to be engaged in and that she could provide Ed Teixeira as a POC, Ed agreed. Ed also agreed to contact the EPA.

Chris then wanted to have Lance review some of the lessons learned that had come up during the discussion and share them with the group.

Lance reviewed the lessons learned and action items that he had captured from the discussion.

LL #1: Actively engage early with the EPA Region 9 air program on air monitoring issues.

LL #2: Beef up long term ambient air monitoring (DOH already adding additional air monitors).

Action Items:

#1: Keith (DOH) or Ed (SCD) to contact Wayne Nastri to provide air and water support POC from EPA

#2: Ed (SCD) to follow up with state agriculture on APHIS contact

#3: Ed (SCD) to follow up with Federal Regional Council

After listing these items Greg Bouie, NPFC, asked if any other volcano community has been looked at for similar issues and were there any lessons learned or actions taken that could help this situation? It was researched but apparently there is no other comparison to what is occurring on the Big Island, especially with impacts from acid rain and what will happen to communities who rely on rain catchment systems.

Another action item raised by the Mayor was a risk assessment, and who would be responsible for conducting it.

Jeff Lusk, FEMA, mentioned that since this situation is not at a constant state of emergency and there is no completion time identified, the Stafford Act could not be used to conduct such an assessment. He also asked about the chronic exposure levels and what are the red, yellow, green indicators for the public, agricultural, water and cultural resources.

State Civil Defense felt strongly that since the hazard was coming from a Federal Park that was on Federal property, the Federal government should be considered the Responsible Party in this case.

Ed Teixeira (SCD) asked what would DOI need from the state delegates in DC to improve their monitoring. The Park Service also brought up that a National Volcano Warning System was developed sometime ago but funding was cut for the program though he believes it is still technically on the books but currently unfunded and inactive.

The state wanted to engage DOI to see about getting the system back up and running. Additionally if the RP is determined to be Hawaii Volcano National Park, they would need to increase their monitoring efforts and the state wants to tactfully facilitate this and look at engaging Federal to Federal assistance.

FEMA mentioned (reemphasized) that since this issue really doesn't have a realistic closure date it would be difficult to put into Stafford Act parameters.

Mayor Kim then reminded everyone that while there is 700 tons of SO2 coming out of Halemaumau Crater daily (which is federal property) that there is 7,000 tons of SO2 coming out of the Pu'u O'o vent which is state property. So once again who's jurisdiction is this hazard really under.

At this point the discussion began to wind down as it neared the intended stop time of 1130. It was mentioned that Wayne Nastri would be on the Big Island in August so it would be a good opportunity to engage with him on this issue. Another action item was finding out what other resources were available on a federal level and perhaps the Task Force could look into this.

Chris Curatilo thanked everyone for their time, contribution to the discussion and their willingness to speak freely and openly which is how we will make forward progress.

Dan Meer provided closing remarks and reminded everyone that this is a joint effort and that an EPA FOSC report was available for review and comment.

Meeting adjourned: 1130

ACTION ITEMS

The following are action items were generated from the meeting:

#1: Keith (DOH) or Ed (SCD) to contact Wayne Nastri to provide air and water support POC from EPA

#2: Ed (SCD) to follow up with state agriculture on APHIS contact

#3: Ed (SCD) to follow up with Federal Regional Council

END