

Advisory Council Minutes

July 24, 2025

Members Present:

Ron Edgar, Chemistry
John Dietzman, Environmental
Hal Ophus, Business Community
Ray Byrne, Public Health (Zoom)

Staff Present:

April Westby, Executive Director
Margee Chambers, Air Resource Specialist

The meeting was called to order at 8 a.m.

1. Approval of the May 22, 2025 and June 26, 2025, Minutes:

- a. Not enough members for a quorum. Tabled until next meeting.

2. Advisory Council vacancy, future Advisory Council openings, and meeting schedule

- a. Elena Wolf had to resign her position on the Advisory Council; she no longer works at Kaiser Aluminum. That position has been opened for applicants and we have had interest from two people, both from Avista. The Board will review the applications and will be appointing the position at the next Board meeting.
- b. The Advisory Council will have three open positions at the end of this year. Ron, Hal, and Ray all have positions ending this year. They were asked to consider if they would like to continue to serve on the Advisory Council.
- c. Because of the recent low attendance, April asked the members present if they would like to change the time of the monthly meeting or consider holding Advisory Council meetings every other month.
 - i. Ron advised that the bylaws would need to be changed if meetings were changed to every other month
 - ii. April will reach out to the other members to get their input.

3. Executive Directors Report

- a. The new monitor that is being installed at Ridgeline High School in Liberty Lake is just about ready to go online. That should start reporting to our website next week.
- b. We have been busy getting the word out on all the seasonal burning restrictions. They are posted on the website, updated on the burn line, and staff handles many phone calls from the public with questions.
- c. Our managers participated in two half-day training sessions with Bill Swaggert. He covered employee coaching and how to handle workplace issues. Our staff

will be working to complete Professional Development Plans, PDPs, which have not been done in four or five years. Staff completed self-assessment forms and the managers incorporate those. We are hoping to have all those done by the end of the month.

- d. The 2023-2025, state Woodstove Changeout grant ended on June 30, 2025. We sent surveys out to the grant recipients and retailers to get their feedback. Ecology recently released the grant application for the next cycle, 2025-2027. Margee is working to complete our application that is due the first week of August 2025. Since our program has been very successful, we anticipate receiving grant funding for the next cycle and running the program in much the same way.
- e. Our FY 26 budget is now in effect. We still have not received any additional information about our Federal and State, 103 and 105 Core grants. We anticipate that we will get more information by September, at the earliest. Washington State is having some budget issues of their own.
- f. Our agency hosted the Washington Air Managers' group meeting on July 2, 2025. We discussed a wide range of topics, including funding, use of AI, agency involvement in large fires, the upcoming wildfire smoke season, and other wildfire smoke topics.
- g. The Agency is looking at having an AI policy. We are forming a committee, that includes one representative from each section, to look at potentially using AI for report writing and what limits we want to place on its use.
- h. Mike McKay is retiring at the end of this month. Partly because of budget issues, we will not be hiring a new Monitoring Technician. One of our inspectors will be working 40% on Air Monitoring and 60% on Compliance. Margee will help keep the forecast up to date. Fully staffed for Inspectors is 5 FTE. We are down to 3.6 FTE and are therefore not able to have the Inspectors out in the field as much as we would like. The Board asked that we wait to see what happens with the budget to make a decision on hiring another Inspector.

4. FY 26 Budget Updates

- a. Michelle is working on finishing the FY 25 financials. We will probably do a FY 25 recap presentation in September.
- b. We are still waiting to hear about our IRA grant that funds some of our monitoring work.

5. Air Operating Permit program update

- a. The Air Operating Permit, AOP, is a legally enforceable document that organizes all of the Federal, State, and local requirements in one place.
- b. They usually have a lot of emissions points and can be 70-80 pages in length.
- c. They came out of the Federal Clean Air Act Amendment of 1990, codified in 40CFR part 70 & 71 and in Washington regulation chapter 173-401. There are no local Air Operating Permit regulations.
- d. An AOP requires monitoring, testing, recording, and record keeping ensuring compliance with the emission limits.

- e. It requires the source to make regular reports twice a year and certify once a year. This is done whether they are meeting the emissions requirements or not.
- f. This permit needs to be renewed every five years.
- g. Sources that fall under AOP are:
 - i. Potential to emit 100 tons of regulated pollutants or criteria pollutants, more than 10 tons of any hazardous air pollutant, or more than 25 tons per year of total hazardous pollutant.
 - ii. Certain sources are subject to federal air quality requirements that make them subject to the AOP program.
- h. The City of Spokane Northside landfill is the only location in Spokane County that is required to have an Air Operating Permit but is not a major source.
- i. Issuing an AOP is a lengthy process, which includes:
 - i. Receiving the application
 - ii. Reviewing the application for completeness
 - iii. Drafting the permit
 - 1. Check federal, state, and local regulations to see which ones apply and make sure the permit aligns with those regulations.
 - iv. Review the draft with the source until the Agency and source are happy with the plan.
 - v. 30-day Public Comment period
 - vi. 45-day EPA review
 - vii. Finalized
- j. Along with the AOP there is a Statement of Basis that explains how the permit was drafted, any assumptions that were made, and any decisions that were made while drafting the permit.
- k. We currently only have seven Air Operating Permits, City of Spokane Waste to Energy, City of Spokane Northside Landfill, Inland Empire Paper Company, Fiber Tech Industries, Mutual Materials, Trans Canada Gas Transmission Northwest, Kaiser Aluminum. Of the seven, all except for Fiber Tech and Northside Landfill are major for criteria air pollutants. Fiber Tech is major for styrene, a hazardous air pollutant.
- l. This program is federally mandated to be full cost recovery.
- m. If a permit is not renewed at the five-year due date the current permit stays in place.
- n. There are ongoing federal, state, and local regulation changes that affect the permit.
- o. We keep track of federal vs state enforceable requirements. The regulations that have been approved into the EPA SIP are federally enforceable.
- p. Facilities can make major changes within that five-year period. Sometimes the permits need to be altered to add or subtract equipment.
- q. There can also be changes in facility personnel. New hires may not be as familiar with the compliance requirements and may need more help.
- r. We have a limited number of employees and a Notice of Construction takes priority over an Air Operating Permit.

- s. Every six months we inform EPA about the number of permits that we have lapsed. EPA periodically audits our permits and gives us a list of recommended and required changes.
- t. A public citizen can enforce a permit. They can also be appealed, asking EPA to deny or modify a permit.

6. Woodstove Changeout program summary and future grant opportunity

- a. There are two parts to our Woodstove Changeout Program, Voucher based and Income Qualified.
- b. Voucher based:
 - i. The homeowner has an existing and operational wood stove installed in their home.
 - ii. The stove is not EPA certified or over 20 years old.
 - iii. The home is within Spokane County
 - iv. Homes can be a rental, but the homeowner must apply for the voucher.
 - v. Homeowner or renters use one cord of wood or more a year.
 - vi. They can submit an application by mail or online but must include a photo of the current wood stove installed in the home.
 - vii. Approved applicants receive a voucher in the mail with a list of participating retailers.
 - 1. Participating retailers must meet criteria to be eligible.
 - viii. The voucher is good for an instant discount off the purchase price and installation of a new device. Voucher values vary from \$1,000 to \$2,500; \$1,000 for woodstove, \$1,400 for pellet, \$1,800 for gas, or \$2,500 for a mini-split heat pump.
 - ix. Retailers install the new device and recycle the old one. We receive a certificate of destruction.
- c. Income Qualified:
 - i. The homeowner has an existing and operational wood stove installed in their home.
 - ii. The stove is not EPA certified or over 20 years old.
 - iii. The home is within Spokane County
 - iv. Burn a chord of wood or more per year
 - v. Homeowner must be at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level
 - vi. They submit a paper application with a photo of the device.
 - vii. We review the application for the air quality portion and then we forward it to SNAP for income verification.
 - viii. Approved applicants receive an approval letter explaining the program along with a list of participating retailers.
 - ix. Approved applicants must receive two quotes to remove and replace their old device with a new one. They can choose if they want a woodstove, pellet stove, gas, or mini split.
 - x. We review the quotes and meet with the applicant to discuss the lower bid. The grant will pay for the lower bid to remove and replace their existing

woodstove. If the applicant prefers to use the higher bid, they must pay the difference themselves.

- xi. The retailer removes the old device, installs the new one, recycles the old one, and sends us a certificate of destruction.
- d. The program launched in October of 2023 and ended June 30, 2025. We received a \$540,000.00 grant, most of the money received goes to pay for the changeouts.
- e. The Voucher Based program changed out 146 wood stoves or fireplace inserts: 60 to gas, 60 to wood, 20 to pellet, and 6 to a mini split.
- f. The Income Based program changed out 36 woodstove or fireplace insert changeouts: 7 to gas, 22 to wood, 2 to pellet, and 4 to a mini split.
- g. We have a net annual PM 2.5 emission reduction of just over 14,000 pounds. Over the last 20 years our agency has been involved in changing out over 1,000 wood stoves.
- h. We are currently putting together the 2025-2027 grant application and we anticipate launching the next round in the fall.
- i. We sent out surveys to all of the recipients and received good feedback. They think it's a good program and a great way to help improve the air quality in our area.
- j. At the Board meeting in August we are going to highlight SNAP and all of their contributions to SRCAA over the years.
- k. The next round of grants we are focusing on serving the overburdened community.
- l. Ron was interested in the amount of old wood stoves still in use in our area. 16.7% of the occupied housing in our county heat with wood, 11.5% use a wood stove and 5.2% use fireplace inserts. Total number of wood heating devices is 37,000, we have changed out approximately 1,000 over the past 20 years.

7. Open Discussion

- a. No new concerns

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 a.m.

The next Advisory Council Meeting is scheduled for August 28, 2025.

Advisory Council Member

April Westby, Executive Director