Community Engagement Plan for the *Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring in the Cherokee Community of Pascagoula, Mississippi* Project

History

Due to an increase in community concerns, MDEQ conducted small scale ambient air monitoring within the Cherokee Neighborhood in 2016. The air monitoring was limited to volatile organic compounds (VOC) analysis. Three 24-hour samples and two instantaneous samples were taken and analyzed using EPA's TO-15 method.

Purpose

This plan serves to ensure those who live in the Cherokee community and the local businesses are aware of the air monitoring results, how to find them, and at what frequency they will be updated. Projected outcomes of the project include determining whether air quality problems exist in the community, continuing to promote existing partnerships in the community, and developing public trust.

Monitoring Project Summary

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) partnered with Jackson County and the City of Pascagoula to apply for and was ultimately awarded a $500,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA's) Competitive Air Quality Monitoring Grant funded by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). MDEQ submits quarterly reports to EPA for the ARPA grant. MDEQ also received an additional $125,425 to expand the air monitoring project from EPA funded by the Inflation Reduction Act for Clean Air Act Grants of 2022 (CAA IRA). MDEQ submits semi-annual grants for the CAA IRA grant. MDEQ plans to begin sampling around July 2024 and will continue testing for 1 year.

Initial Engagement

MDEQ's initial engagement will consist of a Town Hall style informational meeting to inform the community about the upcoming project. MDEQ's Office of Community Engagement (OCE) will notify the community's residents through a mailout about the meeting 2 weeks in advance.

The town hall meeting will consist of a presentation detailing the ambient air monitoring (which pollutants are being tested for, Frequency of testing, etc.) and a presentation of the proposed community engagement plan. Copies of the draft plan will be available at the informational meeting and will be posted to MDEQ's website after the meeting. A page will be created under MDEQ's OCE's site which will be dedicated to providing information

concerning this project. Community residents and local businesses in the Bayou Casotte will be given two weeks to review the draft plan and submit comments and suggestions.

Availability of Results

After a sample has been analyzed, the information will be available on MDEQ's OCE webpage. The short-term information will be presented in various forms and will depend on the pollutant. Once the air monitoring begins, the availability of the results will also depend on the pollutant. The availability and method of presentation is described below.

PM_{10}/$PM_{2.5}$ (Particulate Matter with a diameter less than 10 and 2.5 micrometers)

Analyzed – Continuously

Availability – Real time on AirNow. A link to the site will be on the project's page under MDEQ's OCE's website.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)

Analyzed – 24-hr sample collected every six days with up to 25 additional random/response samples (min. 5 samples each month) - Sent off for analysis by a contracted third-party laboratory.

Available – After a month of data is received, the information will be compiled and presented in table format. MDEQ will post the information within two weeks of compilation. An email will be sent to the community notifying them of the posting.

PM_{10} Metals

Analyzed – 24-hr sample collected every six days with up to 25 additional random/response samples (min. 5 samples each month) - Sent off for analysis by a contracted third-party laboratory.

Available – After a month of data is received, the information will be compiled and presented on a PDF in table format. MDEQ will post the information within two weeks of compilation. An email will be sent to the community notifying them of the posting.

Total Reduced Sulfur

Analyzed – Continuously

Availability – Data is recorded continuously. MDEQ is currently working on how this data will be presented. Ideally, the information will be retrieved and sent to the website in real time; however, this will depend on the capabilities of the website and IT. This document will be updated as this is finalized.

Reduced Sulfur Compounds

Analyzed - 24-hr samples collected randomly or as response samples. Sent off for analysis by a contracted third-party laboratory.

Availability - After a month of data is received, the information will be compiled and presented on a PDF in table format. MDEQ will post the information within two weeks of compilation. An email will be sent to the community notifying them of the posting.

Final Report

When the year of testing is complete, all information will be compiled into a single report which will compare the data to appropriate chronic health/risk screening values for VOCs and compare PM10/PM2.5 concentrations to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). If any ambient air quality problems are found, the report will identify any potential post-project steps which may include the need for further data evaluation and risk characterization, identification of opportunities to mitigate risk and identification of possible sources of any elevated pollutant levels. (Note: Conducting any post-project next steps is not included in this project or project period)

The report will be available on the project's website. An email and flyer will be sent out to the community notifying them of the report's posting. MDEQ will also hold a public meeting to provide project results.

Community Engagement Plan for the *Enhanced Air Quality Monitoring in the Cherokee Community of Pascagoula, Mississippi* Project Comments

Comments should be submitted to **Jaricus Whitlock** at jwhitlock@mdeq.ms.gov or **601-961-5303** and **Laura James** at ljames@mdeq.ms.gov or **601-961-5675** by **5 pm** on **Friday, April 5, 2024**