

Dean Effler

YRCAA: state implementation plan

1. I would ask Department of Ecology to ask the legislature to Revise the make up of the voting membership of YRCAA. More than 50% of the members should be community members without financial or family links to industries that contribute to air pollution. The other 50% would be industry representatives and county commissioners. Scientists who work for YRCAA should be attending the board meetings as an informational source but not as a voting member. This allows the board to go beyond scientific reports, wood smoke, and wood stoves to address air quality problems that effect citizens' health, well being, and their ability to enjoy their private property. Right now the YRCAA does not address the air quality conditions in all parts of the county and ignores those conditions that are most unhealthy and contribute most to the dissatisfaction of private citizens. As long as the industry dominates the YRCAA board these complaints will go unaddressed. At a minimum there should be at least one community member on the board who is not working in the agriculture industry or is a family member of someone who works in the agriculture industry. Ideally that citizen member should be someone who lives in a rural neighborhood where most of the air quality complaints come from.
2. The YRCAA needs to reconsider their stand to ignore citizen science that is done by individuals or community groups. FOTC did a valid preliminary study of ammonia levels at a residence near CAFOs. This study which included controls in the upper Yakima Valley showed average ammonia levels over a year to be 66 times higher in the lower valley than in the upper valley. Despite the fact that this information contributed to the understanding of the YAWNS study it was ignored by YRCAA. The EPA encourages citizen science but YRCAA does not.
3. YRCAA needs to work with citizen groups to obtain money to measure air quality in residential areas near agricultural pollution sources so that it can be known whether neighbors are exposed to unhealthy air. As long as the board is dominated by industry this will never happen.
4. When citizens complain about a health issue regarding pollution that is occurring right at the moment of the complaint, having an onsite visit within 48 hours is not adequate. Their policy should be changed to 12-24hrs for health complaints.

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