

Delta Mercury Exposure Reduction Program (Delta MERP)

Community Stakeholder Group Meeting Notes

January 17th, 2017 – Big Break Visitor Center, Oakley, CA – 9:30am-12:30pm

In Attendance:

Name	Organization
Lauren Baehner	Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy/ California Department of Public Health
Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon	Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy
Debra Kustic	Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy
Lori Copan	California Department of Public Health
Selina Cole	Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
Hengsothea Ung	Asian Pacific Self-development and Residential Association (APSARA)
Grace Park	Yolo County Children's Alliance (YCCA)
Stephanie Hiestand	City of Tracy
Michael Kent	Contra Costa Health Services
Zenaida Burges	Todos Unidos
Cindy Foltz	Health Education Council
Alex Keeble-Toll	The Sierra Fund
Kelsey Westfall	The Sierra Fund
Shannon Murphy	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
Jacob Fleck	United States Geological Survey

Introduction, Welcome, and Brief Overview of Delta MERP

Agency Updates: Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

Selina Cole gave an update on the Water Board activities in managing the Delta MERP. Selina explained that FY 2016-17 is the last year for the small grants program, (ending in July) due to lack of funding. The Water Board is looking for future funding opportunities to support the program.

Agency Updates: Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy

Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon gave updates on the Delta Conservancy activities in implementing the Delta MERP which included staffing changes: Kathryn Kynett took a new position outside of the Conservancy, and Shakoora has returned to the Conservancy as a Program Advisor and is the lead agency staff on MERP. The Conservancy has conducted outreach to community stakeholders, state and federal agencies, and local organizations to promote involvement and awareness. The Conservancy has coordinated with agencies and existing programs to

incorporate fish contamination messages into on-going activities, including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

Agency Updates: California Department of Public Health

Lauren Baehner, MERP Coordinator, gave updates on the CDPH activities in implementing exposure reduction activities to support the Delta MERP. Several staff changes occurred since the last meeting: Lori Copan, Section Chief of the Community Participation, Education and Evaluation section and Lauren Baehner, hired as the DMERP Coordinator, are the key staffs at CDPH who work on the MERP. Alyce Ujihara retired; Gabriela Pasat, Alcira Dominguez and Mariana Ponte-Cordova transitioned to new programs at CDPH and Lauren Joe left CDPH.

Lauren Baehner provided summaries of activities conducted by grantees during the FY 15-16 Small Grants Program; the three grantees were Asian Pacific Self-Development and Residential Association (APSARA), California Indian Environmental Alliance (CIEA) and Lao Khmu Association. Lauren shared results from the FY 15-16 Small Grants Program exit interviews: all grantees 1) felt that the most important activities were conducted in appropriate languages for their community and were community workshops and educational materials, 2) made new partnerships and enhanced collaboration with other agencies, and 3) planned to continue conducting outreach after the end of the grant, 4) recommended that MERP offer more trainings to the next year grantees, 5) hold workshops at new partner events, and 6) have translated materials. The grantees also reported challenges they faced while implementing the grants included reinforcing the advisory information with community members and explaining complex information in short interactions.

D-MERP Small Grants Program Updates: YCCA

Grace Park with YCCA gave an update on implementing YCCA's small grant. Activities so far have included holding advisory messaging pilot sessions, evaluations and population screenings, social media postings, outreach events, community stakeholder meetings, and home visitation programs, all of which incorporated MERP messaging and education and reached approximately 1220 people. Projected activities for the remainder of the grant include nurturing parenting class, play school experience sessions, Russian storytime, Russian MERP workshops, early childhood preschool fair, bait shop outreach, parent school district meetings and events with community partner agencies. All activities will incorporate MERP messaging and education.

D-MERP Small Grants Program Updates: APSARA

Hengsothea Ung with APSARA gave an update on implementing APSARA's small grant. Activities to date have included outreach and education at community meetings and events, collaboration with temples and churches to conduct community educational presentations, and outreach to youth groups. Projected activities for the remainder of the grant include working

with youth groups, posting advisory signs in Khmer at local temples and community centers and advisory signs in English at fishing locations near their center. Hengsothea discussed the challenges and successes that APSARA faces in educating their communities about mercury in fish and shared activities and adaptations that worked well. He also talked about the importance of being able to interact with community members when talking about fish contamination and suggested a physical advisory sign with interactive features to capture the attention of the public and then share more in-depth information.

Update on Posting the Advisories

Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon with the Delta Conservancy gave an update on posting the advisory signs. Sign-posting activities to date have included outreach, identification of sign posting locations, and coordination of sign posting with partner agencies and organizations. As signs begin to be posted, future activities will include tracking sign posting activities, and monitoring status of signs and effectiveness of the advisory signs. Sign posting outreach has focused on gaining input and collaboration on posting the advisories. The Delta Conservancy has reached out to the five Delta counties (Contra Costa, Sacramento, Solano, San Joaquin and Yolo), wildlife areas such as Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and Cosumnes River Preserve, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Lands Commission and MERP community stakeholders. Signs will be posted in locations with public water access, fishing sites and piers, boat launches, marinas, wildlife areas and parks. These locations will be in the five Delta counties and the three Delta advisories will be posted in their appropriate regions: Sacramento River and Northern Delta, Central and South Delta, and the San Joaquin River. Delta MEPR has identified around 100 locations to post advisory signs by evaluating previous sign locations in the Bay Delta region, identifying new locations and identifying key contacts at each site. Work in progress includes coordination with multiple organizations to discuss logistics, obtain information for posting and developing a database to track the advisory signs.

Delta MERP Sustainability

Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon with the Delta Conservancy gave a presentation about Delta MERP sustainability. Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon discussed strategies to measure program effectiveness as a first step; MERP will measure the outputs, measure the products and then evaluate the results. Due to lack of future funding, this is the last year for the Delta MERP small grants program. Sustainability will require creation of mechanism for potential funding sources and use of existing resources through coordination among agencies, organizations and the community. Program sustainability is important because reducing fish methylmercury levels takes a long time and MERP addresses the mercury-related health risks to consumers of Delta fish and these efforts need to continue in the Delta. The Delta Conservancy provided a list of potential sources of funds. Resources for community-based organizations and Tribes include the Delta MERP Small Grants Program, EPA Environmental Justice Small Grants Program,

CalEPA Environmental Justice Small Grants Program, the Lawrence Foundation, Indian Tribes and Intertribal Consortia, Partners for Places, Five Star Urban Water Restoration Grant, Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant, Center for Health and Environmental Justice. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation offers a Culture of Health Leaders program to support community leaders to build their leadership skills. Luis Olmedo with Comite Civico Del Valle shared his organization's experience with sustainability and leverage of government funds.

Upcoming Meetings and Q&A

Delta MERP will hold the next and final Community Stakeholder Group Meeting in May of 2017 near West Sacramento. The topic for this meeting will be women and children's health, and there will be more discussion around sustainability of MERP messaging for our community partners.