

Weather Modification Advisory Committee

Meeting of May 21, 2010
North Campus Building – 1st Floor Public Meeting Room
1106 Clayton Lane, Austin, Texas

Summary of Minutes

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item B., Roll Call and Certification of Quorum. Committee members Frank Reilly, Gary Foster, and James Nance were present. Committee members Don Parrish and Everett Deschner were absent. A quorum was present.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item C., Approval of Minutes – Meeting of January 29, 2010. Committee member, James Nance made a motion to approve the minutes with a correction to the spelling of Chairman Reilly's name. Committee member, Gary Foster seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote in favor.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item D., Public Comment. There was no public comment.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item E.1., Staff Reports, Executive Office. Bill Kuntz, Executive Director reported on legislative budget cuts, which eliminated all advisory board travel reimbursement, and the strategic plan focus groups, yielded no comments during the planning sessions. Committee member James Nance remarked that the program is on track.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item E.2., Staff Reports, General Counsel – Brad Bowman, General Counsel reported on the Commission directive to review the rules and suggest ways to stream line them. Executive Director Bill Kuntz provided examples of rule review streamlining.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item E.3., Staff Reports, Compliance Division 3.a. New permits (3) for rain enhancement projects in West and South Texas. George Bomar, Program Specialist reported that three permit renewals had been issued since the last Committee meeting. Mr. Bomar reported that programs based in Plains, San Angelo and Pleasanton had pending applications on three rain enhancement projects. SOAR Program was issued a permit on March 9, 2010, the South Texas permit was issued on March 31, 2010; and a West Texas rain enhancement and hail suppression permit was issued on April 9, 2010. Mr. Bomar provided status of the permits and licenses now in effect: 8 licenses and 11 permits.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item E.3., Staff Reports, Compliance Division E.3.b. Annual meeting of the Weather Modification Association in Santa Fe, NM. George Bomar, Program Specialist provided an overview of the national weather modification conference held in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Mr. Bomar said that Todd Flanagan received a distinguished service award, and he reported on discussions of winter time seeding operations, discussions about hurricane modifications, satellite imaging (real time satellite) for cloud seeding, and the Egyptian practice of seeding orographic clouds. Todd Flanagan reported on the

importance of a real time satellite to assist in cloud seeding operations to improve a delay of up to 20 minutes. Mr. Bomar reported on papers submitted by Wyoming for winter time seeding to provide snow, participation from the international community, and answered questions from the Board regarding global warming and the impact on the weather modification program.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item E.3., Staff Reports, Compliance Division E.3.c. New policy statement on planned weather modification by the American Meteorological Society. Mr. Bomar reported that he and six other meteorologists are working on a national policy statement regarding planned weather modification for the AMS. A first draft of the statement was provided to the AMS and has been reviewed. Suggested changes are now being considered by the seven member panel developing the policy. Mr. Bomar highlighted several points from the policy and three recommendations for the future of weather modification.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item E.3., Staff Reports, Compliance Division E.3.d. Status of manual for field meteorologists. George Bomar, Program Specialist reported that Stephanie Beall will give an update on the manual and suggested that the suppression criteria be added to the manual.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item E.3., Staff Reports, Compliance Division E.3.e. Prospects for resumption of cloud-seeding research in Texas: The Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP). The State Conservationist notified TDLR that the AWEP would be entertaining applications for 2010 federal grants for drought alleviation and water augmentation projects. TDLR staff submitted a proposal for funding in support of the resumption of salt-seeding experiments along the Texas-New Mexico border in the spring of 2011.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item F., Field meteorologists' report on status of rain-enhancement activities. The Committee heard from Stephanie Beall, Southwest Texas Rain Enhancement Association, who reported on operations (eight flights and seven seeding days) in April and May. Ms. Beall also gave reports on behalf of the Panhandle and San Angelo-based projects. The Panhandle project had five flights and four reconnaissance missions in April and May. The West Texas program has had eight flights this year, with three deemed quite successful. Ms. Beall then provided a brief overview of the draft of a training manual for prospective project meteorologists. The manual includes a reading list, and technical sections on organizational tools and seeding materials.

Todd Flanagan reported South Texas Weather Modification Association had three flights within the last 10 days because rainfall has been more than adequate.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item G., Consideration and possible recommendation on applications for renewal of weather modification permits. George Bomar, Program Specialist provided information on an application for a renewal of a hail-suppression permit by Color Spot, Inc., as well as a history of the project and publication of a Notice of Intention in a local newspaper. The permit application included a list of technical papers discussing the role of cavitation in the formation, and inhibition, of hailstone formation in large thunderstorms. Mr. Bomar highlighted portions of these papers. Mr. Bomar also responded to previous concerns regarding the specific role of the project meteorologist, stating that procedures for interaction between the meteorologist and farm personnel during hail-cannon operations had been clarified. Mr. Bomar suggested this new language be added to the permit, should TDLR

issue the permit. Committee member Gary Foster made a motion to recommend approval of the permit. Committee member James Nance seconded the motion.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item H., Discussion on night flight seeding operations. Stephanie Beall explained the difference in night and day flight seeding operations, saying nighttime operations are mostly impacted by visibility. George Bomar commented on the previous use of night vision goggles for seeding operations at the San Angelo-based project.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item I., Recommendations for agenda items for the next meeting. The Committee placed Fiscal Year 2011 license renewals on the next agenda.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item J., Discussion of date, time, and location of the next Committee meeting. The Committee decided to meet on August 20, 2010, 10:00 a.m. in Austin, Texas.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item L., Adjournment. Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly adjourned the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

Frank Reilly, Presiding Officer
Weather Modification Advisory Committee