

Weather Modification Advisory Committee

Meeting of April 6, 2009
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 10:10 a.m.

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

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item C., Approval of Minutes – Meeting of December 8, 2008. Committee member, James Nance made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Committee member, Everett Deschner seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0 with Committee member Gary Foster abstaining.

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 welcomed the Committee to the new meeting facility; and presented a legislative update, reporting on the appropriations request, in which Rep. Tracy King was seeking funding for the weather modification program, which is hopeful to pass.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item E.2.a., Staff Reports, Compliance Division – Status of upgrade of radar facilities at rain-enhancement sites. George Bomar, Program Specialist presented a map of the cloud seeding and rain enhancement operations; and he noted three projects with 11 or more years of operation. Mr. Bomar reported on projects and invited the resident meteorologists to report on their projects. Mr. Bomar reported that the new high-resolution Doppler database provided greater opportunities for weather modification; provided a summary of weather modification reports from a newsletter by the Texas Weather Modification Courier, and reported letters regarding weather modification qualifications and the necessary training requirements to seek certification from the Department and the Board. Todd Flanagan, South Texas Weather Modification Association, reported on the new high resolution weather software which is great, however, the data is larger than the machines can store or process for long periods of time. Stephanie Beall, Southwest Texas Rain Enhancement Association, presented an outline of proposed training materials that the meteorologists would like to see adopted for certifying future weather modification meteorologist.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item E.2.b., Staff Reports, Compliance Division - Radar-derived statistical evaluation of 2008 cloud-seeding operations. George Bomar, Program Specialist reported on radar – derived statistical evaluations of Texas projects in 2008 performed by Archie Ruiz.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item E.2.c., Staff Reports, Compliance Division – Proposed legislation impacting weather modification activities in Texas. George Bomar, Program Specialist reported on legislation identified earlier by Bill Kuntz.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item E.2.d., Staff Reports, Compliance Division – Statement on cloud seeding and chemical toxicity. George Bomar, Program Specialist reported on the proposed weather modification associations statement on seeding chemical (silver iodide – silver chloride) toxicity up for adoption by the Weather Modification Association. Mr. Bomar summarized the statement and reported that it likely would be finalized within the next few weeks. The statement indicates that silver iodide and silver chloride do not pose any serious environmental threats.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item E.2.e., Staff Reports, Compliance Division – Prospects for resumption of cloud-seeding research in Texas. (1) The Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) and (2) The Federal Weather Modification Authorization bill. George Bomar, Program Specialist reported that the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program is a potential source for funding for future weather modification research work in Texas. Senate Bill 601 was reintroduced in the United States Senate by Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson; the bill was recently voted out of Committee and establishes a weather mitigation research program that would provide funding for weather modification research projects like the one conducted in West Texas during the summers of 2004 and 2005.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item F., Consideration of applications for a weather modification license amendment. George Bomar, Program Specialist reported that no applications for amending licenses had been submitted.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item G., Consideration of possible rule language clarifying the scope of weather modification activities as described in the weather modification statute and rules. Clarifying language for Rule 79.18(3)(d) (Permit Applications). Program Specialist, George Bomar outlined the proposed rule. The Board discussed the proposed language and agreed that the language was acceptable. Brad Bowman, General Counsel presented a legal perspective that may preclude the proposed rules from being adopted.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item H., Recommendations for agenda items for the next meeting. The Committee recommended forming a workgroup to review proposed training materials. Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly appointed James Nance and Everett Deschner to that workgroup; and review of eight applications for renewal of licenses was to be placed on the next agenda.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item I., Discussion of date, time, and location of next Committee meeting. The Committee decided to meet on Friday, August 7, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. in Austin, Texas.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved back to agenda item C., Public Comment. The Committee heard comments from Tommy Shearrer who reported on the upgrading of the radar and adding a twin engine aircraft with top seeding ability which also allows for night seeding.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item I., Adjournment. Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly adjourned the meeting at 11:29 p.m.

Frank Reilly, Presiding Officer
Weather Modification Advisory Committee