



## Deer Park Community Advisory Council

### Summary of January 24, 2011 Meeting

#### DPCAC Holds First of Two Meetings on Greenhouse Gases

For the first time, Deer Park Community Advisory Council (DPCAC) explored the topic of greenhouse gases when the group that advises local industry met at the end of January. Lorraine Gershman, Director of Regulatory/Technical Affairs for the American Chemistry Council (ACC) in Washington DC, provided an industry perspective on greenhouse gas issues, including the economic and environmental costs and benefits of reducing them. On Feb. 28, environmentalists' viewpoints will be presented. Gershman's presentation is available at [www.deerparkcac.org](http://www.deerparkcac.org)

Gershman spoke about three aspects of greenhouse gases (GHGs): legislation, mandatory reporting, and regulatory changes. She also shared GHG data ACC collects from its 140+ member companies.

Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and its equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>e), such as methane. The most commonly heard term relating to their control is "cap and trade" legislation. Though a bill passed the US House of Representatives in 2009, it did not pass the US Senate. Gershman said no comprehensive climate bill is expected in this session of Congress.

Mandatory GHG reporting is just beginning. Companies with a set level of CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions had to register by Jan. 31. (Some DPCAC plants must report, some need not.) EPA is to approve the facility's registration, and then have plants input data into its new electronic reporting system. The reporting system is not complete, however, so industry is concerned about meeting the Mar. 31 reporting deadline.

EPA's proposal to make the GHG reporting data public, as they do with the Toxics Release Inventory, is being delayed while it resolves concerns about the impacts on competitiveness from sharing all data, even confidential business information.

A 2007 Supreme Court decision is resulting in some EPA rule changes that will affect some DPCAC plants. The court found CO<sub>2</sub> and other GHGs fall under the Clean Air Act definition of pollutant. The justices said that, if EPA determined GHGs are an air pollutant that may endanger

public health or welfare, the agency must manage GHG emissions from light duty motor vehicles. In 2008, the EPA Administrator said stationary sources could become subject to certain Clean Air provisions if that occurred. EPA has since determined GHGs do endanger public health or welfare, issued the motor vehicle rule in 2010, and made certain large industrial facilities and electricity generation units subject to permitting requirements that were expanded to cover GHGs.

From an industry perspective, Gershman said new permit requirements and mandatory reporting increase costs, and publication of confidential business information could affect competition.

Gershman shared data on GHGs that the American Chemistry Council collects from its member companies as part of its Responsible Care ® program. ACC data show that greenhouse gas emissions have been reduced 16% since 1992, energy efficiency has improved 10% since that year, and hazardous air pollutants have declined 71% since 1988.

DPCAC meets again on Mon., Feb. 28 to hear Jennifer Powis, Senior Regional Representative for the Sierra Club in Texas, provide environmentalists' perspectives on greenhouse gas issues. The meeting begins at 6:00 p.m. For details, contact Tony Shick at 832-260-7201.