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Director Spotlight: Benjamin Israël - Pembina Institute, NGO Industrial



Benjamin joined Pembina Institute in 2015 as an analyst and currently works as part of the Responsible Fossil Fuel team providing his expertise to corporate and government projects to mitigate the environmental and climate impacts of the industry sector. "One of my first projects was on the impacts of coal-fired electricity on air quality—and thus human health—in Alberta and in Canada. Along with health organizations, I co-authored two reports on this topic. This was my first exposure to air quality issues – and I must say I felt I just entered a whole new world."

Following his first exposure to air quality issues, CASA entered Ben's radar in the context of his work on coal and learning about the reoccurring Electricity Framework Review (EFR) Project Teams. Now on the third review, the EFR team was formed to reduce air quality issues on a grid dominated by coal-fired generation. He would later join the CASA Board of Directors as the Alternate Director for the NGO Industrial sector in early 2018.

CASA was Ben's first introduction to the consensus-based-decision making process. "I remember my initial reaction being a mix of surprise and skepticism, given the antagonism between the industry and NGOs often painted in the media. But a few years later, and having seen the CASA approach at work, I must say I am sincerely impressed." He sees the CASA process is a reminder that all sectors can work together for the benefit of Albertan's environment and health. A recent example of this is the work CASA completed by delivering a NOx standard for coal to gas conversion. "I know for a fact it was a challenging

process, first on the technical side; then because the engagement came with quite an accelerated timeline. In less than a month, the working group reached consensus, delivered a solution that benefits all Albertans, and ultimately demonstrated to the Alberta government—if needs be—the utility of CASA in identifying solutions that are agreeable to divergent opinions."

Since the establishment of CASA in 1994, Pembina Institute has been actively involved in our work to help manage air quality in Alberta, and Pembina board and project team members have been a vital part of the organization's success. Pembina uses a holistic approach to environmental and climate issues and being a part of the CASA process makes it possible to share their expertise on energy systems to help advance solutions around air quality issues. In the future, Ben would like to see more of this holistic approach applied to manage all air emissions in Alberta, including air quality, climate, and the environment. He also hopes to see more formal relationships develop between CASA and the airshed zones, which will lead Albertan's to be better informed about air quality issues.

Originally from France, Benjamin graduated from Mines-ParisTech with his Masters in Energy and Environment, before moving to Alberta to help advance solutions to the province's energy and environmental challenges in the context of a carbon-constrained world.



Clean Air Forum

If you work in or around the world of air quality in Alberta, you may have heard there is a need for opportunities where diverse stakeholders can get together and have an open discussion about the state of Alberta's air. On November 21,

2018, the Alberta Capital Airshed (ACA) delivered on that need.

Hosted at MacEwan University, the first annual Clean Air Forum was focused on two major issues.

1. The need to **bring diverse stakeholders together** to a table that expands beyond the airsheds. Organizers aimed to develop an opportunity for air quality scientists and community interests' groups to come together to have meaningful discussions on the state of the air.
2. To focus on the issue of **human health**, and how it is impacted by air quality.



The Honourable Shannon Phillips addressed attendees at the first annual Clean Air Forum.

The forum consisted of three panels, followed by a workshop to wrap up the day.

Panel: The State of Air Quality in our Airshed

Moderator: Andrew Read

Panelists: Dr. Kevin McCullum, Dr. Matt Parsons, Peter Bieman & Patrick Anderson

Panel: Human Health Implications of Poor Air Quality

Moderator: Dr. Raquel Feroe

Panelists: Dr. Chris Sikora, Dr. Ellina Lytvyak & Dr. Sarah Henderson

Panel: What is Being Done to Address Air Quality Issues?

Moderator: Kalen Pilkington

Panelists: Andre Asselin, Bruce Newbold & Chandra Tomaras

Workshop: What Else Should We Be Doing Within Our Airshed?

Moderator: Steve McIsaac

Participants were assigned topics related to air quality at random as they arrived at the forum. These random topics were used to create teams who were then asked to develop a list of air quality issues related to that topic. Teams then swapped lists and were asked to come up with ways to solve these issues given to them to the best of their abilities. The workshop challenged stakeholders from various backgrounds to work together to develop solutions for air quality issues Albertan's are facing across the province.



It was a great start for the first annual Clean Air Forum. Organizers were aiming for 50 attendees, and a total 79 ended up attending. Positive reviews and feedback started coming in almost immediately following the event.

Gary Redmond, Executive Director of the ACA was happy with the turnout and looks forward to the next one. He says "The ACA is looking forward to organizing the next Clean Air Forum, and we are already planning ways to build on and improve the program". They plan to invite more players involved in the air quality world. Ideally, there would be elected officials from across Alberta, health officials, land use planners, participants and speakers from

other provinces or countries to bring a different perspective to the table, and a continued attendance by air quality scientists, and community interest groups.

The ACA is a not-for-profit, multi-stakeholder organization that monitors, collects and shares information on air quality. Transparency is one of their main values, and all the air monitoring information they collect is available to the public. The ACA focuses on providing and improving air quality education and awareness while facilitating multi-stakeholder conversations to help improve air quality management across Edmonton.

For more information on the Clean Air Forum, please [read the full report on the event](#). For more information on the Alberta Capital Airshed, please [email](#) or [visit their website](#). You can also check them out on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).



Electricity Framework Review Project Team (EFR)

The Board approved the EFR project charter in June 2018 and the project team was initiated in July 2018. Through this third Five-Year Review, the project team's goal is to ensure the *Emissions Management Framework for Alberta's Electricity Sector* reflects current circumstances. The project is being completed in two phases:

- Short-term tasks (phase 1) due in December 2018.
- Long-term tasks (phase 2) due in Q3 2019.

Jim Hackett (ATCO) and Randy Dobko (Alberta Environment and Parks) provided an update at the CASA December board meeting on the results of the short-term tasks of the EFR Project Team. Phase one of the project produced a non-consensus perspective document on NOx emissions standards for gas-fired turbines, with the team developing two different proposals for a standard, and sectors supporting one or the other.

Key areas of non-consensus included, 1) at what threshold or configuration should emission standards be set based on the capabilities of add-on control such as selective catalytic reduction, and 2) treatment of cogeneration units vs. combined cycle units.

By consensus, the board voted to submit the 2018 EFR Phase 1 Interim Report as advice to the Government of Alberta. Phase two will continue in 2019, and come to a close in fall of 2019. Due to a heavy workload and constrained timelines, some items in phase one have been postponed to phase two and will be addressed in early next year, with an updated expected to be provided in the first board meeting of 2019.

[Click here for more information on the 2018 EFR Review Project Team](#)



Ambient Air Quality Objectives Project Team

At the December 2016 meeting, the CASA Board of Directors approved a Statement of Opportunity from Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) to form the CASA Ambient Air Quality Objectives (AAQO) Project Team. The Team's

Project Charter was approved at the December 2017 Board Meeting. The team's objectives are to provide advice to AEP on the development of AAQOs that are consistent with the Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards for PM_{2.5}, O₃, NO₂ and SO₂ and the carry forward of two substances from the previous Alberta Ambient Air Quality Objectives Stakeholder Advisory Committee work plan, total reduced sulphur (TRS) and H₂S. The timeline for reporting on each substance has been staggered. These priority substances are the focus of AEP's work plan on ambient air quality objective development and review.

PM_{2.5} and Ozone have both previously been submitted to the board for approval. Alison Miller (Chemistry Industry Association of Canada/Canadian Chemical Association of Petroleum Producers) and Laura Blair (Alberta Environment and Parks) presented the report for H₂S/TRS at CASA's December board meeting. The H₂S/TRS Subgroup and the AAQO Project Team did not reach consensus, and the team submitted a perspectives document.

The areas of non-consensus formed around the application of a TRS Guideline being outside the mandate of the project team. Some stakeholders are concerned a guideline could potentially be used compliance and modeling purposes, as well as reporting protocols.

The non-consensus perspective document was approved by the CASA Board to be submitted to Alberta Environment and Parks as advice.

The NO₂/SO₂ Subgroup continues to meet, with work on SO₂ expected to begin in early 2019. The project teams are aiming to have a decision before the board in April or September of 2019.

[Click here to read more about the AAQO Project Team.](#)



Roadside Optical Vehicle Emissions Reporter (ROVER) III Project Team

CASA will receive funding from Environment and Climate Change Canada, through the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT), for a total of \$100,000.00 to support the work of the ROVER III Project Team, with the final data collection being shared with ICCT to support their own research. The collection is expected to begin in the summer of 2019.

[Click here to read about the ROVER III Project Team.](#)



CASA 2018 Recognition Dinner

December 12th, 2018 was CASA's first Board Recognition Dinner held at the Edmonton Federal Building. It was an opportunity for current board members to come together and recognize members who have retired from the board in 2018, and thank them for all of the work and time they have put into the CASA board and project teams.

Former board members Peter Noble and Cheryl Baraniecki were in attendance and were thanked for the time spent as members of the CASA Board of Directors.

Attendees enjoyed an open bar, sponsored by ATCO, a sit-down dinner, and a presentation provided by Riley Georgsen and Shannon Leggo from TransAlta on their organizations work with Coal to Gas Conversions.

[You can read TransAlta's presentation on their work with Coal to Gas Conversions here.](#)

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