

The following is a summation of the interview of Commissioner Mike Byerly by EPAC member Douglas Lawson on the issue of the EPAC review of AEPD. The five key questions are listed with the commissioner's response to each immediately thereafter.

- Is EPD effective and efficient?

Commissioner Byerly did not want to make a definitive statement regarding how effective or efficient the AEPD currently is without a careful review of their policies and budgets. He did express confidence in the AEPD staff and administration's intentions and abilities. When pointedly asked as to whether or not he was aware of any areas where the AEPD could cut back or from which it could reallocate resources, he stated that he did not know of any and would like to see the AEPD's funding increased overall.

- Do any of EPD's services duplicate services provided by other agencies?

The commissioner has heard opinions stated by others that the work of the AEPD is duplicative but largely dismissed this idea as being inaccurate and misinformed.

- Does EPD faithfully carry out the Commission's policy guidance?

Commissioner Byerly expressed that he has no concerns about AEPD overstepping their authority. He stated that they dutifully execute the environmental protective services that the commission has asked them to provide. His greatest concern, expressed emphatically and repeatedly, was that he would like the AEPD to initiate more policy discussions. He would like the AEPD to bring more issues to the attention of the BoCC and would like to hear the staff weigh in on far more of the discussions going on before the BoCC. He noted that the AEPD tends to keep its head down, but he would like to hear more of their voice. The commissioner would like to see AEPD contribute more to the BoCC agenda, generate more initiatives and new recommendations. He feels that there are many issues where the BoCC could potentially be making decisions to further the agenda of environmental protection, but they need the AEPD to act as an advocate to bring up these issues and argue for promoting greater protection in our community.

- Should EPD's roles be changing given diminished budgets in other agencies (i.e. water management districts)?

The commissioner stated that he did not currently know enough details of the roles and responsibilities of each agency to be able to answer this question at this time.

- What should EPD's future priorities be?

Commissioner Byerly expressed confidence in the AEPD to determine for themselves which areas they would like to pursue. He says that he would like the AEPD to present more recommendations to the BoCC and leave it up to the board to make the final

decision. Every attempt to further the agenda of environmental protection increases awareness even if the BoCC ultimately decides to go in a different direction.

Additionally the commissioner was interested in the process by which the County Management makes recommendations to policy at the level of the functional groups. He is concerned that the voice and opinions of the AEPD may be absent from the recommendations of the Community Planning Functional group as it reports to the BoCC. If the AEPD has a dissenting or additional opinion to that expressed by the leader of the Community Planning Functional group on any issue, the commissioner would like to hear that opinion brought to the attention of the BoCC.