

Jurisdiction and Agency Coordinating Committee Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

MEMORANDUM

TO: Martin E. Nohe, Chairman
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

Members
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

FROM: Tom Biesiadny, Chairman
Jurisdiction and Agency Coordinating Committee
Northern Virginia Transportation Authority

SUBJECT: Update on Regional Air Quality (Agenda Item 6.F.)

DATE: May 8, 2009

This memorandum is intending to provide the NVTa with a brief update on regional air quality activities.

- The 2009 Ozone Season began on May 1, 2009. So far there have been no Code Orange or Code Red days. The season lasts through September 2009. This year, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission has chosen not to participate in the Code Red Ride Free program on forecast Code Red days. More information on this decision is included in Agenda Item 4A.
- Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) staff is working with local governments and transportation agencies to implement two programs contained in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) (the federal economic stimulus program). The first program is a diesel retrofit program designed to reduce diesel emissions. MWAQC staff is coordinating a regional application for Diesel Emission Reduction Act (DERA) Funding for a variety of projects submitted by individual local governments and regional agencies. Combining these requests into one application will allow the region to meet the minimum grant threshold. MWAQC is also developing a proposal for Clean Cities funding.
- The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments has established a Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee to advise it on climate related issues. In particular, this committee will be charged with implementing the recommendations of the COG's Climate Change Steering Committee to reduce the region's greenhouse gas emissions. COG is currently securing appointments to the Committee.

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- MWAQC and Transportation Planning Board (TPB) staff are evaluating the Environmental Protection Agency's new mobile emission calculation model known as MOVES. This model is much more sophisticated than the current MOBILE 6 model. While it will still be some time before the EPA requires air quality conformity to be conducted using the MOVES model, some initial model runs have indicated that the test version of the MOVES model calculates significantly higher mobile emissions than MOBILE 6. MWAQC and TPB staff will be submitting comments on the model to EPA for their consideration.
- On February 24, 2009, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia issued a ruling on the EPA's National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter (PM2.5). The ruling remands the standards to EPA for reevaluation. The Court criticized the EPA for disregarding the recommendations of its staff and its Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee on fine particulates and found that the EPA failed to justify its departure from those recommendations. The Court did not vacate the rules, so that some fine particulate protection remains in place while EPA is reevaluating the standards.
- On April 17, 2009, EPA signed Proposed Endangerment and Cause or Contribute Findings for Greenhouse Gases under the Clean Air Act. MWAQC is preparing a letter to EPA supporting the concept of a national program to reduce the risks from climate change and reduce greenhouse gases.

JACC members and I will be available at the Authority meeting on May 14, 2009, to answer questions.

Cc: Members, NVTAA Jurisdiction and Agency Coordinating Committee