

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.E.)

DATE: January 8, 2010

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

- Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) recently commented on the proposed primary National Ambient Air Quality Standard for Nitrogen Dioxide. In its letter, MWAQC supported the proposal to establish a new short-term hourly NO₂ standard and urged the EPA to establish the new standard based on sound science. MWAQC indicated that the proposed short term standard will limit peak concentrations and reduce the public health risk to respiratory systems. MWAQC also generally supported efforts to monitor roadside concentrations of NO₂, because these concentrations can be higher than average concentrations found at the community scale. It noted that there are uncertainties and challenges related to implementing a roadside monitoring program, and urged the EPA to undertake additional research to ensure the effectiveness of this program. It also raised concerns about the cost to establish and operate a roadside monitoring network, particularly in urban areas, and urged the EPA to provide the resources necessary to state and local air monitoring agencies for establishing the NO₂ monitoring network. Finally, it stated that without assistance, the requirement for roadside monitoring network is unacceptable.
- The Council of Governments established a Climate, Energy, and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) 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. The Committee has met twice and is in the process of developing a work program with specific tasks and schedules. The CEEPC will meet again on January 27, 2010. At this meeting the committee will review the transportation elements for its draft work program.

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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. Recently, TPB staff replaced default data in the model with region specific data. 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. The use of regional data versus the default data reduced the projected emissions levels somewhat. TPB staff is continuing to incorporate adjustments into the model.

JACC members and I will be available at the Authority meeting on January 14, 2010, to answer questions.

Cc: Members, NVTJ Jurisdiction and Agency Coordinating Committee