

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202)962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202 TDD: (202) 962-3213

Item #5

MEMORANDUM

January 15, 2014

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Gerald K. Miller
Acting Co-Director, Department of
Transportation Planning

RE: Additional Letters Sent/Received

The attached additional letter sent/received will be reviewed along with other letters sent/received under item #5 of the January 15th TPB agenda.

Attachment

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202

January 13, 2014

US Department of Transportation
Docket Management Facility
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, W12-40
Washington, DC 20590-0001

**RE: *Comments on Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)
Interim Program Guidance (Docket # FHWA-2013-0023)***

Dear Federal Highway Administration:

The National Capital Region Planning Board (TPB), the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington, DC metropolitan region appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Interim CMAQ Program Guidance issued and published in the Federal Register on November 12, 2013.

The TPB coordinates with the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia Departments of Transportation and local jurisdictions in the region's non-attainment planning area to include programs and projects which are part of the region's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP), and part of the regional air quality conformity process and Congestion Management Process. The TPB also administers a regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program, Commuter Connections, which has been in operation since 1974 and is one of the nation's oldest and largest regional TDM programs. Commuter Connections has been the recipient of CMAQ funds for numerous activities that have helped the region to reduce congestion and improve air quality in a cost effective manner.

The TPB staff has reviewed the Interim CMAQ Guidance and provides the following comments:

1. **Transferability of CMAQ Funds:** When calculating the CMAQ transferable amount, states and MPO's should have flexibility to program funds in a manner that is not onerous and one that that will maximize the effectiveness of CMAQ funds to meet both congestion and air quality goals. Transferability/flexibility provisions should take into consideration a region's PM2.5 air quality targets and/or requirements and not impede the region's ability to meet any of its air quality conformity plan requirements due to set-aside calculation requirements for PM 2.5.
2. **Cost Effectiveness Tables:** In developing cost-effectiveness tables for potential CMAQ projects a region may be considering, the FHWA should allow for use of the tables as a resource for MPO's and States and not a definitive source. Input from the MPO's and states should also be solicited prior to the finalization of the tables.
3. **Annual Reporting:** Annual CMAQ reporting should be aligned with any resulting MAP-21 performance based plan reporting requirements. The goal of the reporting should be to demonstrate progress towards achieving air quality and congestion reduction targets. A cost-

effectiveness analysis, while helpful for FHWA, should remain an optional provision for each MPO and state to submit.

4. PM 2.5 Impacts: The Interim CMAQ Guidance should clarify that if a CMAQ-funded project reduces PM2.5 emissions, the project can be included in the count towards the 25% PM2.5 set-aside requirement.
5. Emissions Model: Emission estimates may have been calculated using the MOBILE6 model. The final CMAQ Guidance should provide a clarification that there would not be a requirement to update emissions estimates for previously programmed projects using the MOVES model.
6. Operating Expenses: On Page 12, the Interim CMAQ Guidance states that operating assistance includes all costs of providing new transportation services including, but not limited to, labor, fuel, administrative costs, and maintenance. Those costs are subject to a 5-year limit. Page 25 describes that operating assistance to manage new or expanded TDM measures may be funded per page 12. However, page 25 goes on to state that marketing and outreach efforts to expand the use of TDM measures may be funded indefinitely, but only if broken out as distinct line-items. Over the years, there has been a wide variance as to what FHWA considers outreach/marketing vs what it considers as labor, and subject to a limit. A clarification should be made that marketing and outreach can include labor directly tied to TDM marketing and outreach projects.
7. Vanpool Vehicles: Existing guidance on CMAQ related to carpool/vanpool (Chapter 7(D)(10)) – Page 26 states the following: “Vanpool vehicle capital costs include purchasing or leasing vans for use in vanpools.” In this region, third-party operators are used to operate the Pool Rewards vanpool program and the capital is not leased, it is contracted. Guidance should reflect contracting in its references. The final CMAQ Guidance should also reference or duplicate FTA Circular 9030.1d (Urban Circular) Chapter 3 Section 6(o) regarding how to leverage private capital through the Capital Cost of Contracting policy.
8. Telecommuting and Flexible Work Schedules – The TPB has been supportive of both telecommuting and flexible work schedules for nearly two decades. Currently, over a quarter of the workforce in the TPB region teleworks at least 1.4 days per week and 7% of the area’s workers use flexible work schedules. The current Interim CMAQ Guidance excludes flexible work schedules on Page 25 in the list of TDM measures as well as telecommuting on Page 34 with regards to annual reporting. This oversight should be corrected to include both programs in each of those sections as they work hand-in-hand to strengthen employer-based TDM programs and lead to positive impacts for both congestion and air quality.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Should you have further questions or need additional information, feel free to contact Nicholas Ramfos of my staff at nramfos@mwkog.org or on (202)962-3313.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerald Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and "M".

Gerald Miller
Acting Co-Director
Department of Transportation Planning
National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board