

ITEM 8 – Action
September 20, 2017

**Approval of Joint TPB/MWAQC/CEEPC Comment Letter for
Transmission to US EPA and US DOT.**

Staff Recommendation: Approve attached joint TPB/MWAQC/CEEPC comment letter on EPA’s proposed reconsideration of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Standards for Light Duty Vehicles

Issues:

Background:

The EPA is seeking comment on a proposed reconsideration of GHG standards for model year 2022-2025 light duty vehicles. In January 2017, EPA completed a required mid-term evaluation of the rule, and published a Final Determination keeping the standards established in 2012 in place. In March 2017, EPA announced its intention to reconsider the Final Determination, and on August 21, 2017, published a request for comment on the reconsideration. The board will be briefed on the proposed reconsideration, and asked to approve a joint TPB/MWAQC/CEEPC comment letter urging the EPA to stand by its January 12, 2017 Final Determination and maintain the existing GHG standards promulgated in 2012.



MEMORANDUM

TO: The Transportation Planning Board
FROM: Jane Posey, TPB Transportation Engineer
SUBJECT: TPB Comment on EPA Reconsideration of GHG Standards for Light-Duty Vehicles
DATE: September 20, 2017

The TPB is being asked to sign a joint letter with the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) and the Climate, Energy and Environmental Policy Committee (CEEPC) offering comment on the Environmental Protection Agency's reconsideration of greenhouse gas (GHG) standards for Light-Duty Vehicles.

In 2012 the EPA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) jointly issued regulations for GHG emissions and Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for model years 2017-2025 light-duty vehicles. The regulation reduces carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and impacts criteria pollutants nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOC) (precursors of ground level Ozone). The regulation required EPA to conduct a mid-term evaluation of the GHG standards established for the model years 2022-2025.

On January 12, 2017, EPA completed the mid-term evaluation and published a Final Determination keeping the standards in place. In March 2017, EPA announced its intention to reconsider the Final Determination of the mid-term evaluation of the GHG standards, and on August 21, 2017 EPA, NHTSA, and the US Department of Transportation (US DOT) published a request for comment on the proposed reconsideration of the standards mentioned above for model years 2022-2025. EPA also requested comment on whether the standards for model year 2021 light-duty vehicles remain appropriate.

The GHG standards proposed to be reconsidered are included in the current Motor Vehicle Emission Simulator (MOVES) model mandated for use in all conformity analyses, as well as in the development of State Implementation Plans (SIPs), such as the 2008 ozone standard redesignation request and maintenance plan currently underway in our region. These standards also contribute significantly to the forecast reduction in the region's vehicular GHG emissions, assisting the region in its voluntary efforts to attain its GHG reduction goals.

The EPA is accepting comments through October 5, 2017. Given the importance of federal controls on reducing regional (and national) emissions, staff recommends that the TPB submit comments in support of retaining the standards. MWAQC and CEEPC also plan to comment. TPB staff worked with MWAQC staff to develop a joint TPB/MWAQC/CEEPC comment letter. A joint letter may have more influence than separate letters. The TPB Technical Committee and the MWAQC Technical Advisory Committee have reviewed the attached comment letter, and are in support of it. The TPB is being asked to approve this letter at its September meeting in order to meet the comment period deadline.

September XX, 2017

Administrator G. Scott Pruitt
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2015-0827
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Secretary Elaine Chao
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Subject: Comment on Reconsideration of the Final Determination of the Mid-Term Evaluation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Standards for Model Year 2022-2025 Light-Duty Vehicles; Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2015-0827

Dear Administrator Pruitt and Secretary Chao:

Thank you for providing an opportunity to comment on the Reconsideration of the Final Determination of the Mid-term Evaluation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions Standards for Model Years 2022-2025 Light-Duty Vehicles. On behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC), the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (COG) Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC), we oppose any rollback of the current standards and request that you maintain the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions standards for Model Year (MY) 2022-2025 vehicles, as prescribed in the October 15, 2012, Final Rule.

MWAQC is certified by the governors of Maryland and Virginia and the mayor of the District of Columbia to develop plans demonstrating attainment of federal ozone and other criteria pollutant standards for the Washington, DC-MD-VA non-attainment area. The TPB is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for metropolitan Washington. It is the region's forum for cooperative transportation decisionmaking, including issues related to air quality. COG's CEEPC serves as a principal policy adviser on climate change, including development of a regional climate change strategy to meet the regional greenhouse gas reduction goals adopted by MWAQC.

The National Capital region has implemented several emissions control measures in all emissions sectors, including transportation, over the years to improve its air quality and comply with National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for a variety of criteria pollutants. The region also relies heavily on federal emissions control programs for a significant amount of its emissions reductions. One such federal program is the 2012 joint rulemaking by the EPA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) which set federal greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and CAFE standards for light duty vehicles in model year (MY) 2017 and beyond. This partnership between the federal government, the California Air Resource Board (CARB), and the automobile industry developed a comprehensive program to improve the fuel efficiency of the light duty fleet and to reduce criteria pollutants and GHG emissions. Any relaxation of these standards will make it increasingly difficult for non-attainment and maintenance areas across the country to realize the reductions in NOx emissions needed to comply with existing NAAQS for criteria pollutants. Any relaxation of this rule will also make it more challenging for communities across the United States to meet their voluntary commitments to reduce GHG emissions.

September 1, 2017

While significant progress has been made in the Washington region to reduce emissions of criteria pollutants and GHG emissions, addressing sources of low-level NO_x, including from on-road vehicles, is critical to continuing to deliver cleaner air for the residents of the region. The 2012 GHG and CAFE standards rule provides for reduction in NO_x emissions and supports the region in maintaining its compliance with the 2008 Ozone NAAQS. Additionally, these reductions will assist in meeting the 2015 Ozone NAAQS the region is working towards.

Additionally, we are concerned that GHG emissions contributing to global climate change can contribute to conditions that exacerbate air quality degradation related to emissions of criteria pollutants, making NAAQS compliance more challenging. The role of the federal government's leadership in delivering effective regulatory limits on emissions from motor vehicles is a critical component of our ability to meet our adopted and mandated environmental objectives. As such, MWAQC, TPB, and CEEPC believe the existing emission standards are needed, appropriate, and should be maintained.

While we recognize EPA's authority to reconsider the Mid-term Evaluation (MTE) Final Determination, MWAQC, TPB, and CEEPC have reviewed the Final Determination and agree that the GHG emissions standards for passenger vehicles and light-duty vehicles (LDVs), Model Year (MY) 2022 through 2025, are acceptable and appropriate. Additionally, we agree that the MY 2021 GHG emission standards for LDVs are also appropriate.

Further, we concur with the conclusions of the 2016 Technical Assessment Report (TAR) that there are a wide range of technologies that manufacturers can employ to meet the MY 2022-2025 standards with similar or lower costs than those projected in the 2012 Final Rule. We are encouraged to note that progress made to improve fuel economy and reduce emissions in recent years has been greater than expected, and that there are clear indications that consumers are accepting of and benefiting from the advancements in automobile technologies.

For these reasons, we urge the EPA to stand by the January 12, 2017 Final Determination and maintain the existing GHG emission standards promulgated in 2012.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on the EPA's and NHTSA's consideration of GHG standards for LDVs.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Hans Riemer
Chair, Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC)

The Honorable Bridget Donnell Newton
Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB)

The Honorable Penelope A. Gross
Chair, Climate Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC)