

# ISSUES RELATED TO PROPOSED CHANGES TO WASHINGTON REGION AIR QUALITY FORECAST

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# Background

- Forecasts are issued for the Washington region for ozone throughout the ozone season and for fine particles (PM2.5) throughout the year.
- These forecasts are sent to the general public and media through EPA’s Enviroflash emails and telephone hotline.
- Weekday - Separate forecasts are provided by MDE, DOEE, and COG for ozone and by MDE alone for PM2.5 for the Washington region, which are then averaged to develop consensus forecasts.
- Weekend - Forecasts are provided by MDE alone.

	Ozone				PM2.5			
	Washington	Baltimore	Western Maryland	Eastern Shore	Washington	Baltimore	Western Maryland	Eastern Shore
COG	x							
MDE	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
VDEQ			x				x	



# Issues – Proposed Changes

- MDE recently proposed significant changes to forecasting.
- Those changes were discussed by all forecasters and a few issues identified. **In today's discussion, we are informing you of those issues and seeking your feedback.**
- **Core Philosophical Issues**
  - Forecast accuracy vs Message to reduce emission to people living in upwind areas who are enjoying clean air but may be contributing to dirty air in downwind areas.
  - Forecast accuracy vs simplicity of forecast messaging
    - Current procedure – People receive just 1 forecast and a real-time alert each day.
    - Proposed procedure – People will receive separate forecasts and alerts (potential for forecast updates) for each sub-region. People travelling across multiple sub-regions within the same day will have to consider multiple forecasts and alerts.



# Issues - Proposed Changes (Contd...)

- **Public and media Messaging & Outreach Issues**

- Significant change to how forecasts are issued.
- Extensive outreach to the public and media – Need to explain proposed changes such as, how they will receive forecast emails and alerts and how to interpret multiple forecasts in the region (e.g., Code Orange forecasts/Action Days for a part of the MSA but only Code Yellow for the rest) as they move from one region to another on the same day. Feedback from public is very important.

- **Technical & Logistics Issues**

- Northern Virginia and District forecasts - Separate forecasts or a consensus forecast with COG, VDEQ, and DOEE?
- How will weekend forecasts, forecast postings, and notifications be handled?
- How will ozone/PM2.5 exceedance notifications be handled as they occur? Virginia does not participate in EPA's Enviroflash messaging system.



# Issues - Proposed Changes (Contd...)

- How will PM2.5 forecasts be done? Currently DOEE and COG do not forecast PM2.5, just ozone. Northern Virginia currently doesn't forecast anything. COG, DC, and Virginia will need to resolve this.
- The core counties in the nonattainment area, the District, Prince George's & Montgomery Counties, and the Northern Virginia cities and counties should receive the same forecast (keep sub-regions 7, 11, and 12 together). Splitting off southern Maryland (sub-region 9) and Frederick County (sub-region 3) seems reasonable. There will still be 3 different forecasts within the region though.
- COG and Clean Air Partners websites changes – This would take resource and time to implement after having detailed discussion within CAP.
- Timing of proposed changes - Close to the 2022 ozone season. Need to consider delaying until 2023 to allow sufficient time to get feedback from various stakeholders, address above issues, and implement any changes.

