**Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee**

Suite 300, 777 North Capitol Street, N.E. Washington , D.C. 20002-4239 202-962-3358 Fax: 202-962-3203

June 28, 2012

Jim Lee

National Weather Service,

Sterling, VA

Dear Mr. Lee:

I am writing on behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) to urge you to continue support for the issuance of the code orange based air quality alerts.

MWAQC has come to know that that the National Weather Service, Sterling (Virginia) stopped issuing air quality alerts based on code orange to the general public. Air quality is an issue of great concern for the people in the Washington region. Many who suffer from respiratory problems or who care for children or the elderly rely on these alerts to plan accordingly. Schools take advantage of these alerts to limit the outdoor activities for their students. A survey performed by Clean Air Partners found that most of the people surveyed took actions on code orange days compared to other days. Therefore, it is clear that the code orange based air quality alerts have proven to be extremely useful for the people in this region.

MWAQC is certified by the governors of Maryland and Virginia and the mayor of the District of Columbia to develop regional ground-level ozone and PM2.5 air quality plans and strategies for the Washington, DC-MD-VA non-attainment area. Air pollution is an important public health issue. It causes respiratory problems and affects young children, the elderly, and those with chronic respiratory diseases in particular. For this reason, it is therefore very important that these alerts be reinstated so that they keep protecting the public health. These code orange based air quality alerts provided by NWS, Sterling have proven valuable to metropolitan Washington area residents and, in particular, young children, the elderly, and those with chronic respiratory diseases.

MWAQC appreciates the contribution provided by NWS through its air quality alert program towards the issue of public health. We urge you to preserve the issuance of the code orange based air alert program to protect the health of the people in this region.

Sincerely,

Phil Mendelson, Chair

Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee