

Policy Summary - MWAQC Technical Advisory Committee

Key policy-relevant issues discussed at the MWAQC-TAC meeting on February 4th is summarized below.

Base Year 2011 Emissions Inventory

The Washington region is currently designated as a “Marginal” ozone nonattainment area. As part of the requirements for the marginal nonattainment area, the region needs to submit a comprehensive emissions inventory for the base year 2011 to EPA by July 20, 2014.

The committee discussed the base year 2011 emissions inventory developed for different emissions sources and approved it for MWAQC’s review and approval before it goes out for public comments.

EPA Proposal: Greenhouse Gas Rule for Power Plants

MWAQC-TAC discussed EPA’s proposed greenhouse gas rule for new power plants and its plan to propose a rule for the existing power plants by the next year. Under the proposal, any new plant that runs on coal would be permitted to emit only about half as much carbon dioxide as an average coal plant puts into the air today. While the proposed rule for new power plants will be directly enforced by EPA, the proposed rule for existing power plants will be enforced by states. Therefore, states will have choices in meeting the standards. States will be encouraged to use renewable energy sources (wind, etc.) and could reduce electricity demand by employing energy efficiency measures. Since the new coal based power plants will have to incur additional costs to limit carbon dioxide output or develop new methods of cleansing emissions, the industry is likely to challenge it in court. While a few industries such as, natural gas sector are expected to support the rule, coal fired power plants will likely oppose it.

2013 Constrained Long-Range Transport Plan (CLRP) Performance Analysis

TPB staff briefed MWAQC-TAC on the performance analysis of the 2013 Constrained Long-Range Transport Plan (CLRP).

Important finding of the above analysis are:

- The share of daily and commute travel by single drivers is expected to decrease in favor of other modes, especially in the outer suburbs.
- The share of commute travel by carpool is forecast to grow.
- The share of both daily and commute travel by transit is not expected to increase through 2040.
- The share of total daily travel by walking and biking is forecast to increase.
- Overall AM peak highway congestion is expected to increase substantially between now and 2040.

MDE/DDOE Special Project

DDOE staff presented details of the Special Project (funded by MDE and staff support from DDOE and COG). NO_x emission goals were developed for the onroad mobile source for 2015 and 2020 to address current and future ozone standards respectively. These goals were developed based on a number of modeling studies performed by the Ozone Transport Commission (OTC) and EPA. CO₂ emission goals were developed for the onroad mobile source for 2020, 2030, 2040, and 2050 to address various greenhouse gas goals outlined in climate change reports of COG, District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, and other local governments in the region.

The committee discussed these goals in detail. VDEQ felt that it was difficult to find necessary mobile source control measures to achieve the outlined emissions reductions in the relatively short time periods discussed in the project. VDEQ also felt that the issue of CO₂ emission reduction should be discussed as part of CEEPC.