

Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee

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October 27, 2004

Honorable Christopher Zimmerman, Chair
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Chair Zimmerman:

The Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee (MWAQC) has reviewed the draft *Air Quality Conformity Determination Of The 2004 Constrained Long Range Plan And The FY2005-2010 Transportation Improvement Program For The Washington Metropolitan Region*. We are pleased the proposed transportation plan meets the approved mobile emissions budgets set in 2003.

We note that the mobile emissions budgets set in 2003 used the earlier Travel Demand Model Version 2.1C. It appears that improvements and updates to the travel demand model have produced significantly reduced emissions estimates compared to previous years and compared to the region's mobile emissions budgets. As a result of the model improvements and updates, the 2005-2010 transportation emissions estimates for 2005 provide a sizable margin of safety for both the NO_x and VOC budgets. We urge TPB and the States to maintain the margins of safety for the benefit of air quality and the health of all residents in the region.

We also encourage the States and local governments to maintain their commitments to TERMS and other emission reduction measures, regardless of whether implementation of these measures is necessary for conformity. Meeting the 8-hour ozone standard will be a much more difficult effort, requiring all measures including existing TERMS, and possibly new ones in the near future.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft conformity analysis. We look forward to continued cooperation in conducting future air quality conformity assessments. We appreciate TPB's and the States' efforts to improve mobile emissions in the region.

Sincerely,

Thomas Dernoga
Chair
Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee