

Air Quality and Transportation Conformity Highlights

Prepared by the Office of Natural Environment
Federal Highway Administration



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

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Announcements and Recent Events

MAP-21 CMAQ Assessment Study Complete

Section 1113 (c) of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) mandated the *Air Quality and Congestion Mitigation Measure Outcomes Assessment Study*, directing the examination of the outcomes of actions funded under the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement program since the enactment of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Efficiency Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Battelle and the Texas Transportation Institute conducted the research which focused on the following three goals: (1) assess and document the emission reduction, air quality, and human health impacts of federally-supported surface transportation actions intended to reduce emissions or lessen traffic congestion and expand on the base of empirical evidence on those impacts; (2) increase the knowledge of other information to more accurately understand the validity of current estimation and modeling routines and ways to improve those routines; and (3) increase the knowledge of factors determining the human health changes associated with these types of transportation actions. A Summary Report of Findings and a detailed Technical Report are available on the FHWA website

at http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq/research/outcomes_assessment/index.cfm.

Please contact Karen Perritt at (202) 366-9066 or Karen.Perritt@dot.gov with questions.

EPA Proposes New Primary and Secondary Ozone Standards

Based on its review of the air quality criteria for ozone (O₃) and related photochemical oxidants and national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for O₃, EPA proposes to make revisions to the primary and secondary NAAQS for ozone to provide requisite protection of public health and welfare, respectively. EPA is proposing to revise the primary standard to a level within the range of 0.065 to 0.070 parts per million (ppm). The secondary standard would be revised to within the range of 0.065 to 0.070 ppm in terms of 3-year average W126 index values, at or below a range of 13–17 ppm-hours. Information on the proposed new rule can be found at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-17/pdf/2014-28674.pdf>. Written comments on this proposed rule must be received by March 17, 2015. The agency will issue a final rule by October 1, 2015. For further information, contact Susan Lyon Stone, Health and

Environmental Impacts Division, Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at (919) 541-1146 or stone.susan@epa.gov.

EPA Conducts Three Public Hearings on New Ozone Standards

EPA hosted three hearings to gather input on its proposed new ozone standards. The hearings took place on January 29 in Washington, D.C., and Arlington, TX, and on February 2 in Sacramento, CA. Each hearing was scheduled to run from 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. More information on the public hearings can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/glo/hearings.html>.

MOVES2014 Technical Guidance Now Available

On January 9, 2015, the EPA Office of Transportation and Air Quality posted “MOVES2014 Technical Guidance: Using MOVES to Prepare Emission Inventories in State Implementation Plans and Transportation Conformity” on the EPA website. This version of the MOVES Technical Guidance has been updated for MOVES2014 and provides guidance when using MOVES2014 for SIP and transportation conformity purposes. The document is at www.epa.gov/otaq/models/moves/documents/420b15007.pdf. If you have questions about this guidance document or technical questions about MOVES2014, please contact the MOVES team at mobile@epa.gov.

Court Vacates EPA’s Partial Revocation of the 1997 Ozone NAAQS for Transportation Conformity

On December 23, 2014, the Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit issued a ruling on the litigation concerning EPA’s regulations implementing the 2008 ozone standards. Part of those regulations revoked the 1997 ozone standard for transportation conformity purposes, thereby providing that transportation conformity no longer needed to be determined for the 1997 ozone standard after July 20, 2013. In its decision, the court specifically vacated that portion of the regulation which had revoked transportation conformity requirements for the 1997 ozone standard. The Court also ruled that EPA’s decision to extend a compliance deadline for its ozone air standard exceeded its authority under the Clean Air Act. The court’s decision can be found at <http://www.cadc.uscourts.gov/internet/opinions.nsf/E97A64FFBFE4DC1D85257DB70054D5EE/%24file/12-1321-1528834.pdf>.

White House Issues New Draft NEPA Guidance

The White House Council on Environmental Quality released a new draft of guidance on December 18, 2014, spelling out how federal environmental reviews should take climate change into account. The proposed new guidance addresses how federal agencies should consider greenhouse gas emissions and the impacts of climate change when conducting reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The draft guidance will be available for public comment for 60 days and is available at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/nepa_revised_draft_ghg_guidance.pdf.

EPA Designates 14 Areas Out Of Compliance with PM_{2.5} Limit

EPA designated 14 areas in six states as out of compliance with the 2012 standard for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}), a classification that triggers pollution control plans under the Clean Air Act. In a final rule announced on December 18, 2014, the agency said air monitoring data from 2011 to 2013 indicate that

those areas are either showing a monitored violation or contributing to a violation of the standard in a nearby area. The nonattainment areas are in California, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio and Pennsylvania. EPA also deferred initial designations in several areas due to insufficient but soon-to-be available data and will make initial designations in those areas at a later time through a separate rulemaking. The final designations were published in the *Federal Register* (<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-01-15/pdf/2015-00021.pdf>) on January 15, 2015, effective on April 15, 2015. In areas that are designated nonattainment under the 2012 PM_{2.5} standard, transportation conformity requirements will apply for that standard one year after the designation effective date for metropolitan transportation plans, TIPs, and projects. For more information, please visit: <http://www.epa.gov/pmdesignations/2012standards/regs.htm>.

Research

Annual Transportation Research Board Meeting

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) 94th Annual Meeting was held in Washington, D.C., from January 11-15, 2015, at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center. The TRB Annual Meeting program covers all transportation modes, with more than 5,000 presentations in nearly 750 sessions and workshops addressing topics of interest to all attendees—policy makers, administrators, practitioners, researchers, and representatives of government, industry, and academic institutions. More information is available at <http://www.trb.org/AnnualMeeting2015/AnnualMeeting2015.aspx>.

Reminders

New Tools Available for Generating MOVES Inputs

EPA has created a series of tools to help generate inputs for MOVES analyses. These tools include MOVES2014 default age distributions, Age Distribution Projection Tool for MOVES2014, and an AADVMT converter for MOVES2014. The tools may be downloaded from the MOVES Tools website: <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/models/moves/tools.htm>. Users should consult the latest version of the MOVES technical guidance for additional information on when to use these tools. Any specific questions should be sent to mobile@epa.gov.

End of Maintenance Period and Conformity

In October 2014, EPA released guidance confirming that transportation conformity no longer applies 20 years after the effective date of the area being re-designated maintenance for a national ambient air quality standard and EPA approval of the first 10-year maintenance plan (CAA § 175(a)), and the approved maintenance plan did not extend the maintenance period beyond 20 years from designation. In other words, conformity requirements no longer apply to metropolitan transportation plans, TIPS, and FHWA/FTA projects after that date for that particular NAAQS. However, conformity requirements will continue to apply for other transportation-related pollutants for which the area is nonattainment or maintenance. The guidance is available on EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/stateresources/documents/420b14093.pdf>. For questions related to the applicability of conformity at the end of the 20-year maintenance period, please contact Karen Perritt at Karen.Perritt@dot.gov or 202-366-9066, or Cecilia Ho at Cecilia.Ho@dot.gov or 202-366-9862.

MOVES2014 October Release

In response to user feedback from the July 2014 release of MOVES2014, EPA posted an updated version of the MOVES2014 Installation Suite. The October release fixes an error in the new non-road portion of MOVES 2014, addresses a number of minor issues with the on-road portion, improves the installation process, includes small performance improvements, and fixes an error in the spreadsheet to estimate evaporative emissions from vehicles meeting California Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) standards. All MOVES2014 users should install the October release as soon as possible. The updated code and database are available on the MOVES website: www.epa.gov/otaq/models/moves/. The new ZEV spreadsheet is available at www.epa.gov/otaq/models/moves/tools.htm.

Revised Interim Guidance on CMAQ Program Operating Assistance under MAP-21

The 2014 Appropriations Act included changes to the Operation Assistance Section of the CMAQ program (23 USC 149(m)). FHWA posted new [CMAQ Interim Guidance on Operating Assistance](#) to implement the MAP-21 changes. Projects for which CMAQ funding was made available, obligated, or expended in FY 2012 could be eligible for operating assistance without a time limitation based on this change. Contact Cecilia Ho at 202-366-9862 or Cecilia.Ho@dot.gov with any questions.

Areas with Insignificant Findings or Limited Maintenance Plans

While areas with insignificant findings or limited maintenance plans are not required to satisfy the regional emissions analysis requirements in 40 CFR 93.118 and/or 93.119, a conformity determination for the plan, TIP, and project that meets the other requirements (such as interagency consultation, timely implementation of TCMs, etc.) of the transportation conformity rule is still required. Also, a hot-spot analysis is still required in CO areas and for projects of air quality concern in PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} areas. Contact Karen Perritt at 202-366-9066 or karen.perritt@dot.gov with any questions.

Training Opportunities

National Transit Institute Offers Introduction to Conformity

The National Transit Institute (NTI) is offering an Introduction to Transportation Conformity course that will present basic information about conformity requirements and the relationship of the transportation and air quality planning processes in order to prepare agency staff (federal, state, and local) to participate in interagency consultation and work effectively in resolving conformity issues. The course will be held in Arlington, Virginia, on March 24-26, 2015. Seating is limited to 35 participants. Register online at: <http://ntionline.com/courses/courseinfo.php?id=84>.

MySQL Training for MOVES Model Users

Two training opportunities are available for MOVES model users. A three-hour webinar provides an introduction to MySQL Query Browser and MOVES interface. A six-hour training over two days will enable users to do MySQL programming and to write his/her own MySQL scripts and to manipulate MySQL databases including MOVES input and outputs. For more information or to schedule training, contact John Byun (Joon.Byun@dot.gov) or Paul Heishman (Paul.Heishman@dot.gov).

Web-based Training Courses Available

A variety of web-based training opportunities are accessible via the FHWA Conformity Website, at http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/conformity/training/. Training includes Air Quality Planning, Transportation Conformity, and others. Please contact Karen Perritt at (202) 366-9066 or Karen.Perritt@dot.gov with any questions or comments.

FHWA Resource Center Training Activities

FHWA's Resource Center Air Quality Technical Services Team is available to offer MOVES training, and information is available at the [Resource Center website](#).

Contacts

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[FHWA Resource Center Air Quality Team](#)

Past issues of the *Air Quality and Transportation Conformity Highlights* are available on FHWA's website: http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/conformity/highlights/. Please e-mail Victoria.Martinez@dot.gov with any suggestions for future issues.

If you would like to be notified by email when a new issue of the *Air Quality and Transportation Conformity Highlights* becomes available, please sign up [here](#).