

# Air Quality and Transportation Conformity Highlights

## June 2014

*Prepared by the Office of Natural Environment  
Federal Highway Administration*

### Announcements and Recent Events

**USDOT Proposes New Surface Transportation Bill.** As proposed the [GROW AMERICA Act](#) will invest \$199.2 billion over four years to provide the certainty necessary for states and local communities to make transportation investments necessary to improve our highway infrastructure and support our economic growth. Additionally the GROW AMERICA Act will strengthen transportation investment decision-making, accelerate project delivery, and expands and makes innovative finance options more accessible. Visit DOT's [Grow America Act website](#) for more information, including a copy of the full text or fact sheets of the GROW AMERICA Act.

**FHWA Posted New Report.** The [FHWA and EPA National Near-Road Study](#), Detroit, MI provides a summary of a monitoring study conducted in Detroit in 2010 - 2011. The objective of this study was to determine Mobile Source Air Toxic (MSAT) concentrations and variations in concentrations as a function of distance from the highway and to establish relationships between MSAT concentrations as related to highway traffic, meteorological conditions; and other pollutants primarily emitted from motor vehicles. Contact Victoria Martinez at 787-771-2524 or [victoria.martinez@dot.gov](mailto:victoria.martinez@dot.gov).

**FHWA Assessment of Conformity.** The FHWA recently completed an assessment of conformity procedures in specific nonattainment and maintenance areas known as "complex areas." The purpose of this study was to update the FHWA Air Quality, [Transportation Conformity Webpage](#), with information describing how MPOs accommodate the transportation conformity requirements in different types of complex nonattainment and maintenance areas. Specifically, the research was designed to document advances in the conformity process and regional emissions analyses being conducted in these complex areas, and to share this information with MPOs, DOTs and other stakeholders. Contact Mark Glaze 202-366-4053 or [mark.glaze@dot.gov](mailto:mark.glaze@dot.gov).

**FHWA Established Health in Transportation Webpage.** This [webpage](#) is designed to be a comprehensive resource on the linkages between transportation and health. Linking health and transportation brings together transportation professionals and health practitioners in a collaborative process to improve transportation decisions. The latest report to be posted, "[Statewide Transportation Planning for Health Communities](#)" presents insights and a flexible model for State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) that choose to integrate public health considerations into their transportation planning and decision-making. Contact Fred Bowers at 202-366-2374 or [frederick.bowers@dot.gov](mailto:frederick.bowers@dot.gov).

**Northern Transportation & Air Quality Summit (NTAQS).** August 19 – 20, 2014, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Summit will bring together stakeholder from the transportation and air quality communities to discuss the current and upcoming regulatory environment, new technologies, and

current practices. The content is geared toward practitioners in the northern and Mid-Atlantic States involved with public agencies at all levels. Registration and Meeting information is available on the [Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission \(SPC\)](#) Website. Contact Kevin Black at 410-962 or [kevin.black@dot.gov](mailto:kevin.black@dot.gov).

**The AASHTO Center for Environmental Excellence (CEE) Requests Transportation and Environmental Research Ideas.** The AASHTO CEE requests transportation and environmental ideas for 2014, submitted through the Transportation and Environmental Research Ideas ([TERI](#)) database by June 11, 2014. The TERI database is a “one stop” location for keeping track of transportation practitioners’ research ideas across the environmental spectrum. Contact Jennifer Brickett, Program Manager for the Environment at AASHTO, at (202) 624-8815 for more information.

**2014 Air & Waste Management Association (A&WMA) 107th Annual Conference & Exhibition (ACE).** The A&WMA invites you to the upcoming conference [Navigating Environmental Crossroads](#) to take place June 24 – 27, 2014 at the Long Beach Convention Center in Long Beach, California. A special mini-symposium on the “Impacts of Transportation Hubs & Ports” is planned, as well as, “Determining Which Components of Particulate Matter May be Most Harmful.” Contact Michael Claggett at (505) 820-2047, or [michael.claggett@dot.gov](mailto:michael.claggett@dot.gov) for more information.

**The AASHTO Center for Environmental Excellence Air Quality Peer Exchange.** On May 6-7, 2014, representatives from approximately twenty-five State DOTs and three MPOs, as well as FHWA staff came to Washington D.C. to exchange ideas, best practices, and lessons learned related to air quality issues facing State Departments of Transportation (State DOTs). Topics included: PM hot spot modeling, the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program, Mobile Air Source Toxics, GHG emissions analysis, and emission reduction strategies. The participants identified challenges that they are currently facing such as staff turnover and the need to improve technical expertise (e.g. modeling, etc.) as well as best practices including effective project selection procedures for CMAQ Program funds, strategies for effective interagency coordination, and effective project level analysis. Contact Mark Ferroni at 202-366-3233 or [mark.ferroni@dot.gov](mailto:mark.ferroni@dot.gov) for more information.

## Reminders

**Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program Operating Assistance.** The 2014 Appropriations Act included changes to the Operation Assistance Section of the CMAQ program (23 USC 149(m)). The changes added new language that specifically prohibits the imposition of a time limitation for operating assistance eligibility on a system “for which CMAQ funding was made available, obligated or expended in fiscal year 2012.” We understand this change is not consistent with the language in the [CMAQ Interim Guidance](#). FHWA will provide further guidance shortly to implement this change. 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](mailto:cecilia.ho@dot.gov) if you have any questions.

**USEPA Considers Tightening Ozone Standard.** A draft [policy assessment](#) recommends EPA lower the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone, currently set at 75 parts per billion (ppb) to a standard between 70 ppb and 60 ppb. The document says that the current standard

may not be adequate to protect the public from the harmful effects of smog. The ozone NAAQS was last revised to 75 ppb in 2008, and is scheduled to be reviewed every five years.

**FHWA's Carbon Monoxide (CO) categorical Hot-spot Finding.** On February 12, FHWA released a streamlined approach for project-level conformity on some projects in carbon monoxide nonattainment and maintenance areas (except in California). All the documentation associated with the CO categorical hot-spot finding, including the technical document and modeling files can be found on FHWA's [CO categorical finding website](#). To aid the implementation, FHWA developed a [web-based tool](#) for project sponsors to determine if the project's parameters fall within the acceptable range of modeled parameters to rely on the CO categorical hot-spot finding. Contact Emily Biondi at 202-366-9482 or [emily.biondi@dot.gov](mailto:emily.biondi@dot.gov).

**FY 2013 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program.** Annual reports were due March 17, 2014. These reports should reflect all of the projects for which CMAQ funds were obligated in Federal Fiscal Year 2013. Reporting should include 1) all projects administered by FHWA for which there were CMAQ obligations in FY 2013, and 2) all transfers to FTA or other Federal agencies during the fiscal year. Contact Mark Glaze at 202-366-4053 or [mark.glaze@dot.gov](mailto:mark.glaze@dot.gov).

**New CMAQ Interim Guidance for MAP-21 Issued.** The Notice of the CMAQ Program Interim Guidance was published in the *Federal Register* on November 12, 2013, effective immediately. The Program Interim Guidance updates and replaces the 2008 CMAQ Program Guidance to reflect amendments made by MAP-21. The CMAQ Interim Guidance is available on [FHWA's website](#).

**Areas with Insignificant Findings or Limited Maintenance Plans.** While these areas 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 PM2.5 areas. Contact the Emily Biondi at 202-366-9482 or [emily.biondi@dot.gov](mailto:emily.biondi@dot.gov) with any questions.

**MAP-21 Highlights on Agency Websites.** Presentations, questions & answers, and other vital information surrounding the legislation remain on FHWA's web pages. The CMAQ Program Interim Guidance, webinar presentation slides and the Qs&As can be found on the [MAP-21 website](#). Basic fiscal information is housed on the MAP-21 site as well, although the supplementary tables with more detailed breakdowns on the individual Federal-aid programs are found on the agency's [Laws and Regulations](#) page.

## Training Opportunities

**Air Quality Planning Web Course Available.** The Air Quality Planning web-based training series is designed for transportation practitioners. It includes four modules: Clean Air Act Overview (FHWA-NHI-142068), State Implementation Plan (SIP) and Transportation Control Measure (TCM) Requirements and Policies (FHWA-NHI-142069), SIP Development Process (FHWA-NHI-142070) and Transportation Conformity (FHWA-NHI-142071). All courses are free. For more information, visit [www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov](http://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov), search Air Quality Planning or look for the specific course number. Please contact Karen Perritt at (202) 366-9066, or [karen.perritt@dot.gov](mailto:karen.perritt@dot.gov) with any questions or comments.

**Conformity 101 Training Available On-Line.** FHWA made a short course entitled "What is Conformity?" available on-line. This course is intended for transportation and air quality practitioners who are new to transportation conformity, those looking for a refresher, or others who only need a brief overview of the rule. The session is approximately 27 minutes long. Handouts are available for download at the same site. This course can be accessed on [FHWA's Website](#).

**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](mailto:joon.byun@dot.gov)) or Paul Heishman ([paul.heishman@dot.gov](mailto:paul.heishman@dot.gov)).

**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](#).

**MOVES Training.** EPA and DOT jointly developed 2 MOVES training courses: (1) a three-day training course on conducting quantitative PM hot-spot analysis using MOVES, and CAL3QHCR and AERMOD air quality dispersion models. Detailed information about this course and training materials and agenda can be found at: [PM Hotspot Quantitative Analyses Training](#). (2) a two-day training course for developing SIPs and conformity analyses. For additional information on the two-day training sessions, visit [EPA's MOVES training website](#). All training materials are also available on the [MOVES training site](#).

## Contacts

### **FHWA HQ Air Quality and Transportation Conformity Team:**

Cecilia Ho, [Cecilia.Ho@dot.gov](mailto:Cecilia.Ho@dot.gov) (202)366-9862, Team Leader  
Emily Biondi, [Emily.Biondi@dot.gov](mailto:Emily.Biondi@dot.gov) (202)366-9482  
Mark Glaze, [Mark.Glaze@dot.gov](mailto:Mark.Glaze@dot.gov) (202)366-4053  
Victoria Martinez, [Victoria.Martinez@dot.gov](mailto:Victoria.Martinez@dot.gov) (787)771-2524  
Karen Perritt, [Karen.Perritt@dot.gov](mailto:Karen.Perritt@dot.gov) (202)366-9066

### **[FHWA Resource Center Air Quality Team](#)**

Past issues are available on [FHWA's website](#). If you have any suggestions for future highlights, please email [victoria.martinez@dot.gov](mailto:victoria.martinez@dot.gov).