

SACRAMENTO METROPOLITAN
AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

For Agenda of: July 28, 2005

To: Members, Board of Directors
Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District

From: Larry Greene
Air Pollution Control Officer

Subject: ARB Land Use Guidance

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the board receive this report for its information and provide direction as appropriate on the District's approach to outreach and assistance with local jurisdictions' implementation of ARB's Air Quality and Land Use Handbook.

Background:

On April 28, 2005, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) approved its *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective*. This document is intended to notify local jurisdictions with land use authority about potential health hazards posed by known stationary and mobile sources of toxic air contaminants. Interim CARB Chair Barbara Riordian notes in a cover letter: "This document provides important public health information that we hope will be considered along with housing needs, economic development priorities, and other quality of life issues."

CARB has requested that local air quality districts assist in the task of notifying local jurisdictions about the guidance.

Actions to date:

The City of Sacramento requested a meeting with District staff on May 18 to discuss the guidelines in light of citizen concerns raised and/or anticipated to be raised over specific projects located near freeways. The handbook notes an elevated public health risk associated with toxic air contaminants from vehicular sources within 1,000 feet of a freeway, with a dramatic drop off in the concentration of ultra-fine particulates beyond 300 feet.

Staff held an initial meeting with the City's planning staff to review the guidance and hear specific concerns regarding implementation of recommendations in the document. These included general questions about language in the guidance, as well as questions about:

1. Modeling methods and assumptions (i.e., traffic volumes, wind speed and direction, future mobile source emission reductions, etc.);

2. Interpretation of modeling results (i.e., what is an acceptable threshold of exposure to TACs?),
3. Mitigation measures.

Although CARB has approved the handbook, it has not yet developed models and other tools to assist in implementation of its recommendations. City staff has requested that the District provide interim guidance for projects now undergoing the entitlement and review process.

Issues:

Staff has expressed to CARB that the Air Quality and Land Use Handbook is a useful tool in calling air quality issues to the attention of local land use planners. We have also noted the following needs in order to effectively assess projects already in various stages of review and approval, as well as those which will be proposed in the future:

- Agreement on which model is most appropriate for use in assessing impacts.
- Completion of ARB's work risk assessment models.
- Agreement on standardized input assumptions for the model.
- Threshold of acceptable risk to occupants of a project near sources of potential toxic air contaminants.
- Mitigation measures to reduce exposure/risk levels for occupants of such projects, and a protocol for modeling such measures to determine whether the risk level is reduced to appropriate levels, once those levels are set.

Further, City staff indicated concern that the guidance may pose a barrier to desired infill projects.

Staff met with CARB to review these questions and discuss the status of models available to assess public health impacts of locating sensitive receptors, such as residential projects at varying distances from a freeway.

Next steps:

Staff has developed a series of next steps (Attachment A) to assist local jurisdictions in responding to citizen inquiries and concerns and provide certainty for project proponents. Note that many of the immediate questions raised by the City and District staff may not be answered for many months, or even years.

Near term activities include notifying local jurisdictions that the CARB handbook has been approved (Sample Letter - Attachment B), and incorporating reference to the handbook in project review comments (Attachment C).

The City of Sacramento has indicated that it will arrange a meeting with CARB, SACOG and the SMAQMD to discuss the short and long term implications of the handbook guidance. Staff supports this request and will participate to the full extent desired by City planning staff.

As a practical matter, the District's project review comments note that for projects located adjacent to freeways, local jurisdictions should consider: siting non-residential uses in the parts of the project closest to the freeway; minimizing impact on residential development by including development guidelines that orient buildings away from the freeway; or providing setback or buffer zones.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Greene
Air Pollution Control Officer

Attachments