

June 20, 2005

Ms. Christine Crawford, Director  
City of Elk Grove  
Planning Department  
8400 Laguna Palms Way  
Elk Grove, CA 95758

Dear Ms. Crawford:

This letter is to advise you about the *“Air Quality and Land Use Handbook: A Community Health Perspective”* (Handbook) recently released by the California Air Resources Board (ARB). You can obtain a copy of the study directly from the ARB website <http://www.arb.ca.gov/ch/landuse.htm>. The Handbook, approved for release by the Air Resources Board in April 2005, was developed to provide technical information to local land use and transportation agencies for considering impacts of local sources of air pollution in the land use decision-making process.

The Handbook builds upon California’s General Plan Guidelines and contains recommendations on siting of new sensitive land uses such as homes, schools and daycare centers. It provides available information on the potential health impacts of siting new sensitive land uses near sources of air pollution and makes separation distance recommendations where possible. It also provides information on air quality issues relating to land use and promotes the consideration of localized air pollution impacts in the land use decision-making process.

This Handbook looks at air quality issues associated with emissions from industrial, commercial and mobile sources of air pollution. Mobile sources continue to be the largest overall contributors to the State’s air pollution problems, representing the greatest air pollution health risk to most Californians. Based on current health risk information on air toxics, the most serious pollutants on a statewide basis are diesel particulate matter, benzene, and 1,3-butadiene, all of which are emitted by motor vehicles.

The Handbook is intended as a framework for informed decision-making. ARB has not provided any significant guidance regarding implementation of the recommendations contained in its newly approved Air Quality and Land Use Handbook, and there is a need by local jurisdictions as well as project developers to have such guidance, particularly as it relates to proximity to freeways. The following will serve as the basis for comments provided on project reviews to local jurisdictions for the initial implementation mechanism:

For projects that are located a greater distance from a source than recommended by ARB's guidelines, our comments will be based on the following:

Housing and other structures and facilities accommodating sensitive receptors within new development projects located more than 500 feet from the outside travel lane of a freeway are considered not to be at elevated risk during this initial implementation phase.

For projects that are located a lesser distance from a source than recommended by ARB's guidelines, our comments will be based on the following points:

Housing and other structures and facilities accommodating sensitive receptors within new development projects located within 500 feet of the outside travel lane of a freeway are considered to be exposed to potential increased risk during this initial implementation phase. The District's comments on projects within this distance range will include a caution for sensitive receptors, and local jurisdictions will be advised to avoid siting sensitive receptor projects within this area immediately adjacent to freeways.

The Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District will continue to work with the California Air Resources Board to develop technical tools to assist in the task of assessing the health risk associated with land use and transportation projects and to recommend what modeling tools can best be utilized during the project review and approval process. This initial implementation recommendation will be in place only until such time as a specific Threshold of Significance for these types of air toxics can be developed.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Larry Greene  
Air Pollution Control Officer