

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – June 10, 2013

CONTACT: Rob Sachnin, Regional Planner
South Western Regional Planning Agency
(203) 316-5190

**Transportation Air Quality Determination with respect to
the 2008 Ozone Standard.**

Today the South Western Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is opening the public involvement process, for a two week period, to receive comments on the air quality conformity evaluation of our current 2011 Long-Range Transportation Plan and current 2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program with respect to the new 2008 eight-hour ozone standard. Support documents are available on our website (<http://www.swrpa.org/Default.aspx?Transport=35>) include the November 2011 Ozone Air Quality Determination, the regional transportation plan, and the transportation improvement program. Comments may be submitted through Wednesday, June 26, 2013.

Two public information sessions will be held. The first will be on June 12, 2013 at 10:00 a.m., as part of the Transportation Technical Advisory Group (TTAG) meeting. The second will be on June 19, 2013 from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. Both information sessions will be held at the South Western Regional Planning Agency Offices at the Stamford Government Center, 888 Washington Blvd. Third Floor Conference Room, in Stamford, CT.

Comments may be sent to Rob Sachnin at Sachnin@swrpa.org, or 203-316-5190 x15

Meeting facilities are handicapped-accessible. For special accommodations, persons wishing to attend the MPO meeting and require an interpreter may make arrangements by contacting SWRPA at (203) 316-5190 (voice only), prior to the date of the meeting.

Para organizar especial de alojamiento o los servicios de traducción en contacto con SWRPA antes de la reunion al (203) 316-5190 (sólo voz)

Background

On March 12, 2008, (73 FR 16436) the EPA revised the primary national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for ozone, designed to protect public health, to a level of 0.075 parts per million (ppm). The secondary NAAQS for ozone, designed to protect public welfare, was simultaneously set at the same level (and with the same averaging time) as the primary NAAQS.

EPA working with the State of Connecticut and Indian Tribes established air quality designations for the state of Connecticut, including areas of Indian country, for the 2008 primary and secondary NAAQS for ozone on May 21, 2012 (77 FR 30088; effective July 20, 2012). Two areas consistent with the boundaries and areas of the 1997 eight-hour ozone nonattainment areas were classified marginal nonattainment covering the entire State. The “Greater Connecticut, CT 2008 eight hour ozone nonattainment area” includes: Hartford County; Litchfield County; New London County; Tolland County; Windham County; Mashantucket Pequot Tribe of Connecticut; and Mohegan Indian Tribe of Connecticut. The “New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT 2008 eight hour ozone nonattainment area” includes: Fairfield County; Middlesex County; and New Haven County.

Transportation conformity is required under CAA section 176(c) to ensure that transportation plans, transportation improvement programs (TIPs) and federally supported highway and transit projects

are consistent with (“conform to”) the purpose of the State Implementation Plan (SIP). Conformity to the purpose of the SIP means that transportation activities will not cause new air quality violations, worsen existing violations, or delay timely attainment of the relevant NAAQS or interim reductions and milestones. Transportation conformity applies to areas that are designated nonattainment, and to those former nonattainment areas that have been redesignated to attainment since 1990 and have a Clean Air Act section 175A maintenance plan (“maintenance areas”) for transportation-related criteria pollutants: Carbon monoxide, ozone, nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter. The EPA’s Transportation Conformity Rule (40 CFR 51.390 and Part 93, subpart A) establishes the criteria and procedures for determining whether transportation activities conform to the SIP.

Transportation conformity for the 2008 ozone NAAQS applies one year after the effective date of nonattainment designations for that standard. This is because Clean Air Act section 176(c)(6) and 40 CFR 93.102(d) provide a one year grace period from the effective date of initial designations before transportation conformity applies in areas newly designated nonattainment for a particular pollutant and standard. Hence, within one year after the effective date of the initial nonattainment designation for a given pollutant and standard, the area’s MPO and the DOT must make a conformity determination with regard to that pollutant and standard for the area’s transportation plan and TIP. The conformity requirements for donut areas, [*For the purposes of transportation conformity, a “donut” area is the geographic area outside a metropolitan planning area boundary, but inside a designated nonattainment or maintenance area boundary that includes an MPO (40 CFR 93.101).*] including the application of the one year conformity grace period, are generally the same as those for metropolitan areas. MPOs and any adjacent donut areas must continue to meet conformity requirements in nonattainment and maintenance areas.

Through interagency consultation, Connecticut Department of Transportation, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, FHWA, FTA, EPA and the Connecticut Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), agreed that a new air quality conformity determination for the 2008 ozone standard could be conducted using the current air quality analyses, “*Connecticut Department of Transportation’s Ozone Air Quality Determination of the 2011 Regional Transportation Plans and the FY 2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Programs for the Connecticut portion of the New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT Ozone Nonattainment Area and the Greater Connecticut Ozone Nonattainment Area,*” dated November 2011, remain valid for determining air quality conformity in accordance with section 93.122(g) of the Transportation Conformity Rule. The attainment date for 2008 eight-hour ozone nonattainment areas classified as marginal is December 31, 2015, which is one of the analysis years included in the current air quality conformity analysis.

Areas designated nonattainment for the 2008 ozone NAAQS that have adequate or approved SIP budgets for the 1997 ozone NAAQS as is the case with Greater Connecticut and New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT must continue to use such budgets in transportation conformity determinations until budgets for the 2008 ozone NAAQS are found adequate or are approved. The 1997 ozone NAAQS budgets are:

2008, and 2009 Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets for the 1997 Ozone Standard				
	Connecticut portion of the New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT (Southwest CT) Area		Greater Connecticut Area	
	VOC (tpsd)	NOx(tpsd)	VOC (tpsd)	NOx (tpsd)
Year 2008	29.7	60.5	28.5	54.3
Year 2009	27.4	54.6	26.3	49.2