



Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Meeting Date: October 22, 2013

Prepared By: Adele Noel, Environmental Project Manager

Phone #: (512) 854-7211

Division Director/Manager: Jon White/Thomas Weber - NREQ

Department Head/Title: Steven M. Manilla, P.E., County Executive-TNR

Sponsoring Court Member: County Judge Samuel T. Biscoe

AGENDA LANGUAGE:

Consider and take appropriate action on the following requests:

- A) A resolution in support of the Ozone Advance Plan emission reduction measures ; and
- B) Renew 8-Hour Ozone Flex emission reduction commitments and commit to new additional measures.

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Ozone Advance is a collaborative, voluntary effort between U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), states, tribes, and local governments to help areas remain in attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The Austin Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is very close to being out of attainment of the ozone health standard. Taking voluntary actions to reduce ozone emission now will benefit public health while minimizing our regulatory burden.

Ozone Advance is the latest in a series of air quality improvement plans the MSA has undertaken over the past decade. It builds on the successes of previous plans and refocuses our region on the challenges of maintaining in attainment. In 2008, Travis County and other elected officials in the MSA became signatories to an 8-Hour Ozone Flex Plan to address reducing local sources of ozone. In May 2012, city and county elected officials in Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis and Williamson counties signed a Commitment Letter to the EPA to develop an Ozone Advance Plan (OAP), to succeed the 8-Hour Ozone Flex Program that expires in December, 2013. The Central Texas Clean Air Coalition (CAC), is now seeking commitments that will improve air quality from local governments and other organizations in the MSA.

As a member and supporter of CAC, Travis County affirms to renew commitments made and implemented under the 8-Hour Ozone Flex Plan and commits to additional emission reduction and planning measures to help assure an ongoing

designation of “in attainment” under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ground Level Ozone.

Additional emissions reduction measures include several Travis County commitments:

- Commute Solutions Program, including Employer Funded Transit Passes;
- Open Burning Restrictions on Ozone Watch Days;
- Applying for Texas Emissions Reduction Program (TERP) and Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) funding;
- Procurement Policy Prioritizing Purchases of Low-Emission Light-duty Vehicles;
- Support Region-wide Measures (for example, rideshare program, school educational programs, research projects);
- Track and Report Vehicle and Motorized Equipment Usage; and
- Track and Report Electricity and Natural Gas Usage.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

TNR recommends approval.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

Keeping the region in compliance with federal ozone standards has long been a priority for Travis County, both to protect public health and to avoid the costly impacts of being designated nonattainment. Reducing ozone levels helps protect the health of children, seniors, and people with chronic respiratory problems such as asthma and bronchitis. If an area is designated non-attainment for ozone, it can have serious consequences for the regional economy, including new constraints on transportation planning, strict limits on industrial growth, and a host of costly pollution regulations. It would also result in the shift of air quality planning and impose new costs on the state for preparing State Implementation Plans for the MSA.

Since 2007, the MSA has experienced 4-10 days a year when the ozone level exceeded the levels EPA considers healthy (75 parts per billion, or “ppb”), and in 2012, the region was only 2 parts per billion (ppb) away from being out of compliance with the three-year average EPA uses to determine if areas are in attainment (the “design value”). With the EPA now considering tightening the standard (range of 60-70 ppb), additional efforts will be needed to ensure continued compliance.

FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

There will be no significant negative impact on Travis County’s budget to confirm commitments under the OAP.

EXHIBITS/ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution

REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:

Cynthia McDonald	Financial Manager	TNR	(512) 854-4239
Steven M. Manilla	County Executive	TNR	(512) 854-9429

CC:

Jon White	Natural Resources Enviromental Quality Division Director	TNR	(512) 854-7212
Thomas Weber	Enviromental Program Manager	TNR	(512) 854-4629
Adele Noel	Air Quality Project Manager	TNR	(512) 854-7211

: :
0801 - NREQ- Air Quality

RESOLUTION



A RESOLUTION OF TRAVIS COUNTY TO IMPLEMENT EMISSION REDUCTION ACTIONS TO ASSIST IN CLEAN AIR EFFORTS PER THE OZONE ADVANCE PROGRAM ACTION PLAN TO MAINTAIN TRAVIS COUNTY'S DESIGNATION AS "ATTAINMENT" IN REGARDS TO GROUND LEVEL OZONE STANDARDS

Whereas, The Citizens of Travis County recognize the value of and are conscious of the need for clean air;

Whereas, the local governments within the Austin-Round Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which consists of Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, and Williamson Counties, recognize that they are near-violation of the 8-hour National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone;

Whereas, the Ozone Advance Program is a voluntary local approach to ozone attainment whose purpose is to encourage early emission reduction that will help keep the area in attainment of the ozone NAAQS;

Whereas, A designation of non-attainment will inhibit local flexibility in planning and development and create economic impacts to the citizens of Travis County for up to twenty years;

Whereas, Travis County is a member of the Central Texas Clean Air Coalition (CAC) of the Capital Area Council of Governments;

Whereas, the CAC has signed up to participate in the Ozone Advance Program and has committed to submit an Action Plan by December 31, 2013;

Whereas, the CAC has requested that its members consider committing to emission reduction measures as part of this Action Plan by October 31, 2013; ***and***

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Travis County Commissioners Court:

That Travis County affirms to renew commitments made and implemented under the 8-Hour Ozone Flex Plan and commits to additional emission reduction and planning measures to help voluntarily secure an ongoing designation of “in attainment” under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ground Level Ozone.

Resolved, this 22nd day of October, 2013.

SAMUEL T. BISCOE

County Judge

RON DAVIS

Commissioner, Precinct One

BRUCE TODD

Commissioner, Precinct Two

GERALD DAUGHERTY

Commissioner, Precinct Three

MARGARET J. GÓMEZ

Commissioner, Precinct Four