

## **Summary of the Austin-Round Rock MSA 8-Hour Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) Flex Program**

The Austin-Round Rock MSA 8-Hour Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) Flex Program is a voluntary agreement between local governments, TCEQ and EPA. The goal of the program is to implement measures as needed to continue attainment of the federal ozone standard (currently 84 parts per billion of ozone) through 2013. The program provides the region with a flexible air quality management process. Through an on-going collaborative process, the program identifies specific air quality action triggers and determines the appropriate implementation response. The program may also be revised as needed. This allows the region to respond to changes in air quality conditions or regulations more effectively.

In compliance with EPA's May 2006 8-Hour O<sub>3</sub> Flex Program guidance, the region's 8-Hour O<sub>3</sub> Flex Program consists of the following elements.

### **Overview**

- Chapter 1 provides an overview of 8-Hour O<sub>3</sub> Flex Program requirements, regional participants and past planning successes.
- The MSA must be monitoring attainment of the ozone standard to be eligible to participate. The EAC signatories are the initial participants; other local participants may be added.

### **Technical Evaluation**

- Chapter 2 is a technical evaluation of the region's past, current and future ozone levels. It includes monitoring and emission inventory data, analysis of high ozone episodes, regional photochemical modeling, and air quality trend analyses.
- The evaluation indicates that regional ozone levels will stay close to the Federal standard, with increased emissions due to population and energy sector growth somewhat offset by decreased emissions due to pollution controls, especially federal standards for mobile sources. The region will remain sensitive to transported emissions from outside the area, which can raise background ozone levels significantly.

### **Action Plan**

- Chapter 3 is the Action Plan. It defines the action triggers and response options. It includes planning activities, voluntary emission reduction measures and contingency measures and addresses coordination, public participation, schedules, and required reporting.
- Regional participants generally continue their Early Action Compact emission reduction commitments. (See Attachment A for specific commitments). Other initial measures include a regional web-based rideshare program and an ozone watch/warning system. Additional measures are implemented in 2010 to account for expected emissions growth. If regional ozone levels reach 84 or 85 parts per billion (ppb), then still more measures will be implemented. The participants select the specific measures to be implemented in response to the triggers. (See attachment B for triggers and response).

### **Memorandum of Agreement**

- Chapter 4 is the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). It is the formal acceptance of the region's 8-hour O<sub>3</sub> Flex program by EPA, TCEQ, and the local governments. It includes general commitments and objectives, responsibilities, expected duration, conditions for modification or early termination, signature page and date.
- All parties commit to developing, implementing and maintaining the 8-Hour O<sub>3</sub> Flex Program according to EPA guidelines.
- EPA commits to considering the region's participation in the program, including time to allow the implemented contingency measures to work, in exercising its discretion to redesignate the area

nonattainment, if a nonattainment situation occurs. EPA will also allow the MSA appropriate State Implementation Plan (SIP) credit for measures implemented under the program.

- EPA and TCEQ commit to informing local governments of all available options and flexibility available to the area if the area, or any portion of the area, is determined to be nonattainment for the 8-hour ozone standard for the duration of the agreement.
- EPA and TCEQ commit to adopting one or more of the Tier II contingency measures selected by local governments if a violation of the 84 ppb standard occurs.
- Local governments commit to program implementation and may continue photochemical modeling activities.
- CAPCOG will continue to develop and regularly update area emissions inventories.
- The MSA agrees to continue existing EAC requirements, specifically the “maintenance for growth” requirement through 2012.
- Local governments agree to revise or update program contingency measures if state/tribal or federal laws change during the MOA period.
- Local governments agree to implement one new, voluntary emission reduction measure within one year of the MOA signing.

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