

Agenda Item No. 5(d)

(Date)

Dear (name of elected official here):

I am writing on behalf of the elected officials who serve with me on the Central Texas Clean Air Coalition (CAC) because we need (name of jurisdiction here) to join us at this critical time in our region's air quality planning. The CAC's work has made Central Texas a national leader in the implementation of proactive, voluntary air quality planning initiatives. While these efforts have kept us in attainment of federal, public health-based air quality standards, they are no longer sufficient to do so.

On March 12, 2008, EPA announced plans for a more stringent 8-hour ozone standard. Our region's regulatory ozone monitor located in Travis County indicates that we do not comply with the new standard.

Although the TCEQ has recommended that only Travis County be designated nonattainment, typically, EPA uses the entire Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as the default boundary for a nonattainment designation. A nonattainment designation would bring serious financial and regulatory responsibilities to all five counties of the Austin-Round Rock MSA.

Because there is some uncertainty as to when EPA will make its nonattainment designations, we may still be able to affect the outcome through continued voluntary actions. And regardless of our attainment status, improvements in local air quality improve our quality of life. This is especially true for those most vulnerable to high levels of ozone: children, seniors, and people with respiratory disease.

During the transition to the new ozone standard, it is crucial that the region remain in compliance with the previous standard, which is still in effect. The CAC

is addressing this concern by implementing the 8-Hour Ozone Flex Plan. The region designed the plan to keep us in compliance with the 1997 federal standard. This plan allows our communities to choose for themselves the most suitable mitigation activities, and lets us select the “triggers” that would initiate them.

The Clean Air Coalition is working to ensure that Central Texas is well placed to meet new regulatory challenges. The primary concern, however, is for public health. Our policy decisions must support our fellow Texans’ right to breathe clean air.

I ask (name of jurisdiction) to become an active member of the Central Texas Clean Air Coalition. Together we can protect the healthful air that is every Texan’s birthright.

For more information, including a presentation on plan options, please contact Bill Gill (512.916.6066) or Cathy Stephens (512.974.1861), the CAC Advisory Committee Co-Chairs.

Sincerely,