

March 17, 2015

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
EPA Docket Center  
Mailcode: 28221T  
Attention Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2008-0699  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the National Association of Clean Air Agencies (NACAA), we are pleased to provide the following comments on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone, published by the agency on December 17, 2014 (79 Fed. Reg. 75,234). NACAA is a national, non-partisan, non-profit association of air pollution control agencies in 41 states, the District of Columbia, four territories and 116 metropolitan areas. The air quality professionals in our member agencies have vast experience dedicated to improving air quality in the U.S. This testimony is based upon that experience. The views expressed in this testimony do not represent the positions of every state and local air pollution control agency in the country.

NACAA welcomes this EPA proposal to revise the current ozone NAAQS, which were established in 2008. In particular, NACAA supports EPA's use of scientific evidence to establish a primary ozone NAAQS that protects public health based on the agency's assessment that the current standard is not adequate to do so. The serious threats to public health from exposure to ozone are well documented. For example, in its Integrated Science Assessment for this NAAQS review, the agency concluded, among other things, that ozone pollution causes respiratory harm; is likely to cause premature death and adverse cardiovascular impacts; and may cause damage to the central nervous system and reproductive and developmental effects.

In addition, EPA's independent science advisors, the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC), also believe the primary ozone NAAQS must be more protective of public health. As the group stated in its June 26, 2014 letter to EPA on the agency's *Second Draft Policy Assessment for the Review of the Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard*, "In addressing the adequacy of the primary standard, the Second Draft PA presents scientifically sound information on the health effects evidence for each major effect category....The CASAC finds scientific justification that current evidence and the results of the exposure and risk assessment call into question the adequacy of the current standard. Furthermore, there is clear scientific support for the need to revise the standard. The CASAC supports the scientific rationale

presented in the Second Draft PA on these points.” CASAC also went on to say that it “further concludes that there is adequate scientific evidence to recommend a range of levels for a revised primary ozone standard from 70 ppb to 60 ppb.”

NACAA, therefore, supports EPA’s proposed revised primary NAAQS – within the range of 0.065 to 0.070 parts per million (ppm) – which is at the upper end of the science-based range recommended by CASAC.

With respect to the secondary ozone NAAQS, we note that CASAC supports EPA’s scientific conclusion that the current secondary standard is not adequate to protect against current and anticipated welfare effects of ozone on vegetation. CASAC has advised EPA to revise the secondary NAAQS to a standard based on the biologically based cumulative exposure “W126 index” at a level of 7 ppm-hrs to 15 ppm-hrs. Rather than follow CASAC’s recommendation, EPA has proposed a secondary NAAQS identical to the proposed primary standard – that is, within a range of 0.065 ppm to 0.070 ppm – contending that this would provide an equivalent level of protection.

We believe the agency has not adequately justified why it chose to diverge from CASAC’s recommendation or how it reached its conclusion of equivalent protection. As with the primary standard, we urge EPA to base the secondary standard on solid scientific data. Therefore, before EPA moves forward with its secondary NAAQS proposal we urge the agency to provide a better scientific justification for its proposal and its claim of equivalency.

On the issue of the Air Quality Index (AQI), NACAA supports EPA’s proposal to revise the AQI at the same time that it finalizes the revised ozone NAAQS. The AQI is a risk communication tool developed by EPA to keep the general public informed about its local air quality and to help make educated decisions about exposure to air pollutants. Air quality is measured by monitors that record the concentrations of major pollutants each day at thousands of locations across the country. Those raw measurements are then converted into AQI values using standard formulas developed by EPA. The effectiveness of the AQI as a public health tool will be undermined if EPA undertakes regulatory changes to the ozone NAAQS without simultaneously revising the AQI. Therefore, we are pleased that EPA has proposed to move forward with revisions to the NAAQS and the AQI at the same time.

With respect to the proposal’s ambient monitoring provisions, NACAA agrees that the ozone monitoring seasons should better reflect the times of year when ozone may approach or exceed the standard in order to more fully realize the health benefits of the revised NAAQS. We believe EPA’s analysis makes a strong case that the current ozone monitoring seasons are not long enough in many areas of the country and we support the agency’s proposal to extend the seasons. We note that some of EPA’s specific proposed changes to the ozone monitoring seasons may present regional consistency issues; for example, a nonattainment area may extend over adjoining states with different ozone seasons. We support the retention of the regulatory language allowing EPA Regional Administrators to grant waivers allowing deviations from ozone season monitoring requirements where monitoring agencies demonstrate that such deviations are appropriate.

EPA is also proposing to revise the existing Photochemical Assessment Monitoring Stations (PAMS) network by requiring PAMS measurements at existing NCore stations in nonattainment areas. NACAA supports this change to the network design but notes that the PAMS requirements will require significant equipment investment and ongoing expenditures and will require additional federal funding. We

agree that there may be some existing NCore sites that are not well-suited for making PAMS measurements (e.g., where an NCore site is not located in the best place for PAMS sampling, or the site does not have the capacity for PAMS instrumentation), and we therefore support EPA's proposal to allow the Regional Administrators the authority to approve an alternative location for a required PAMS site where appropriate.

With respect to required PAMS measurements, NACAA is concerned with EPA's proposal to require agencies to collect eight, 3-hour averaged carbonyls samples on a daily basis for the entire PAMS season. This level of sampling would require a substantial amount of agency resources and seems unduly burdensome. This is particularly true in light of the data quality issues presented by the known shortcomings with the current method for measuring carbonyls in the PAMS program, Method TO-11a. In addition, NACAA members are experiencing difficulty in locating vendors that manufacture eight-channel carbonyl samplers necessary to meet this sampling frequency. We urge EPA to consider a less-frequent carbonyl-sampling requirement.

EPA is also proposing to require monitoring agencies to measure mixing heights at PAMS sites. NACAA believes it would be much more practical and cost-effective to obtain this mixing height data by upgrading the ceilometers operated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as part of the Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS), so that individual state and local monitoring agencies are not required to purchase their own ceilometer equipment. We strongly encourage EPA to continue its efforts to work with NOAA to make this upgrade to the ASOS network, and we agree with EPA's proposal to allow state and local agencies to use ASOS or other nearby mixing height data to fulfill this requirement, if and when such data become available.

Finally, while NACAA firmly believes EPA must maintain a strong firewall between standard-setting issues and implementation issues, we do acknowledge that whatever decisions EPA makes on the primary and secondary ozone NAAQS will have a profound impact on the work of state and local air pollution control agencies. EPA must also recognize this and take timely actions on several fronts.

First, EPA should commit to, and follow through on, proposing the implementation rule for the revised ozone standards at the same time it issues the final revised standards and issuing the final implementation rule within one year following such proposal. It is imperative that development of the implementation rule and any related guidance be done in close collaboration with state and local air agencies. EPA should also work in close partnership with state and local air agencies to increase efficiencies in the planning process.

Second, EPA should take timely action to adopt, or further strengthen, federal measures to control a range of emission sources. It is extremely important that these measures be adopted and implemented in time for the associated emission reductions to contribute to attainment by the specified deadlines. Further, EPA should ensure that states are able to take credit for federal measures that achieve real emission reductions.

Third, in order to fulfill their responsibilities to attain more protective ozone standards by the prescribed deadlines, state and local air agencies will need more resources than they currently have. This is especially true since many areas of the country will face nonattainment status for the first time and will require additional training and resources to develop and implement state plans. EPA must assist states and localities in this regard and request additional, adequate federal funding to enable them to successfully

fulfill their statutory responsibilities and their obligation to provide their citizens with clean, healthful air as expeditiously as practicable.

On behalf of NACAA, we thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments on this proposal and look forward to working with EPA and other stakeholders to ensure that a final rule is promulgated by October 1, 2015.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. S. Aburn Jr.", written in a cursive style.

George S. (Tad) Aburn, Jr.  
(Maryland)  
NACAA Co-President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Merlyn Hough", written in a cursive style.

Merlyn Hough  
(Springfield, OR)  
NACAA Co-President