

MINUTES

REGIONAL AIR QUALITY COUNCIL

Thursday, August 8, 2002

Boulder County

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jim Scherer, *CHAIRMAN*
Randy Ahrens, *City & County of Broomfield*
Dennis Arfmann, *Holme Roberts & Owen*
Theresa Donahue, *Citizen Member*
Dave Sladek, *The Clayton Group*
Ed Tauer, *City of Aurora*
Melanie Worley, *Douglas County/DRCOG*

MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

Jane Norton, *Colo. Dept. Public Health & Environment*
Tom Norton, *Colo. Dept. of Transportation*

OTHERS PRESENT:

Ken Lloyd, RAQC; Gerald Dilley, RAQC; Sara O'Keefe, RAQC; Shirleen Tucker, APCD; Dickey Lee Hullinghorst, Boulder County; Kathy Engelson, CDOT; Kirk Knapp, Boulder Valley School District; Andrea DeBarros, GO Boulder/City of Boulder; Andrea Robbins, GO Boulder/City of Boulder; Graham Hill, Transportation Resource Center; Bob Farmer, private citizen

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Scherer at 3:10 p.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of the Agenda

Dennis Arfmann moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Dave Sladek. Motion passed without objection.

Dennis Arfmann moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Dave Sladek. Motion passed without objection.

Informational Items

Chairman:

Jim Scherer called on Margie Perkins, Director of the APCD, to discuss the upcoming press conference on Friday, August 9 with Gov. Owens and EPA Administrator Christie Whitman to announce two important accomplishments. Ms. Perkins said the first announcement is to acknowledge that the metropolitan Denver region is in compliance with all federal, health-based air quality standards. The second is that Administrator Whitman is to sign the Denver region's request for redesignation for PM-10.

In addition, Gov. Owens will highlight the air quality accomplishments over the past few years, but he will also address the challenges that still remain, which impacts the RAQC. Gov. Owens will acknowledge that ozone is the most eminent issue in the region and will direct the RAQC and AQCC to focus on finding solutions to the ozone problem.

Executive Director:

Ken Lloyd informed the Council that Misty Howell had a baby girl and the family is doing well. He said she will be on maternity leave until the end of September.

Ken informed the Council that Meg Deane Franko left the RAQC staff to start her own writing and editing business. Sara O'Keefe will be picking up Meg's responsibilities. In addition, one person will be added to the staff in the future.

Committees:

High-Emitting Vehicle Work Group

Dennis Arfmann, Chair, informed the group that the committee's name changed in July from Smoking Vehicle Work Group to High-Emitting Vehicle Work Group.

Dennis passed around an article taken from *Environmental Manager* magazine. The article was titled "The Road Ahead for Vehicle Emissions Inspection and Maintenance Programs." He pointed out a portion of the article that stated, "I/M programs should focus primarily on identification, diagnosis, and repair of the highest-emitting vehicles along with verification of those required."

With that in mind, Dennis said the Work Group has been meeting for five months and has been focusing with what has been going on nationally.

As a reminder, about five percent of the population of vehicles creates between 40-50 percent of the pollution.

The Work Group intends to have a draft report ready for the next meeting on September 9. The Work Group hopes to present recommendations to the RAQC at the October meeting.

Diesel Stakeholder Work Group

Ken Lloyd updated the group on the process for the set of final recommendations set forth by the Work Group. There has been one meeting since the group's last meeting in May with the Colorado Motor Carriers Association (CMCA) and the APCD staff to discuss what legislative options can be implemented at this time.

For this next legislative session, the focus will be on implementing those recommendations with only a modest cost involved.

Local Community Presentations

Transportation Allowance Pilot Program

Andrea Robbins, Transportation Planner for GO Boulder/City of Boulder, briefed Council a new pilot program for downtown City of Boulder employees. The program will provide an allowance of \$1 per day to all downtown employees. The purpose of the program is to encourage employees to take alternative modes of transportation – such as walking, riding a bike, or riding the bus.

Andrea is hopeful that the program – which just started August 5 – will reduce congestion around the downtown campus, free up parking spaces for visitors to Boulder City Hall, and reduce air pollution.

Boulder Community Transit Network

Audrey DeBarros, Marketing and Outreach Specialist for GO Boulder/City of Boulder, briefed Council on the two newest additions to Boulder's Community Transit Network – the Dash and the Stampede. The two new commuter buses will provide Boulder residents, students, workers, and visitors with more commuting options. The Stampede, deemed "the missing link," will connect the University of Colorado's main campus to the east campus and the Dash will connect Boulder to Lafayette and Louisville.

GO Boulder hopes to increase ridership on both commuter buses over the next few months.

CNG School Buses in Boulder County

Kirk Knapp, Fleet Manager for Boulder Valley School District (BVSD), discussed the use of compressed natural gas (CNG) buses throughout the district. Kirk said helping to clean the air was part of the reason the district made the decision to invest in CNG technology. The other reason is a \$35,000 rebate per bus from the Governor's Office of Energy Management and Conservation. The rebate helps cover any extra costs assumed in purchasing a CNG bus over a diesel bus.

Kirk said the District purchased eight buses at the start of the 2001 – 2002 school year and added two more recently, bringing the total to 10. Currently, the District has seven of the 10 78-passenger buses operating on regular routes. The District also has two food service vans and one delivery van running on natural gas. Kirk will closely monitor the performance of the new CNG equipment to determine whether or not the District should invest in additional vehicles in the future.

Public Comment and Discussion

Bob Farmer, private citizen, suggested to Council that gas cap testing should only occur during non-ozone season or on no-alert days during the summer. He said that there are too many evaporative emissions leaking out when a gas cap is taken off a vehicle for testing. He said that according to the EPA, 20 percent of hydrocarbon emissions are evaporative emissions.

Graham Hill, Chairman for the Transportation Resource Center, briefed Council on the new Transportation Resource Center, located at 1401 Walnut in Boulder. The Center, which opened last fall, serves as an outreach post to administer the Eco Pass program and to distribute information on bicycle maps, electric bikes, and other alternative transportation and air quality-related items. The Center holds regular meetings to get citizens, businesses, and visitors to feel comfortable using the facility.

Health Effects of Air Pollution

Dr. Sverre Vedal, Pulmonologist at the National Jewish Medical and Research Center, presented an overview of recent research regarding the health effects of air pollution. He presented many charts and graphs showing the connection to increases in air pollution to increases in death rates. He spoke of the "Great Fog" phenomenon in London in 1952 where particles dramatically increased and one day later deaths rose precipitously. It is estimated that 12,000 Londoners died due to the increased levels of smoke, soot and dust. Dr. Vedal said that what happened in London proves that air pollution can kill you, but the question is does it still do that today. He said that we do not see high concentrations of particles in the ambient air today as we did in London in 1952.

Dr. Vedal pointed out that Denver is not unique in terms of where it will stand on particle and ozone effects on health. He said that the levels of particle pollution in Denver are in the mid to lower range compared to other cities across the nation. Dr. Vedal anticipates future studies specific to the Denver region.

Clean Air Fleets Outreach and Awareness Program

Sara O'Keefe, RAQC staff, briefed Council on the new *Clean Air Fleets* Outreach and Awareness Program. The new program was developed from the Diesel

Stakeholders Work Group as part of the final recommendations to reduce diesel emissions from both on- and off-road diesel vehicles.

The RAQC has received \$50,000 from EPA's Air Toxics Assessments and Risk Reduction program, a \$75,000 commitment from the EPA National Voluntary Diesel Retrofit Program, and \$12,500 from a Penske Supplemental Environmental Project to fund the program. The RAQC staff is also pursuing additional sources of funding.

The program's goal is to encourage voluntary initiatives by both on- and off-road diesel fleet operators to reduce diesel emissions. The program will launch a collaborative outreach and awareness effort with private and public fleets in the metro Denver region and will recognize fleet operators that undertake voluntary programs to reduce diesel emissions from their fleet of diesel vehicles.

In order to accomplish the goals of the program, the RAQC and its partners, including the APCD, Colorado Motor Carriers Association, and Northeast Metro Pollution Prevention Association, will focus on the following activities

- recognition program
- best maintenance practices program
- vehicle idling education
- accelerated retirement, retrofit, and alternative fuels projects
- information clearinghouse
- diesel fleet survey
- workshops

Planning for the program will begin in 4th Quarter 2002. The program will run through the end of 2003.

2002 Ozone Update

Ken Lloyd briefed the Council on the status of the 2002 Ozone season. As of August 8, there were 20 ozone alerts called and three days with levels above 90 ppb (all in July), which, Ken mentioned, is unusual.

Due to ozone levels recorded this June and July, next summer's ozone readings are going to be critical. The 2004 allowable level at the NREL monitor is 90 ppb and the allowable level for Rocky Flats is a 91 ppb. It will take only one reading above one of those numbers to push the region into nonattainment for ozone.

To keep ozone levels below the standard, the Voluntary Ozone Reduction Program was implemented in 1999. Since then the RAQC has worked on the following programs:

- Significant public education and outreach

- Ozone alerts
- Voluntary RVP reductions by gasoline suppliers
- "Stop at the Click" promotion on auto refueling
- Local government operations
- Local government operations
- Vehicle maintenance (SMART Sign and clinics)
- Building maintenance and lawn care industries
- "Put a Cap on Ozone" gas cap replacement
- "Mow Down Pollution" lawn mower exchange

Ken mentioned that Governor Owens will formally ask the RAQC and the AQCC to consider additional measures to give the region a greater cushion and avoid nonattainment. EPA is still in the process of developing their implementation policy for the ozone standard. However, it is estimated that EPA will be making designations in 2004, which makes the data for 2003 and 2004 very critical regarding whether or not the region will remain in attainment.

The immediate focus will be on short-term measures to give the region a great cushion after this season's high levels. In addition, the long-term trends for ozone precursors look positive and seem to be on a decline due to new federal standards for cars, trucks, and engines.

The RAQC staff proposes an Ozone Workshop in the next 4-6 weeks. All interested parties will be invited to attend and participate in brainstorming a list of potential short-term strategies. The strategies will then be refined through a stakeholder involvement process and a recommended plan will be in place by January.

The proposed agenda for the workshop includes:

- Technical overview
- Ozone precursor emission trends
- EPA Ozone Implementation Policy
- Overview of Voluntary Ozone Program activities
- Strategies implemented in other areas
- Brainstorm potential short-term strategies

- Voluntary
- Mandatory

Council felt the workshop format made sense and staff should proceed.

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 5:29 p.m.