

Blueprint Update: 1999

Update on the Blueprint for Clean Air

(from the Winter/Spring 2000 *Air Exchange* Newsletter)

In January 1999, the RAQC completed the Blueprint for Clean Air, the first comprehensive, long-range air quality plan for the Denver metropolitan area. Since that time, the RAQC and other organizations have been working to turn the Blueprint recommendations into reality.

Reduce uncontrolled sulfur dioxide emission by 70 percent and nitrogen oxide emissions by 20 percent from Public Service Company's coal-fired, metro area power plants

- Public Service Company's plan to voluntarily reduce 70 percent of sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and at least 20 percent of nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emissions from some of its coal-fired power plants cleared its final hurdle. On October 6, 1999, Public Service Company CEO Wayne Brunetti ratified the emissions agreement in a ceremony with Governor Bill Owens. This agreement was approved by the Air Quality Control Commission (AQCC) and the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) in the summer of 1999.
- This landmark agreement will significantly clean up the Denver metropolitan air. Emissions will be 25 percent to 50 percent below current regulatory standards, depending on the generation unit and type of emission. Last summer, the PUC approved the cost recovery mechanism for the emissions reduction work. When all pollution controls are installed on the plants (by 2003), the average household will pay \$0.82 per month for 15 years. Commercial and industrial customers also will see an additional wires charge to pay for these improvements. Engineering work for the pollution controls began in the fourth quarter of 1999.

Improve the state's inspection and maintenance program for diesel vehicles

- The RAQC and the Air Pollution Control Division (APCD) are working with five diesel fleets on a pilot study to evaluate a new emissions inspection procedure for heavy-duty diesel trucks. The pilot study also is examining the role of improved vehicle maintenance for reducing emissions from diesel trucks. The RAQC will continue to work with APCD and the trucking industry, with the goal of recommending improvements to the diesel inspection program in the fall of 2000.

Reduce street sanding, increase the use of alternatives to sand, and/or increase sweeping to avoid increases in mobile source PM-10 emissions

- In May 1999, the AQCC adopted more stringent emission reduction requirements for street sanding and paved road dust to maintain mobile source particulate emissions at 1995 regulatory levels. Nearly all state and local agencies in the metropolitan area already are meeting these new requirements.

Implement DRCOG's Metro Vision land use and transportation plan for the metropolitan area in order to reduce vehicle travel

- Denver Regional Council Of Governments (DRCOG), local governments and other organizations continue to place a high priority on implementing Metro Vision 2020. To date, 22 local jurisdictions-representing 91 percent of the region's population-have adopted urban growth boundaries consistent with Metro Vision 2020. In addition, in the development of its 1999-2004 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), DRCOG gave significant additional points to transportation projects in jurisdictions that adopted urban growth boundaries.
- Voters on November 2 voted overwhelmingly to borrow money to speed up work on 24 highway projects and to expand light rail down the I-25 corridor. The widening of I-25 and light rail construction is expected to start in 2001 and be completed in 2007 or 2008. Light rail still must win a \$524 million federal grant before the project becomes reality.

Develop a carbon monoxide maintenance plan and redesignation request for the region and evaluate the future direction of the oxygenated fuels and vehicle inspection/maintenance program

- In September, the RAQC proposed a Carbon Monoxide Redesignation Request and Maintenance Plan for the Denver metropolitan area. This plan, which was adopted by the AQCC on January 10, recommends reducing the amount of oxygenated gasoline used during winter months and implementing a remote sensing, clean-screen program that will reduce the cost and increase the convenience of the vehicle inspection and maintenance program.

Increase efforts to reduce emissions from smoking vehicles

- In January 2000, the RAQC forwarded to the General Assembly a discussion paper addressing the problem of high-emitting and smoking vehicles in the Denver metropolitan area. The RAQC will continue to work with legislators and other interested parties during the year to identify effective programs for reducing emissions from high-emitting and smoking vehicles.

Evaluate federal proposals to tighten emission standards for cars and trucks; Advocate for strategies that make sense for the metro area

- The RAQC continues to track federal proposals to tighten emission standards for cars and trucks. In December, EPA finalized tighter emission standards for cars and light-duty trucks and established requirements for low-sulfur gasoline. Additional EPA proposals on diesel vehicles and off-road equipment are expected in 2000.

Take short-term, voluntary actions to guard against violations of the new ozone standard

- During the summer of 1999, the RAQC, working with the Colorado Air Pollution Control Division and other organizations, implemented a program to achieve voluntary emission reductions from ozone-forming pollutant sources. This program will continue during the summer of 2000.

Implement voluntary and incentive programs to reduce pollution

- In 1999, the General Assembly passed a bill providing incentives for greater use of alternative fuel vehicles. The RAQC and other organizations continue to explore options for other incentive programs, particularly relating to high-emitting and smoking vehicles.

For more information about the Blueprint for Clean Air, contact Kenneth Lloyd at 303-629-5450, ext. 250.