

## Air Quality and Transportation Conformity Highlights March 2014

*Prepared by the Office of Natural Environment  
Federal Highway Administration*

### Announcements and Recent Events

**FHWA's Carbon Monoxide (CO) categorical Hot-spot Finding.** On February 12, FHWA released a streamlined approach for project-level conformity on some projects in carbon monoxide nonattainment and maintenance areas. The CO categorical hot-spot finding is issued pursuant to the transportation conformity rule at 40 CFR 93.123(a)(3) and can be used on urban highway projects that include one or more intersections in CO maintenance areas (except in California). Project sponsors may be able to rely on the categorical hot-spot finding in place of doing their own CO hot-spot analysis as part of a project-level conformity determination in CO maintenance areas. All the documentation associated with the CO categorical hot-spot finding, including the technical document and modeling files can be found on FHWA's [CO categorical finding website](#). To aid the implementation, FHWA developed a [web-based tool](#) for project sponsors to determine if the project's parameters fall within the acceptable range of modeled parameters to rely on the CO categorical hot-spot finding. FHWA recorded a [webinar](#) on February 26, 2014 to explain the CO categorical hot-spot finding and how to use it on upcoming project. Contact Emily Biondi at 202-366-9482 or [emily.biondi@dot.gov](mailto:emily.biondi@dot.gov).

**FY 2013 Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program.** Annual reports are due by March 17, 2014. These reports should reflect all of the projects for which CMAQ funds were obligated in Federal Fiscal Year 2013. Reporting should include 1) all projects administered by FHWA for which there were CMAQ obligations in FY 2013, and 2) all transfers to FTA or other Federal agencies during the fiscal year. The March 17 deadline is for FHWA Divisions to review and approve reports in the web-based CMAQ Tracking System. Consequently, States, MPOs, and other project sponsors providing input should have entered the data well before the March deadline to ensure adequate time for Division review. Contact Mark Glaze at 202-366-4053 or [mark.glaze@dot.gov](mailto:mark.glaze@dot.gov).

**Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program Operating Assistance.** The 2014 Appropriations Act included changes to the Operation Assistance Section of the CMAQ program (23 USC 149(m)). The changes added new language that specifically prohibits the imposition of a time limitation for operating assistance eligibility on a system "for which CMAQ funding was made available, obligated or expended in fiscal year 2012." We understand this change is not consistent with the language in the [CMAQ Interim Guidance](#). FHWA will provide further guidance shortly to implement this change. Projects for which CMAQ funding was made available, obligated, or expended in FY 2012 could be eligible for operating assistance without a time limitation based on this change. Contact Cecilia Ho at 202-366-9862 or [cecilia.ho@dot.gov](mailto:cecilia.ho@dot.gov) if you have any questions.

**USEPA Considers Tightening Ozone Standard.** A draft [policy assessment](#) recommends EPA lower the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone, currently set at 75 parts per billion (ppb) to a standard between 70 ppb and 60 ppb. The document says that the current standard may not be adequate to protect the public from the harmful effects of smog. The ozone NAAQS was last revised to 75 ppb in 2008, and is scheduled to be reviewed every five years.

**USEPA Issued Two Revised Guidance Documents.** On February 10, EPA posted two documents for quantifying and using emissions reductions from diesel retrofits and commuter programs. The [Diesel Retrofits: Quantifying and Using Their Emission Benefits in SIPs and Conformity - Guidance for State and Local Air and Transportation Agencies \(PDF\)](#) provides guidance on quantifying and using emission reductions from highway and nonroad diesel vehicles, engines, and equipment that have been retrofitted. The guidance discusses how emission reductions from diesel retrofit projects can be used in a State Implementation Plan (SIP) and in transportation conformity and general conformity determinations, based on the new MOVES methodology described in this guidance. The [Commuter Programs: Quantifying and Using Their Emission Benefits in SIPs and Conformity – Guidance for State and Local Air and Transportation Agencies](#) describes how to credit commuter benefit programs in a SIP or transportation conformity determination.

**Record Low Vehicle Emissions.** Average vehicle emissions per driver were a record low in November 2013. The average new car produced 21 percent less greenhouse gas emissions in November 2013 than in October 2007, according to a [new study](#) released by the University of Michigan's Transportation Research Institute. The record fuel efficiency improvements are due to changes implemented by automakers in response to consumer demand and stricter standards.

## Reminders

**New CMAQ Interim Guidance for MAP-21 Issued.** The Notice of the CMAQ Program Interim Guidance was published in the *Federal Register* on November 12, 2013, effective immediately. The Program Interim Guidance updates and replaces the 2008 CMAQ Program Guidance to reflect amendments made by MAP-21. The CMAQ Interim Guidance is available on [FHWA's website](#).

**FHWA Released the FY14 Supplemental Apportionment Notice.** The FHWA released the FY14 supplemental apportionment tables providing detailed information on the year's apportionments covering all the major elements of the Federal-aid Highway Program authorized under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (MAP-21). The tables were issued on January 31, 2014. Table 14 breaks down the State-by-State apportionment of the CMAQ program, including the flexible funds available to minimum apportionment States, and the priority set-aside created by MAP-21 for PM2.5 areas. The tables are available on the agency's [Legislation & Regulations website](#).

**FHWA Released Three New CMAQ Brochures.** Two revised and one completely new CMAQ brochures are now available on [FHWA CMAQ Website](#). The brochures entitled CMAQ and MAP-21, CMAQ and Public Transportation are updates of earlier brochures and reflect changes prescribed by the MAP-21

Legislation, while the CMAQ and Diesel Retrofits brochure represents a new category under the CMAQ Program. Contact Mark Glaze at (202)366-4053, or [mark.glaze@dot.gov](mailto:mark.glaze@dot.gov) for more information.

**Areas with Insignificant Findings or Limited Maintenance Plans.** While these areas are not required to satisfy the regional emissions analysis requirements in 40 CFR 93.118 and/or 93.119, a conformity determination for the plan, TIP, and project that meets the other requirements (such as interagency consultation, timely implementation of TCMs, etc.) of the transportation conformity rule is still required. Also, a hot-spot analysis is still required in CO areas and for projects of air quality concern in PM10 and PM2.5 areas. Contact the Emily Biondi at 202-366-9482 or [emily.biondi@dot.gov](mailto:emily.biondi@dot.gov) with any questions.

**MAP-21 Highlights on Agency Websites.** Presentations, questions & answers, and other vital information surrounding the legislation remain on FHWA's web pages. The CMAQ Program Interim Guidance, webinar presentation slides and the Qs&As can be found on the [MAP-21 website](#). Basic fiscal information is housed on the MAP-21 site as well, although the supplementary tables with more detailed breakdowns on the individual Federal-aid programs are found on the agency's [Laws and Regulations](#) page.

**2014 Air & Waste Management Association (A&WMA) 107th Annual Conference & Exhibition (ACE).** The A&WMA invites you to the upcoming conference [Navigating Environmental Crossroads](#) to take place June 24 – 27, 2014 at the Long Beach Convention Center in Long Beach, California. A special mini-symposium on the “Impacts of Transportation Hubs & Ports” is planned, as well as, “Determining Which Components of Particulate Matter May be Most Harmful.” Contact Michael Claggett at (505) 820-2047, or [michael.claggett@dot.gov](mailto:michael.claggett@dot.gov) for more information.

## Training Opportunities

**Air Quality Planning Web Course Available.** The Air Quality Planning web-based training series is designed for transportation practitioners. It includes four modules: Clean Air Act Overview (FHWA-NHI-142068), State Implementation Plan (SIP) and Transportation Control Measure (TCM) Requirements and Policies (FHWA-NHI-142069), SIP Development Process (FHWA-NHI-142070) and Transportation Conformity (FHWA-NHI-142071). All courses are free. For more information, visit [www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov](http://www.nhi.fhwa.dot.gov), search Air Quality Planning or look for the specific course number. Please contact Karen Perritt at (202) 366-9066, or [karen.perritt@dot.gov](mailto:karen.perritt@dot.gov) with any questions or comments.

**National Transit Institute Introduction to Transportation Conformity Course Scheduled.** The NTI course, “Introduction to Transportation Conformity” is now scheduled to be offered in San Jose, CA from May 13-15, 2014. This training course is free to employees of public agencies. For more information and to register, go to: [NTI Conformity Training](#).

**Conformity 101 Training Available On-Line.** FHWA made a short course entitled "What is Conformity?" available on-line. This course is intended for transportation and air quality practitioners who are new to transportation conformity, those looking for a refresher, or others who only need a brief overview of the

rule. The session is approximately 27 minutes long. Handouts are available for download at the same site. This course can be accessed on [FHWA's Website](#).

**MySQL Training for MOVES Model Users.** Two training opportunities are available for MOVES model users. A three-hour webinar provides an introduction to MySQL Query Browser and MOVES interface. A six-hour training over two days will enable users to do MySQL programming and to write his/her own MySQL scripts and to manipulate MySQL databases including MOVES input and outputs. For more information or to schedule training, contact John Byun ([joon.byun@dot.gov](mailto:joon.byun@dot.gov)) or Paul Heishman ([paul.heishman@dot.gov](mailto:paul.heishman@dot.gov)).

**FHWA Resource Center Training Activities.** FHWA's Resource Center Air Quality Technical Services Team is available to offer MOVES training, and information is available at the [Resource Center website](#).

**MOVES Training.** EPA and DOT jointly developed 2 MOVES training courses: (1) a three-day training course on conducting quantitative PM hot-spot analysis using MOVES, and CAL3QHCR and AERMOD air quality dispersion models. Detailed information about this course and training materials and agenda can be found at: [PM Hotspot Quantitative Analyses Training](#). (2) a two-day training course for developing SIPs and conformity analyses. For additional information on the two-day training sessions, visit [EPA's MOVES training website](#). All training materials are also available on the [MOVES training site](#).

## Contacts

FHWA HQ Air Quality and Transportation Conformity Team:

Cecilia Ho, [Cecilia.Ho@dot.gov](mailto:Cecilia.Ho@dot.gov) (202)366-9862, Team Leader

Emily Biondi, [Emily.Biondi@dot.gov](mailto:Emily.Biondi@dot.gov) (202)366-9482

Mark Glaze, [Mark.Glaze@dot.gov](mailto:Mark.Glaze@dot.gov) (202)366-4053

Victoria Martinez, [Victoria.Martinez@dot.gov](mailto:Victoria.Martinez@dot.gov) (787)771-2524

Karen Perritt, [Karen.Perritt@dot.gov](mailto:Karen.Perritt@dot.gov) (202)366-9066

### **FHWA Resource Center Air Quality Team**

Past issues are available on [FHWA's website](#). If you have any suggestions for future highlights, please email [victoria.martinez@dot.gov](mailto:victoria.martinez@dot.gov).