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DATE: September 17, 2015

TO: SJVUAPCD Governing Board

FROM: Seyed Sadredin, Executive Director/APCO  
Project Coordinator: Jaime Holt

RE: **ITEM NUMBER 6: REVIEW AND AUTHORIZE THE DISTRIBUTION OF OP-ED REGARDING THE VALLEY'S LEGISLATIVE EFFORT TO MODERNIZE THE CLEAN AIR ACT**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Review and approve the attached Op-ed regarding the District's legislative effort to modernize the Clean Air Act and authorize distribution to local newspapers throughout the Valley as follows:

- Stockton Record (signed by Supervisor Elliott)
- Modesto Bee (signed by Supervisor O'Brien)
- Merced Sun Star (signed by Supervisor Walsh and Mayor Brazil)
- Madera Tribune (signed by Supervisor Wheeler and Councilmember Bomprezzi)
- Fresno Bee (signed by Supervisor Mendes and Councilmember Baines III )
- Hanford Sentinel (signed by Supervisor Pedersen)
- Visalia Times Delta (signed by Supervisor Worthley)
- Porterville Recorder (signed by Councilmember Gurrola)
- Bakersfield Californian (signed by Supervisor Couch and Councilmember Hanson)

**BACKGROUND:**

At the January 2015 Governing Board Meeting, the Governing Board approved the District's legislative platform that called for amendments to the Clean Air Act. By a unanimous vote, the Board decided not to support pending legislative proposals that would severely restrict EPA's ability to promulgate and enforce new standards. Instead, the Board

directed staff to develop a legislative proposal that would fine tune the Act through changes to the implementation mandates that will eliminate redundancy and provide reasonable deadlines while ensuring rapid progress toward meeting the standards, taking into account economic feasibility and technological achievability of necessary controls. Towards that end, the District has developed specific legislative language and District staff and Board members have met with Congressional representatives to advocate for bipartisan action to modernize the Act.

At the May 2015 Governing Board Study Session, the Board directed staff to draft an Op-ed to be placed in the Valley's key newspapers under the signature of Board members to marshal support from the general public and policy makers for the District's legislative proposal.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Since its adoption, the Clean Air Act has led to significant improvements in air quality and public health benefits throughout the nation. After more than 25 years since the last amendments to the Act in 1990, our experience shows that many well-intentioned provisions are leading to unintended adverse consequences. Without action to address these issues, the Clean Air Act sets many regions up for failure and economic devastation as the new federal standards encroach on background pollution concentrations.

Two bills have already been introduced in Congress that amend the Act by imposing major restrictions on EPA's ability to adopt and enforce health based standards. The Clean Air Strong Economies (CASE) Act by Senator Thune of South Dakota, Senator Manchin of West Virginia and Congressman Olson of Texas, requires that EPA not propose a national primary or secondary ambient air quality standard for ozone that is lower than the existing standard until at least 85 percent of the counties that were nonattainment areas, under that standard, achieve full compliance with the standard. The Ozone Regulatory Delay and Extension of Assessment Length (ORDEAL) Act by Senator Flake and Congressman Salmon, both of Arizona, would lengthen the period between when EPA would review and set a new ozone standard from the current five year interval to ten years.

In contrast, the District believes that it is possible to continue with the current rigorous regiment for establishing new standards if the implementation mandates are adjusted to avoid redundancy and provide reasonable deadlines that ensure rapid progress toward meeting the standards. These changes can be made with a combination of administration and/or legislative actions at the federal level without any delay in the current standard setting process. The District's *2015 Federal Clean Air Act Modernization Proposal*, as attached, details the current problems and the District's proposed solutions.

*SJVUAPCD Governing Board*

*ITEM NUMBER 6: REVIEW AND AUTHORIZE THE DISTRIBUTION OF OP-ED REGARDING THE VALLEY'S LEGISLATIVE EFFORT TO MODERNIZE THE CLEAN AIR ACT*

*September 17, 2015*

*Attachments:*

*Attachment A: Draft Op-Ed Urging Support for Amendments to Federal Clean Air Act (2 pages)*

*Attachment B: 2015 Federal Clean Air Act Modernization Proposal (8 pages)*

San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District  
Meeting of the Governing Board  
September 17, 2015

**REVIEW AND AUTHORIZE THE DISTRIBUTION OF OP-ED REGARDING THE  
VALLEY'S LEGISLATIVE EFFORT TO MODERNIZE THE CLEAN AIR ACT**

Attachment A:

**DRAFT OP-ED URGING SUPPORT FOR AMENDMENTS TO FEDERAL  
CLEAN AIR ACT**  
(2 PAGES)

## Draft Op-Ed Urging Support for Amendments to Federal Clean Air Act

The Federal Clean Air Act, signed into law by President Richard Nixon in 1970 and last amended by Congress in 1990 under President George H. Bush, has served the nation well. However, over the last 25 years, important lessons have been learned from implementing the law, and it is clear now that a number of well-intentioned provisions in the Act are leading to unintended consequences. The antiquated provisions of the Clean Air Act are now leading to confusion, and lack of updated congressional directive has rendered courts and non-elected government bureaucrats as policy makers. We urge the Congress and the President to take bipartisan action to modernize the Act. Failure to correct the structural deficiencies in the Act will lead to economic devastation for San Joaquin Valley residents and businesses without commensurate benefit in improving the region's air quality.

We support and want to retain the core elements in the Act that serve to protect public health through the establishment and pursuit of science-based ambient air quality standards. Over the years, residents and businesses have made significant investments and sacrifices in an effort to reduce air pollution and improve public health throughout the San Joaquin Valley. With an investment of over \$40 billion, air pollution from San Joaquin Valley businesses has been reduced by over 80%. The pollution released by industrial facilities, agricultural operations, cars and trucks is at a historical low, for levels of all pollutants. San Joaquin Valley residents' exposure to high smog levels has been reduced by over 90%.

The new standards established under the Act approach the background pollution concentrations in many regions throughout the nation including the San Joaquin Valley. As currently written, the Act does not provide for consideration of technological achievability and economic feasibility in establishing deadlines for attaining the associated federal mandates. When enacting the last amendment to the Act over 25 years ago, Congress did not contemplate the reality that we face today, where after reducing pollution levels by over 80% will still leave a large gap in meeting the standards that cannot be satisfied under the formula-based deadlines prescribed in the act. This sets up regions such as the San Joaquin Valley for failure leading to costly sanctions and severe economic hardship.

The *2015 Federal Clean Air Act Modernization Proposal* presented to Congress by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District will preserve the federal government's ability to routinely reevaluate and set health protective air quality goals based on sound science while avoiding current duplicative requirements and confusion. The proposed changes would also require strategies that lead to the most expeditious air quality improvement while considering technological and economic feasibility. In addition, regions, such as the San Joaquin Valley, would be able to focus efforts on meeting new air quality goals in the most expeditious fashion through deployment of scarce resources in a manner that provides the utmost benefit to public health.

The changes proposed by the District will provide necessary economic and regulatory certainty while retaining public health safeguards. As logical as it may seem, enacting change given the current political climate in Washington will not be easy. We ask all San Joaquin Valley residents, businesses and policymakers to join us in our efforts to bring about these commonsense changes to the Act.

See details at [www.valleyair.org/2015-Clean-Air-Act-Modernization-Proposal.pdf](http://www.valleyair.org/2015-Clean-Air-Act-Modernization-Proposal.pdf).

San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District  
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September 17, 2015

**REVIEW AND AUTHORIZE THE DISTRIBUTION OF OP-ED REGARDING THE  
VALLEY'S LEGISLATIVE EFFORT TO MODERNIZE THE CLEAN AIR ACT**

Attachment B:

**2015 Federal Clean Air Act Modernization Proposal**  
**(8 PAGES)**

## 2015 Federal Clean Air Act Modernization Proposal

Since its adoption, the Clean Air Act has led to significant improvements in air quality and public health benefits throughout the nation. In many areas of the nation, air pollution levels have been reduced to historical lows. We support the well-intentioned concepts in the Clean Air Act that call for routine review of health-based air quality standards, clean air objectives that are technology-forcing, and clean-air deadlines that ensure expeditious clean-up and timely action.

The Clean Air Act was last amended in 1990. Over the last 25 years, local, state, and federal agencies and affected stakeholders have learned important lessons from implementing the law and it is clear now that a number of well-intentioned provisions in the Act are leading to unintended consequences. This experience can inform efforts to enhance the Clean Air Act with much needed modernization. The following proposal is designed to provide specific language aimed at improving the Act's effectiveness and efficiency.

**1. PROBLEM:** Since the 1970's, EPA has established numerous ambient air quality standards for individual pollutants. We have now reached a point where various regions throughout the nation are subject to multiple iterations of standards for a single pollutant. For instance, there are currently 4 pending standards for ozone and 4 pending standards for PM<sub>2.5</sub>. Each of these standards requires a separate attainment plan which leads to multiple overlapping requirements and deadlines. This in turn results in a great deal of confusion, costly bureaucracy, and duplicative regulations, all without corresponding public health benefits.

**SOLUTION:** When a new standard is published, the old standard for that pollutant should be subsumed. States should be allowed to develop a single attainment plan that harmonizes increments of progress and other milestones without allowing for any rollback or backsliding.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS:** To avoid duplicative requirements and confusion, the RFP milestones must be synchronized when a new standard is published, for any region with a pending implementation plan for an older version of the standard for that pollutant. Towards that end, the first RFP milestone for the new standard should be aligned with the next required milestone for the old standard. The reductions required for aligned milestones shall be either 3 percent of the baseline for the new standard or the RFP emission reduction targets established under the existing plan, whichever is greater.

For ozone, add new subsection 182(k) as follows:

**(k) RFP Milestone Alignment for Areas with Pending Attainment Plans**

*Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, the RFP milestones and emission reduction targets in areas that have submitted a plan to the Administrator for the older version of a standard for the same pollutant being addressed by a new standard shall be set as follows:*

*The first RFP milestone for the new standard shall be set at the next RFP milestone date for the existing standard addressed in the current plan. Subsequent milestones will be every three years from the first milestone until attainment. The reductions required at the aligned milestones that address more than one standard shall be either 3 percent of the baseline for the new standard or the RFP emission reduction targets established under the current plan for the older standard, whichever is greater.*

For particulates, add new subsection 189(c)(4) as follows:

**(4) RFP Milestone Alignment for Areas with Pending Attainment Plans**

*Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, the RFP milestones and emission reduction targets in areas that have submitted a plan to the Administrator for the older version of a standard for the same pollutant being addressed by a new standard shall be set as follows:*

*The first RFP milestone for the new standard shall be set at the next RFP milestone date for the existing standard addressed in the current plan. Subsequent milestones will be every three years from the first milestone until attainment. The reductions required at the aligned milestones that address more than one standard shall be either those required for the new standard or the RFP emission reduction targets established under the current plan for the older standard, whichever is greater.*

**2. PROBLEM:** Mobile and stationary sources throughout the nation have now been subject to multiple generations of technology forcing regulations that have achieved significant air quality benefits. Meeting the new standards that approach background concentrations call for transformative measures that require time to develop and implement. These transformative measures require new technologies that in many cases are not yet commercially available or even conceived. The formula-based deadlines and milestones that were prescribed in the Act 25 years ago now lead to mandates that are impossible to meet.

**SOLUTION:** In establishing deadlines and milestones, the Act should be amended to require control measures that lead to the most expeditious attainment of health based standards while taking into account technological and economic feasibility. These deadlines and milestones should also consider background pollution concentrations and

the region's geography, topography, and meteorology that affect pollutant formation and dispersion.

#### **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS:**

In relation to RFP targets for ozone, amend subsection 182(b)(1)(A)(ii)(III) as follows:

*the plan reflecting a lesser percentage than 15 percent includes all measures that can feasibly be implemented in the area, in light of technological achievability and economic feasibility.*

In relation to RFP targets for ozone, amend subsection 182(c)(2)(B)(ii) as follows:

*an amount less than 3 percent of such baseline emissions each year, if the State demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Administrator that the plan reflecting such lesser amount includes all measures that can feasibly be implemented in the area, in light of technological achievability and economic feasibility.*

In relation to RFP targets for ozone, amend subsection 182(e) as follows:

*Each State in which all or part of an Extreme Area is located shall, with respect to the Extreme Area, make the submissions described under subsection (d) of this section (relating to Severe Areas), and shall also submit the revisions to the applicable implementation plan (including the plan items) described under this subsection. ~~The provisions of clause (ii) of subsection (c)(2)(B) of this section (relating to reductions of less than 3 percent),~~ ~~the provisions of paragraphs [6] (6), (7) and (8) of subsection (c) of this section (relating to de minimus [7] rule and modification of sources), and the provisions of clause (ii) of subsection (b)(1)(A) of this section (relating to reductions of less than 15 percent)~~ shall not apply in the case of an Extreme Area. For any Extreme Area, the terms "major source" and "major stationary source" includes [8] (in addition to the sources described in section 7602 of this title) any stationary source or group of sources located within a contiguous area and under common control that emits, or has the potential to emit, at least 10 tons per year of volatile organic compounds.*

In relation to RFP targets for particulates, amend subsection 189(c)(1) as follows:

*Plan revisions demonstrating attainment submitted to the Administrator for approval under this subpart shall contain quantitative milestones which are to be achieved every 3 years until the area is redesignated attainment and which demonstrate reasonable further progress, as defined in section 7501(1) of this title, and which take into account technological achievability and economic feasibility, toward attainment by the applicable date.*

In relation to the attainment deadlines for ozone:

Amend section 181(a) by adding the following new subsection 181(a)(6):

*Notwithstanding table 1, if an area is already classified as extreme for an existing standard, then the area shall be classified as extreme at the time of designation for the new standard.*

Amend section 181(a) by amending table 1 as follows:

TABLE 1

<b>Area class</b>	<b>Design value*</b>	<b>Primary standard attainment date**</b>
Marginal	0.121 up to 0.138	3 years after November 15, 1990
Moderate	0.138 up to 0.160	6 years after November 15, 1990
Serious	0.160 up to 0.180	9 years after November 15, 1990
Severe	0.180 up to 0.280	15 years after November 15, 1990
Extreme	0.280 and above	<del>20 years after November 15, 1990</del> <u>As prescribed in section 181(a)(7)</u>

Amend section 181(a) by adding the following new subsection 181(a)(7):

*Areas shall attain the standard as expeditiously as possible with the most effective measures that take into account technological achievability and economic feasibility. The area shall quantify reductions needed to achieve attainment consistent with section 182(e)(5). Every 5 years after the plan is approved by the Administrator, the area shall demonstrate that all measures that are technologically achievable and economically feasible are implemented or will be included in the plan to ensure expeditious implementation. The plan shall also include measures for advancing the development and deployment of new technologies.*

Amend section 182(e)(5) as follows:

**(5) New technologies**

*The Administrator may, in accordance with section 7410 of this title, approve provisions of an implementation plan for an Extreme Area which anticipate development of new control techniques or improvement of existing control technologies, and an attainment demonstration based on such provisions, ~~if the State demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Administrator that~~*

~~*(A) such provisions are not necessary to achieve the incremental emission reductions required during the first 10 years after November 15, 1990; and*~~

~~(B)the State has submitted enforceable commitments to develop and adopt contingency measures to be implemented as set forth herein if the anticipated technologies do not achieve planned reductions.~~

~~Such contingency measures shall be submitted to the Administrator no later than 3 years before proposed implementation of the plan provisions and approved or disapproved by the Administrator in accordance with section 7410 of this title. The contingency measures shall be adequate to produce emission reductions sufficient, in conjunction with other approved plan provisions, to achieve the periodic emission reductions required by subsection (b)(1) or (c)(2) of this section and attainment by the applicable dates. If the Administrator determines that an Extreme Area has failed to achieve an emission reduction requirement set forth in subsection (b)(1) or (c)(2) of this section, and that such failure is due in whole or part to an inability to fully implement provisions approved pursuant to this subsection, the Administrator shall require the State to implement the contingency measures to the extent necessary to assure compliance with subsections (b)(1) and (c)(2) of this section.~~

~~Any reference to the term "attainment date" in subsection (b), (c), or (d) of this section which is incorporated by reference into this subsection, shall refer to the attainment date for Extreme Areas.~~

**3. PROBLEM:** The Act as it relates to the demonstration of Reasonable Further Progress or Rate of Progress treats all precursors the same, regardless of their potency in harming public health or achieving attainment. Driven by a rapidly expanding body of scientific research, there is now a growing recognition within the scientific community that from an exposure perspective, the National Ambient Air Quality Standards metrics for progress are a necessary but increasingly insufficient measure of total public health risk associated with air pollutants. In particular, control strategies for sources of PM<sub>2.5</sub> and ozone do not necessarily account for qualitative differences in the nature of their emissions. For PM<sub>2.5</sub>, toxicity has been shown to vary depending on particle size, chemical species, and surface area. In the case of ozone, differences in the relative potency of ozone precursors, VOCs in particular, is not captured by a strict, mass-based approach to precursor controls.

**SOLUTION:** The Act should be amended to allow states to focus efforts on meeting new standards in the most expeditious fashion through deployment of scarce resources in a manner that provides the utmost benefit to public health. Towards that end, we recommend a more strategic approach in which public health serves as the key factor in prioritizing control measures, regulated pollutants, and sources of emissions. In establishing Reasonable Further Progress or Rate of Progress, the Act should give a greater weight to pollutants that have greater impact on achieving attainment and improving public health. Additionally, in evaluating Reasonably Available Control Technology (RACT), measures that reduce precursors with more impact on ozone formation should be given higher scores than measures that may reduce greater amounts of less potent ozone precursors.

For example, VOC compounds vary significantly in their contribution to the formation of ozone in the San Joaquin Valley. Similarly, NOx emissions reductions have been demonstrated to be approximately 20 times more effective than VOC emissions reductions in reducing the formation of ozone in the San Joaquin Valley. We therefore recommend that in demonstrating Reasonable Further Progress, EPA allow for an alternative approach that can demonstrate equivalent reductions in ozone concentrations as compared to the straight requirement of 3% per year reduction of VOCs and/or NOx.

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS:

Amend Section 182:

### *(C) NOx control*

*The revision may contain, in lieu of the demonstration required under subparagraph (B), a demonstration to the satisfaction of the Administrator that the applicable implementation plan, as revised, provides for reductions of emissions of VOC's and oxides of nitrogen (calculated according to the creditability provisions of subsection (b)(1)(C) and (D) of this section), that would result in a reduction in ozone concentrations at least equivalent to that which would result from the amount of VOC emission reductions required under subparagraph (B). Within 1 year after November 15, 1990, the Administrator shall issue guidance concerning the conditions under which NOx control may be substituted for VOC control or may be combined with VOC control in order to maximize the reduction in ozone air pollution. In accord with such guidance, a lesser percentage of VOCs may be accepted as an adequate demonstration for purposes of this subsection. The Administrator shall allow the use of NOx reductions in lieu of VOC reductions. The credit for NOx reductions shall be weighted in proportion to their effectiveness in reducing ozone concentrations in relation to the effectiveness of VOC reductions as demonstrated by the attainment modeling submitted with the plan.*

**4. PROBLEM:** Requiring contingency measures in extreme nonattainment areas is irrational and unnecessary. The Act requires all attainment plans to include contingency measures, defined as extra control measures that go into effect without further regulatory action, if planned emissions controls fail to reach the goals or targets specified in the attainment plan. While requiring backup measures was a well-intentioned provision, it does not make sense in areas that have been classified as "extreme" non-attainment for ozone. These areas, by definition, have already implemented all available and foreseeable measures and still need a "black box" of future measures to define and employ. The term "black box" refers to reductions that are needed to attain the standard, but technology to achieve such reductions does not yet exist. No measures are held in reserve in areas that are classified as "extreme" non-attainment for ozone. With no stones left unturned in such plans, requiring contingency measures in such areas makes no sense.

**SOLUTION:** We recommend that the Act be amended to eliminate the requirement for contingency measures in areas classified as “extreme” non-attainment by EPA.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS:**

Add to 172(c)(9) as follows:

**(9) Contingency measures**

*Such plan shall provide for the implementation of specific measures to be undertaken if the area fails to make reasonable further progress, or to attain the national primary ambient air quality standard by the attainment date applicable under this part. Such measures shall be included in the plan revision as contingency measures to take effect in any such case without further action by the State or the Administrator.*

*Notwithstanding this or other sections, contingency measures shall not be required for extreme ozone nonattainment areas.*

**5. PROBLEM:** The Act requirements for severe and extreme ozone nonattainment areas to address vehicle-related emissions growth must be clarified. Section 182(d)(1)(A) requires such areas to develop enforceable transportation control measures (TCMs) and transportation strategies “to offset any growth in emissions from growth in vehicle miles traveled ... and to attain reduction in motor vehicle emissions as necessary.” An area’s vehicle miles traveled (VMT) may increase due to increases in population (i.e., more drivers), people driving further (i.e., sprawl), or increases in pass-through traffic (i.e., goods movement).

Historically, EPA’s section 182(d)(1)(A) approach has allowed the use of vehicle turnover, tailpipe control standards, and the use of alternative fuels to offset the expected increase in VMT. This has allowed for the actual emissions reductions occurring from motor vehicles to be considered in meeting the applicable requirements. A recent Ninth Circuit Court decision, however, has called EPA’s current approach for demonstrating the offsetting of vehicle mile-related emissions growth into question, and has forced EPA to reevaluate its approach. Any change in approach that would require regions to offset vehicle growth regardless of population growth, and without recognition of emission reduction measures such as vehicle turnover and tailpipe control standards, would have a significant impact on many regions’ ability to develop an approvable attainment strategy and, under a strict interpretation, would actually render attainment impossible. Many TCMs and transportation strategies have already been implemented in nonattainment areas, and remaining opportunities are scarce and extremely expensive to implement, with relatively small amounts of emissions reductions available. A less inclusive section 182(d)(1)(A) approach would effectively penalize nonattainment areas for having population growth, and would not give credit to the significant emissions reductions being achieved from motor vehicles.

To illustrate this issue, such an interpretation applied to the District’s 1997 8-hour ozone standard attainment plan would require the elimination of 5.1 million vehicles, while the vehicle population of the Valley is projected to be only 2.6 million vehicles in 2023.

EPA recently established new guidance to address this issue that provides a potential path for reasonably addressing this CAA requirement. However, the path provided under this guidance will undoubtedly be challenged in court as it is utilized by regions like the San Joaquin Valley in the coming years. To provide certainty moving forward, the CAA should be amended to clearly include the methodology for reasonably satisfying this requirement.

**SOLUTION:** The Act should be amended to allow states to take credit for all transportation control measures and strategies and not punish areas that have implemented transportation control measures and strategies that have achieved early reductions in emissions.

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS:**

***(1) Vehicle miles traveled***

*(A) Within 2 years after November 15, 1990, the State shall submit a revision that identifies and adopts specific enforceable transportation control strategies and transportation control measures to offset any growth in emissions from growth in vehicle miles traveled or numbers of vehicle trips in such area and to attain reduction in motor vehicle emissions as necessary, in combination with other emission reduction requirements of this subpart, to comply with the requirements of subsection [5] (b)(2)(B) and (c)(2)(B) of this section (pertaining to periodic emissions reduction requirements). The State shall consider measures specified in section 7408(f) of this title, and choose from among and implement such measures as necessary to demonstrate attainment with the national ambient air quality standards; in considering such measures, the State should ensure adequate access to downtown, other commercial, and residential areas and should avoid measures that increase or relocate emissions and congestion rather than reduce them. As new ozone standards are established, for areas that have implemented early transportation control strategies and transportation control measures, the baseline for demonstrating compliance under this subsection shall remain fixed at 1990 independent of the baseline date for the new plan.*