



Approve Spare The Air Transportation Control Measure

Consent

Prepared by: Renee DeVere-Okie

Attachments: Yes

Approved by: Clint Holtzen

Referring Committee: Land Use & Natural Resources

1. Issue:

Consideration of an extension of the Spare The Air Program as a Transportation Control Measure in the update of the regional 8-Hour Ozone Standard State Implementation Plan (SIP).

2. Recommendation:

The Land Use and Natural Resources (LUNR) Committee recommends that the SACOG Board approve: (1) extension of the Spare The Air Program as a Transportation Control Measure in the update of the regional 8-Hour Ozone Standard SIP; and (2) setting aside funding to continue the existing six-county commitment of \$600,000 per year for the years 2025 through 2032.

3. Background/Analysis:

On October 26, 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) strengthened the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone to 70 parts per billion (ppb) from 75 parts ppb. The updated NAAQS is based on extensive scientific evidence about ozone's effects on public health and welfare. The updated standards will improve public health protection, particularly for at-risk groups including children, older adults, people of all ages who have lung diseases such as asthma, and people who are active outdoors, especially outdoor workers.

Currently, the Sacramento region is designated by the U.S. EPA as in serious nonattainment for the 2015 8-hour ozone NAAQS. In the coming months, EPA will be acting upon a request from the region's air quality districts to redesignate the region to the more critical classification of severe. Concurrent with this request, the five regional air districts within the nonattainment area are jointly working together to develop a plan to demonstrate attainment of the Ozone standard by the end of 2032. As part of the plan development process outlined in the Clean Air Act, air districts in conjunction with Metropolitan Planning Organizations, are required to evaluate and consider any reasonably available control measures for point, area, off-road, and on-road source categories which can collectively advance attainment.

SACOG is specifically responsible for conducting the on-road portion of the reasonably available control measure (RACM) process. As part of this process SACOG looks at Transportation Control Measures (TCM); or more specifically, strategies to reduce motor vehicle trips, vehicle miles traveled, or vehicle idling and the associated air pollutant emissions for potential inclusion in the attainment demonstration. At the October 2022 LUNR meeting, SACOG staff presented the results of the RACM findings and these were approved by the

SACOG Board and forwarded on to the regional air districts for inclusion in their process. Although no measures were found to meet RACM criteria, the SIP can contain other measures that improve air quality.

4. Discussion/Analysis:

The Spare The Air Program is a long-standing program that provides many benefits to the Sacramento region. It is a public education/awareness and emission reduction program with major focuses on engaging and providing awareness to the general public to voluntarily help reduce ground-level ozone pollution when air quality is unhealthy. The main component of the program is to encourage people to reduce vehicle trips, reduce their commute time, take public transportation, and spend less time in their cars on high ozone days. The general public's awareness of air quality issues in the Sacramento region is due, in part, to the widespread impact of the Spare The Air program which has served as an important component of regional air quality education since 1995. The program was first designated as a TCM in 2008. Attachment A provides a summary of the Spare The Air Program.

In the Sacramento region, on-road mobile sources are the largest contributor to the formation of ozone pollution. As the ozone standard becomes more health protective over time, the Sacramento region will need to rely on this measures and other State mobile source control measures to help reduce emission from the on-road mobile sector. The Spare The Air Program is a critical component to the public education/awareness and emission reduction approach for the Sacramento region.

SACOG staff in conjunction with Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD) staff are recommending the extension of the Spare The Air Program as a TCM. The requested extension of the program aligns with the regional attainment year deadline of 2032. This requested extension also demonstrates to the U.S. EPA, a regional commitment to targeting emission reductions from the transportation sector – the largest regional ozone emission source. The air quality and emission benefits associated with this program extends past the region's urban core to nearby areas. Precursor emissions to ozone are typically the highest in the most populated areas in the region. By promoting air quality friendly driving habits where transportation emissions are the highest, it can reduce the opportunity for air pollution formation and improve air quality to downwind areas.

The current six-county TCM commitment for Spare The Air Program, \$600,000 per year for the years 2019 to 2024, continues to be implemented with Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding from SACOG, the El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC), and Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA) and funds have been committed to by EDCTC and PCTPA for future program years. Matching funds for the program come from the air districts' DMV fees and/or Sacramento County's Measure A program.

If the SIP is adopted including the recommended Spare The Air TCM for the years 2025 through 2032, SACOG would continue to commit a total target of \$600,000 per year.

5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:

The Spare The Air Program would be funded with CMAQ funds in the amount of \$600,000 per year to run the program from 2025 to 2032. Matching funds would be provided by the regional air districts as coordinated by SMAQMD.