

MEMO TO: SEMO RPC Air Quality Meeting Attendees
FROM: Dave Grimes
SUBJECT: Meeting Summary
DATE: January 29, 2010

The Air Quality Committee of the Southeast Missouri Regional Planning Commission held a meeting on January 29, 2010 at the American Legion Hall in Perryville. Twenty-five people were in attendance including representatives from local governments, education institutions, economic development organizations, and the private sector. The following is a summary of that meeting.

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Albert Fults at 11:00 a.m.

Mr. Fults then asked for brief introductions around the room.

Mr. Fults asked David Grimes of the Regional Planning Commission staff to provide an update on the status of the Clean Air Action Plan. Mr. Grimes explained that he had received formal Resolutions of Support from all seven counties and was starting to get them from municipalities. He said that he was confident that before he was done he would have such resolutions from all municipalities.

Mr. Grimes then provided a brief update on the status of EPA's "reconsideration" of the Ground Level Ozone Standards. He explained that the EPA had formally announced that they were moving forward with the process early in January and had done the actual publication on January 19, 2010. He said that there was a 60 day comment period and he strongly recommended that the Air Quality Committee and the Regional Planning Commission prepare such comments.

By way of background he explained that the present level of 75 parts per billion had been established in 2008 and that this committee along with the Regional Planning Commission had worked on the nonattainment area designation process all along. The standards promulgated in March, 2008 had represented a level that was a reduction from the previous standard of 85 parts per billion. The "reconsideration" underway would drop that standard to "somewhere in the range" of 60 to 70 parts per billion. He explained that by EPA's estimates the lower of these standards would mean that 95% of all monitors would be out of compliance.

He went on to say that he had received an email from Stan Payne with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources who could not be at the meeting today. Mr. Payne had indicated that EPA wanted comments relating to three areas: The health studies involved in setting the standards; information regarding specific conditions affecting local ozone levels; and, the proposed timelines for implementation.

Mr. Grimes said that he had invited representatives from EPA to today's meeting, but that none would be able to attend.

Mr. Fults then asked for discussion from the group on what the committee's response should be.

The first observation was that this was now a policy/political issue. As such, discussions regarding the science were relatively unimportant. No one suggested that air quality concerns were misplaced. Rather, there was a general agreement that the focus was now on the central question of “how much is too much.” Put another way, is there a real reason to impose additional regulations to achieve needlessly low standards.

Consensus quickly developed that the Air Quality Committee and the Regional Planning Commission needed to provide formal comments. As this discussion progressed, a consensus also developed that it was necessary to get as many groups and governments involved as possible. With the potential for virtually any county with a monitor to be designated as nonattainment under the proposed rule, the committee believes that many counties and municipalities will be interested in participating in the comment process.

The discussion then explored what form participation could take. Since practically all county commissioners will be in Jefferson City on February 3, 2010, the suggestion was made that this opportunity be used to make a presentation to them. Another potential forum for contact would be the Missouri Municipal League. A direct approach to the legislature was also suggested, seeking a formal resolution opposing the proposed changes in standards.

Another approach discussed was to enlist Governor Nixon to present the issue to other governors on the theory that the voice of a governor carried more weight than about any other voice in this process.

Discussion followed regarding what would be presented. Consensus quickly developed that the existing standard of 75 parts per billion was fully adequate and that reduction from this level was not only unwarranted but would actively harm economic recovery and job creation efforts. In addition, the Committee agreed that this position should be presented to the state legislature and the congressional delegation as well as to EPA through the formal comment process.

Chairman Fults appointed a subcommittee including Mike Alesandrini, Kimberly Lagomarsino and Linda Greaser, with David Grimes as staff support, to prepare first a series of “talking points” prior to the February 3, 2010 county commissioner training and then to prepare a draft Resolution to support these positions.

Mr. Grimes requested clarification on what would be included and received the following guidance:

1. It is not clear that lower standards are even achievable.
2. Support the existing standards.
3. Stress that many more areas will be designated nonattainment under these proposed standards.
4. Economic issues do matter, the Clean Air Act prohibition on considering them notwithstanding.
5. Imposition of Lowest Achievable Emission Rate requirements would effectively kill job growth.

A brief discussion of funding followed. Mr. Fults pointed out that the Ste. Genevieve County Commission had already provided \$5,000 dollars in support of this effort. Mr. Grimes reviewed last year's funding efforts. Several local elected officials indicated that they would see if they could include funding for this project into their budgets.

The next meeting was set for February 26, 2010 at the American Legion Hall in Perryville at 11:00 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.