

Director of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) submitted the MUMPO nonattainment/maintenance area consultation interagency MOA, to EPA as a revision to the SIP.

B. What Is EPA Approving Today and Why?

EPA is approving the MUMPO interagency consultation MOA submitted to the EPA Region office on August 1, 2003 by the Director of the North Carolina DENR. EPA has evaluated this SIP revision and has determined that the State has met the requirements of Federal transportation conformity rule as described in 40 CFR part 51, subpart T and 40 CFR part 93, subpart A. The North Carolina DENR has satisfied the public participation and comprehensive interagency consultation requirement during development and adoption of the MOA at the local level. Therefore, EPA is approving the MOA as a revision to the North Carolina SIP.

C. How Did the State Satisfy the Interagency Consultation Process (40 CFR 93.105)?

EPA's rule requires the states to develop their own processes and procedures for interagency consultation among the Federal, state, and local agencies and resolution of conflicts meeting the criteria in 40 CFR 93.105. The SIP revision must include processes and procedures to be followed by the MPO, state DOT, and USDOT in consulting with the state and local air quality agencies and EPA before making conformity determinations. The transportation conformity SIP revision must also include processes and procedures for the state and local air quality agencies and EPA to coordinate the development of applicable SIPs with MPOs, state DOTs, and USDOT.

The State of North Carolina developed the MUMPO interagency consultation MOA based on the elements contained in 40 CFR 93.105. As a first step, the State worked with the existing transportation planning organization's interagency committee that included representatives from the State and local air quality agencies, State Department of Transportation, MUMPO, Federal Highway Administration-North Carolina, Federal Transit Administration, Transit Authority and EPA. The interagency committee met regularly and drafted the consultation rules considering elements in 40 CFR 93.105 and 23 CFR part 450, and integrated the local procedures and processes into the consultation MOA. The consultation process developed in

this MOA is unique to the Mecklenburg-Union Area. The MOA is enforceable against the parties by their signed consent in the MOA. EPA has determined that the State adequately included all elements of 40 CFR 93.105 and that the MOA meets the EPA SIP requirements.

IV. Final Action

EPA is approving the aforementioned changes to the SIP. The EPA is publishing this rule without prior proposal because the Agency views this as a noncontroversial submittal and anticipates no adverse comments. However, in the proposed rules section of this **Federal Register** publication, EPA is publishing a separate document that will serve as the proposal to approve the SIP revision should adverse comments be filed. This rule will be effective November 14, 2003 without further notice unless the Agency receives adverse comments by October 15, 2003.

If the EPA receives such comments, then EPA will publish a document withdrawing the final rule and informing the public that the rule will not take effect. All public comments received will then be addressed in a subsequent final rule based on the proposed rule. The EPA will not institute a second comment period. Parties interested in commenting should do so at this time. If no such comments are received, the public is advised that this rule will be effective on November 14, 2003 and no further action will be taken on the proposed rule. Please note that if we receive adverse comment on an amendment, paragraph, or section of this rule and if that provision may be severed from the remainder of the rule, we may adopt as final those provisions of the rule that are not the subject of an adverse comment.

V. Statutory and Executive Order Reviews

Under Executive Order 12866 (58 FR 51735, October 4, 1993), this action is not a "significant regulatory action" and therefore is not subject to review by the Office of Management and Budget. For this reason, this action is also not subject to Executive Order 13211, "Actions Concerning Regulations That Significantly Affect Energy Supply, Distribution, or Use" (66 FR 28355, May 22, 2001). This action merely approves state law as meeting Federal requirements and imposes no additional requirements beyond those imposed by state law. Accordingly, the Administrator certifies that this rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small

entities under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*). Because this rule approves pre-existing requirements under state law and does not impose any additional enforceable duty beyond that required by state law, it does not contain any unfunded mandate or significantly or uniquely affect small governments, as described in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-4).

This rule also does not have tribal implications because it will not have a substantial direct effect on one or more Indian tribes, on the relationship between the Federal Government and Indian tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal Government and Indian tribes, as specified by Executive Order 13175 (65 FR 67249, November 9, 2000). This action also does not have Federalism implications because it does not have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government, as specified in Executive Order 13132 (64 FR 43255, August 10, 1999). This action merely approves a state rule implementing a Federal standard, and does not alter the relationship or the distribution of power and responsibilities established in the Clean Air Act. This rule also is not subject to Executive Order 13045 "Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks" (62 FR 19885, April 23, 1997), because it is not economically significant.

In reviewing SIP submissions, EPA's role is to approve state choices, provided that they meet the criteria of the Clean Air Act. In this context, in the absence of a prior existing requirement for the State to use voluntary consensus standards (VCS), EPA has no authority to disapprove a SIP submission for failure to use VCS. It would thus be inconsistent with applicable law for EPA, when it reviews a SIP submission, to use VCS in place of a SIP submission that otherwise satisfies the provisions of the Clean Air Act. Thus, the requirements of section 12(d) of the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995 (15 U.S.C. 272 *note*) do not apply. This rule does not impose an information collection burden under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*).

The Congressional Review Act, 5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.*, as added by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, generally provides that before a rule may take effect, the