

A. What Progress Are Compact Areas Making Toward Completing Their Milestones?

Compact areas are continuing to make good progress toward timely completion of their milestones. All 33 communities met the June 16, 2003 milestone, which required areas to submit a list and description of local control measures each area is considering for adoption and implementation. In addition, all 33 compact areas submitted the June 30, 2003 progress report. The June 16 submissions contained many innovative measures that EPA believes have the potential to reduce air pollution, while at the same time, produce additional benefits for these communities. For example, many compact areas are considering electrified truck stops to replace the need for engine idling during truck loading or unloading. A number of other areas are considering the addition of cetane additives to fuel for increased fuel efficiency. San Antonio's list of measures includes a walking school bus program. Under this program, parents rotate the responsibility of walking groups of students to school in lieu of going by bus or by car. The Center for Disease Control reports that lack of exercise is one of the primary reasons why childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions in the U.S. In addition to reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT), thus decreasing mobile source emissions, a walking school bus program provides children with another opportunity to get physical exercise.

Stakeholders for the Austin, Texas compact are exploring an expedited

permitting process for "mixed use, transit-oriented, infill development." Mixing land uses can reduce VMT in several ways, including trip lengths, mode choice and vehicle ownership. In a recent study, EPA has concluded that by encouraging people to walk, bike, and use transit rather than drive, mixed-use development patterns reduce VMT, thereby decreasing automobile emissions and improving regional air quality.⁹

The EPA believes that these types of long-term, land use changes can reduce air pollution well into the future, as well as produce multiple benefits that go beyond cleaner air. Such additional effects include an increase in mobility for all segments of the population, an increase in physical activity and an improved quality of life. These are the kinds of measures that EPA would like to see more areas explore, but for which the CAA provides no real incentives. Based on the many innovative and creative measures contained in the June 16, 2003 submission, we believe that the Early Action Compact program can provide such an incentive.

B. How Will EPA Address Compact Areas Attaining the 8-Hour Ozone Standard in April 2004?

Compact areas that are not violating the 8-hour ozone standard using 2001–2003 ozone monitoring data will be designated attainment at the time we designate areas in April 2004. In most cases, compact areas that would not be in violation of the 8-hour standard when designations are made in April 2004 would have ozone design values near 85 parts per billion (ppb), and therefore,

are at risk for violating the 8-hour ozone standard in subsequent ozone seasons (e.g., 2004–2006). We encourage compact areas designated attainment for the 8-hour standard based on 2001–2003 data to continue to develop clean air plans and to remain committed to the compact program to ensure air quality remains clean. Should an area participating in the program that is designated attainment in April 2004 subsequently violate the 8-hour ozone standard during the term of the compact, EPA would not commit to redesignate the area to nonattainment for so long as the area continues to comply with the compact requirements and meet all compact milestones. The EPA would not permit any extension of the compact requirement to attain the standard by December 2007 for any compact area that violates the standard after 8-hour ozone designations in April 2004, whether the area was designated attainment or nonattainment with a deferral of the effective date of the designation.

C. What Is the Air Quality of the Compact Areas?

A total of 146 counties are covered by compacts. Sixty-four of these counties have ozone monitors and 82 counties do not. Table 3 below summarizes 2000–2002 air quality data that are available for the 146 counties participating in the program. However, in April 2004, EPA will designate areas based on 2001–2003 data; therefore, the air quality status of some compact areas may change for the purpose of designating areas for the 8-hour ozone standard.

TABLE 3.—2000–2002 OZONE AIR QUALITY DATA FOR EARLY ACTION COMPACT COUNTIES

State	Compact area	County	2000–2002 Ozone design value, ppb ozone
EPA Region 3			
VA	Northern Shenandoah Valley Region. (This area is not a MSA.) Adjacent to Washington-Baltimore MSA.	Winchester City	
VA	Roanoke Area (part of Roanoke MSA)	Frederick County	85
		Roanoke County*	87
		Botetourt County*	
		Roanoke City*	
		Salem City*	
MD	Washington County (west of Washington, DC—part of Washington-Baltimore CMSA).	Washington County*	87
WV	The Eastern Pan Handle Region (Martinsburg area—part of Washington-Baltimore MSA).	Berkeley County*	
		Jefferson County*	
EPA Region 4			
NC	Mountain Area of Western NC (Asheville MSA + additional counties)	Buncombe County*	85

⁹“Our Built and Natural Environments” (EPA 231–R–01–002, January 2001).