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Director



December 9, 2021

Daniel Blackman, Regional Administrator
USEPA, Region 4
Atlanta Federal Center
61 Forsyth Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8960

Subject: Limited Maintenance Plan (LMP) for the Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill Maintenance Area for the 1997 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS)

Dear Mr. Blackman:

I am pleased to submit the final *Limited Maintenance Plan (LMP) for the Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill Maintenance Area for the 1997 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS)*. Enclosed is the complete package containing the proposed State Implementation Plan (SIP) revision uploaded into the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) State Planning Electronic Collaboration System (SPeCS) for SIPs interface for your staff to review.

The North Carolina Division of Air Quality (DAQ) prepared this LMP for the Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill maintenance area for the 1997 8-hour ozone NAAQS to comply with the D.C. Circuit decision that vacated EPA's interpretation that the second maintenance plans were not required for "orphan maintenance areas" (i.e., areas that had been redesignated to attainment for the 1997 ozone NAAQS (maintenance areas) and designated attainment for the 2008 8-hour ozone NAAQS).¹ The LMP covers the last 10 years of the 20-year maintenance period from January 3, 2024 through January 2, 2034.

Based on EPA's November 20, 2018, guidance, the DAQ is exercising the LMP option because this area fulfills the LMP requirements for the second maintenance plan period.² In a LMP, maintenance is demonstrated when current air quality levels measured by ambient monitoring sites in an area are below 85% of the standard, and air quality levels have not been highly variable during preceding years. The LMP also includes a typical ozone season summer day emissions inventory for 2017 representing emissions during which the monitoring data show attainment, a commitment to continue operation of the air monitoring network to verify the

¹ South Coast, 882 F.3d 1138 (D.C. Cir. 2018).

² "Resource Document for 1997 Ozone NAAQS Areas: Supporting Information for States Developing Maintenance Plans," U.S. EPA, November 20, 2018, available from https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-11/documents/ozone_1997_naaqs_lmp_resource_document_nov_20_2018.pdf, accessed April 2020.



attainment status over the attainment period, and contingency measures to ensure prompt action is taken to correct any violation of the 1997 ozone NAAQS. The DAQ believes that the information presented in this LMP fulfills the requirements of CAA Section 175A(b) with respect to the second maintenance plan period and requests that EPA approve this LMP for the Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill maintenance areas for the 1997 8-hour ozone NAAQS.

The DAQ issued a public notice announcement, in accordance with 40 CFR 51.102, indicating that the pre-hearing draft of the *Limited Maintenance Plan (LMP) for the Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill Maintenance Area for the 1997 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS)*, was available for public comment and was posted on the DAQ website for review. The public comment period was open from Wednesday, October 27, 2021, through Tuesday, November 30, 2021.

In addition to posting on the website, the public notice announcement was sent to a number of email distribution lists managed by the DAQ, which includes numerous stakeholders from industry and environmental groups. The DAQ has found that sending the public notice announcements to these groups is more effective than publishing the notices in a few local newspapers and is consistent with the requirements described in the April 6, 2011, memorandum, "*Regional Consistency for the Administrative Requirements of the State Implementation Plan Submittals and the Use of Letter Notices.*"

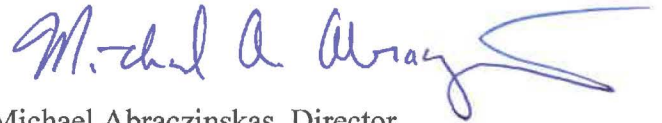
In order to address guidance to minimize the spread of COVID-19, the public notice indicated that a digital public hearing via Cisco's WebEx teleconferencing service would be scheduled if a public hearing were requested. The document was also made available for in person review during normal business hours at the DAQ Central Office in Raleigh and the DAQ Regional Office in Mooresville.

The DAQ did not receive any requests for a public hearing or any written comments from the public during the comment period. The EPA submitted one comment noting that the Air Quality System contains only two years of valid ozone data for the Catawba Longhouse monitor (AQS ID 45-091-8001), thus, any design values calculated are incomplete and invalid for this monitor. The DAQ discussed this comment with EPA and has removed the design values for the Catawba Longhouse from the LMP. This revision did not affect any conclusions regarding the LMP. The public notice, EPA's comment letter and response are included in Appendix B of this LMP submittal.

I look forward to the USEPA's review and final approval of the clean version of the *Limited Maintenance Plan (LMP) for the Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill Maintenance Area for the 1997 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS)*.

If you have any questions regarding this submittal, please contact Tammy Manning of my staff at (919) 707-8717 or tammy.manning@ncdenr.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael A. Abraczinskas". The signature is stylized with a long, sweeping horizontal line at the end.

Michael Abraczinskas, Director
Division of Air Quality

MAA/tkm

1 enclosure

cc:

- Mr. Bruce Ingle, NCDAQ
- Ms. Tammy Manning, NCDAQ
- Mr. Randy Strait, NCDAQ
- Ms. Leslie Rhodes, Mecklenburg County Air Quality
- Ms. Ashley Featherstone, Western North Carolina Regional Air Quality Agency
- Mr. Minor Barnette, Forsyth County Office of Environmental Assistance and Protection
- Ms. Caroline Freeman, USEPA
- Mr. Evan Adams, USEPA
- Ms. Lynorae Benjamin, USEPA
- Ms. Pepa Sassin, USEPA
- Ms. Jane Spann, USEPA