



WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

July 22, 2024

Liane M. Randolph, Chair  
California Air Resources Board  
1001 I Street  
Sacramento, California 95814

Vanessa Delgado, Chair  
South Coast Air Quality Management District Governing Board  
21865 Copley Drive  
Diamond Bar, California 91765

Dear Chair Randolph and Chair Delgado:

Despite stringent regulations governing air emissions and innovative strategies to incentivize pollution reductions, the South Coast ozone nonattainment area experiences some of the highest levels of ground-level ozone pollution in the United States. Notwithstanding the efforts of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD), the California Air Resources Board (CARB), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to bring the area into compliance with the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for ozone, the area continues to exceed the NAAQS.

In an effort to address this challenge, the South Coast AQMD, CARB, and the EPA formed a three-agency workgroup to assess strategies to attain the 1997, 2008, and 2015 ozone NAAQS in the South Coast air basin. The goal of the workgroup is to evaluate all significant emissions categories, the availability of technologies and practices that support emissions reductions, and regulatory and other pathways, both traditional and innovative, to drive the required emissions reductions. The three-agency workgroup selected four sectors for the initial evaluation: aviation, non-road engines, locomotives and railyards, and ocean-going vessels (OGVs). Because the federal government retains substantial authority to develop emissions standards for these sectors, we recognize that the EPA will play an important role in this partnership. Experts from the three agencies are participating in the sector workgroups to assess emissions reduction opportunities and to define the significant roles for each of our agencies in the path to improved air quality. The sector workgroups have recommended a number of actions for South Coast AQMD, CARB, and the EPA to undertake. As a result of this process, EPA is committing to the following:

### **General Commitments**

1. Continue to work in partnership with SCAQMD and CARB to attain all ozone standards, recognizing the need for reductions from the aviation, locomotive, non-road engine, and ocean-going vessels sectors.
2. Work with SCAQMD and CARB to support additional Indirect Source Rules and support efforts to credit these measures in the SIP.
3. Evaluate and act on the waiver and authorization requests submitted by CARB.

### **Locomotives**

4. Explore opportunities with CARB and SCAQMD that can significantly accelerate the transition of the locomotives operating in California to a much cleaner locomotive fleet.
5. Work with SCAQMD and CARB to support technology demonstrations for zero-emission locomotives and infrastructure deployment.
6. Continue to pursue national emissions standards for newly built and remanufactured locomotives.

### **Aviation**

7. In collaboration with Federal partners, continue to work with the International Civil Aviation Organization on more stringent NO<sub>x</sub> emissions standards.
8. Work with CARB, SCAQMD, and other agencies as appropriate, to explore development of measures that use economic incentives at South Coast airports to prioritize use of aircraft with lower NO<sub>x</sub> emissions.
9. Work with CARB on zero-emission ground support equipment and zero-emission taxiing technology assessments.
10. Work with CARB and SCAQMD on a technology forum on how on-airport operations are managed, focusing on optimizing zero-emission support equipment, auxiliary unit operation, and airplane operations (e.g., taxiing).
11. Jointly host a technology forum with CARB, SCAQMD, and other agencies as appropriate, on the operational practices and economics of aircraft routing with the State, country, and internationally.
12. Jointly host a technology forum with CARB, SCAQMD, and other agencies as appropriate, on strategies for lowering NO<sub>x</sub> emissions from aircraft, including through improved combustor design, selective catalytic reduction, water-in-fuel strategies, or other strategies.

### **Non-road Land-Based Diesel Equipment**

13. Begin exploration of a more stringent national "Tier 5" criteria pollutant emissions standards for nonroad land-based compression-ignition engines, including the potential role zero-emission equipment can play to significantly reduce emissions.

### **Ocean Going Vessels (OGVs)**

14. In collaboration with Federal partners, engage with the International Maritime Organization to work towards strengthening the NOx standards for new and existing OGVs, including resolution of the low load Tier III issue for OGVs.
15. Jointly host a technology forum with SCAQMD, CARB, and other agencies as appropriate, on low-load NOx issues, fuels of the future, and solicit ideas from the public, shippers, carriers, and other supply chain stakeholders for future emissions reductions.

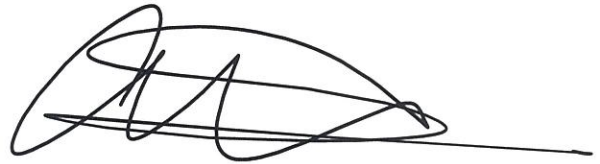
In light of the ongoing challenges the South Coast faces in attaining the ozone NAAQS and the important role the EPA plays in improving air quality, we reiterate our commitment not only to the actions identified above, but also to continuing to work both within the federal government and in collaboration with CARB and the SCAQMD to develop the necessary tools, strategies, and regulatory approaches that will be needed for the South Coast Air Basin to attain the ozone NAAQS. Thank you for the constructive engagement of your agencies and we look forward to our continued collaboration.

Sincerely,



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Martha Guzman  
Regional Administrator  
Region IX



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Alejandra Nunez  
Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator  
Office of Air and Radiation