



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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November 28, 2011

The Honorable Pat Quinn
Governor
State of Illinois
100 West Randolph Street, Suite 16-100
James R. Thompson Center
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Dear Governor Quinn:

I would like to call to your attention an important issue that needs your action. By certifying the 2011 ozone monitoring data, you can head off a federal action that could do significant harm to our region's air quality, its residents, and its transportation system.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is in the process of designating areas that do not meet the 8-hour ozone standard that was established in 2008. Based on the most recent certified air monitoring data, from 2008 to 2010, northeastern Illinois meets that standard. However, those three years had unusual weather conditions, and our region would not be considered to have met the standard (and would therefore be considered "not in attainment") if 2011 air monitoring data are included in the review.

U.S. EPA would be mistaken to consider our region "in attainment" based on data that are already outdated, or will be outdated on January 1, 2012. First, this opens the door to undoing the very controls that have helped improve our region's air quality, because the finding of attainment would prompt some to urge the withdrawal of many Illinois Environmental Protection Agency regulations. IEPA's controls are in fact quite essential to improving the air quality that determines the health of residents, notably children, the elderly, and people with respiratory illness. Once the data are updated with 2011 figures, it will be clear that IEPA regulations are still needed because our region is not actually in attainment.

Second, the state stands to lose substantial federal transportation funds for the next several years through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality

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The Honorable Governor Pat Quinn

November 28, 2011

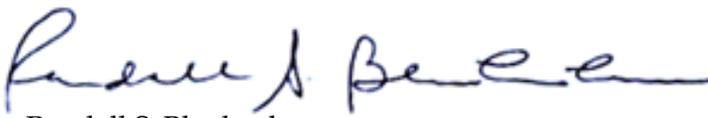
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Improvement (CMAQ) Program if the region is designated as in attainment. The consequences for our region's transportation system will be profoundly negative. For example, our region's recently adopted five-year CMAQ program allocates \$411 million for school bus and locomotive engine retrofits, IDOT projects, and a host of commuter parking lots, bicycle paths, and transit improvements in northeastern Illinois. Depending on the effective date that U.S. EPA would assign to our attainment status, CMAQ funds already allocated could be lost. And all future CMAQ funds -- which we estimate at about \$90 million dollars per year -- would certainly be cut off, severely disrupting transportation improvements for many municipalities and agencies.

In 2010, northeastern Illinois adopted GO TO 2040, its first comprehensive regional plan in more than a century. GO TO 2040 calls for sustainable growth in the region, including actions to support improved air quality. CMAQ funds are being marshaled to implement these actions. One notable example is Pace's \$38.4 million dollar project to enhance express bus service along the Jane Addams Tollway during the upcoming reconstruction. The project, specifically identified in GO TO 2040, is being implemented entirely with CMAQ funds.

For the health of our residents and the continued funding of crucial air quality-beneficial transportation projects, I urge the state to certify the 2011 ozone monitoring data, and encourage the U.S. EPA to include it when designating nonattainment areas within the next few months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Randall S. Blankenhorn".

Randall S. Blankenhorn
Executive Director

TG:RSB/stk

cc: Illinois Environmental Protection Agency:
Interim Director John Kim
Chief, Bureau of Air Laurel Kroack