

## Environmental Protection Agency

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### Subpart A—Conformity to State or Federal Implementation Plans of Transportation Plans, Programs, and Projects Developed, Funded or Approved Under Title 23 U.S.C. or the Federal Transit Laws

SOURCE: 62 FR 43801, Aug. 15, 1997, unless otherwise noted.

#### § 93.100 Purpose.

The purpose of this subpart is to implement section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act (CAA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 7401 *et seq.*), and the related requirements of 23 U.S.C. 109(j), with respect to the conformity of transportation plans, programs, and projects which are developed, funded, or approved by the United States Department of Transportation (DOT), and by metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) or other recipients of funds under title 23 U.S.C. or the Federal Transit Laws (49 U.S.C. Chapter 53). This subpart sets forth policy, criteria, and procedures for demonstrating and assuring conformity of such activities to an applicable implementation plan developed pursuant to section 110 and Part D of the CAA.

#### § 93.101 Definitions.

Terms used but not defined in this subpart shall have the meaning given them by the CAA, titles 23 and 49 U.S.C., other Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations, or other DOT regulations, in that order of priority.

*Applicable implementation plan* is defined in section 302(q) of the CAA and means the portion (or portions) of the implementation plan, or most recent revision thereof, which has been approved under section 110, or promulgated under section 110(c), or promulgated or approved pursuant to regulations promulgated under section 301(d) and which implements the relevant requirements of the CAA.

*CAA* means the Clean Air Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 7401 *et seq.*).

*Cause or contribute to a new violation* for a project means:

(1) To cause or contribute to a new violation of a standard in the area substantially affected by the project or over a region which would otherwise not be in violation of the standard during the future period in question, if the project were not implemented; or

(2) To contribute to a new violation in a manner that would increase the frequency or severity of a new violation of a standard in such area.

*Clean data* means air quality monitoring data determined by EPA to meet the applicable requirements of 40 CFR Parts 50 and 58 and to indicate attainment of a NAAQS.

*Control strategy implementation plan revision* is the implementation plan which contains specific strategies for controlling the emissions of and reducing ambient levels of pollutants in order to satisfy CAA requirements for demonstrations of reasonable further progress and attainment (including implementation plan revisions submitted to satisfy CAA sections 172(c), 182(b)(1), 182(c)(2)(A), 182(c)(2)(B), 187(a)(7), 187(g), 189(a)(1)(B), 189(b)(1)(A), and 189(d); sections 192(a) and 192(b), for nitrogen dioxide; and any other applicable CAA provision requiring a demonstration of reasonable further progress or attainment).

*Design concept* means the type of facility identified by the project, e.g., freeway, expressway, arterial highway, grade-separated highway, reserved right-of-way rail transit, mixed-traffic rail transit, exclusive busway, etc.

*Design scope* means the design aspects which will affect the proposed facility's impact on regional emissions, usually as they relate to vehicle or person carrying capacity and control, e.g., number of lanes or tracks to be constructed or added, length of project, signalization, access control including approximate number and location of interchanges, preferential treatment for high-occupancy vehicles, etc.

*DOT* means the United States Department of Transportation.

*Donut areas* are geographic areas outside a metropolitan planning area boundary, but inside the boundary of a nonattainment or maintenance area that contains any part of a metropolitan area(s). These areas are not iso-

lated rural nonattainment and maintenance areas.

*EPA* means the Environmental Protection Agency.

*FHWA* means the Federal Highway Administration of DOT.

*FHWA/FTA project*, for the purpose of this subpart, is any highway or transit project which is proposed to receive funding assistance and approval through the Federal-Aid Highway program or the Federal mass transit program, or requires Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approval for some aspect of the project, such as connection to an interstate highway or deviation from applicable design standards on the interstate system.

*Forecast period* with respect to a transportation plan is the period covered by the transportation plan pursuant to 23 CFR part 450.

*FTA* means the Federal Transit Administration of DOT.

*Highway project* is an undertaking to implement or modify a highway facility or highway-related program. Such an undertaking consists of all required phases necessary for implementation. For analytical purposes, it must be defined sufficiently to:

(1) Connect logical termini and be of sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scope;

(2) Have independent utility or significance, i.e., be usable and be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made; and

(3) Not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

*Horizon year* is a year for which the transportation plan describes the envisioned transportation system according to § 93.106.

*Hot-spot analysis* is an estimation of likely future localized CO, PM<sub>10</sub>, and/or PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollutant concentrations and a comparison of those concentrations to the national ambient air quality standards. Hot-spot analysis assesses impacts on a scale smaller than the entire nonattainment or maintenance area, including, for example, congested roadway intersections and highways or

transit terminals, and uses an air quality dispersion model to determine the effects of emissions on air quality.

*Increase the frequency or severity* means to cause a location or region to exceed a standard more often or to cause a violation at a greater concentration than previously existed and/or would otherwise exist during the future period in question, if the project were not implemented.

*Isolated rural nonattainment and maintenance areas* are areas that do not contain or are not part of any metropolitan planning area as designated under the transportation planning regulations. Isolated rural areas do not have Federally required metropolitan transportation plans or TIPs and do not have projects that are part of the emissions analysis of any MPO's metropolitan transportation plan or TIP. Projects in such areas are instead included in statewide transportation improvement programs. These areas are not donut areas.

*Lapse* means that the conformity determination for a transportation plan or TIP has expired, and thus there is no currently conforming transportation plan and TIP.

*Limited maintenance plan* is a maintenance plan that EPA has determined meets EPA's limited maintenance plan policy criteria for a given NAAQS and pollutant. To qualify for a limited maintenance plan, for example, an area must have a design value that is significantly below a given NAAQS, and it must be reasonable to expect that a NAAQS violation will not result from any level of future motor vehicle emissions growth.

*Maintenance area* means any geographic region of the United States previously designated nonattainment pursuant to the CAA Amendments of 1990 and subsequently redesignated to attainment subject to the requirement to develop a maintenance plan under section 175A of the CAA, as amended.

*Maintenance plan* means an implementation plan under section 175A of the CAA, as amended.

*Metropolitan planning organization (MPO)* means the policy board of an organization created as a result of the designation process in 23 U.S.C. 134(d).

*Milestone* has the meaning given in CAA sections 182(g)(1) and 189(c) for serious and above ozone nonattainment areas and PM<sub>10</sub> nonattainment areas, respectively. For all other nonattainment areas, a milestone consists of an emissions level and the date on which that level is to be achieved as required by the applicable CAA provision for reasonable further progress towards attainment.

*Motor vehicle emissions budget* is that portion of the total allowable emissions defined in the submitted or approved control strategy implementation plan revision or maintenance plan for a certain date for the purpose of meeting reasonable further progress milestones or demonstrating attainment or maintenance of the NAAQS, for any criteria pollutant or its precursors, allocated to highway and transit vehicle use and emissions.

*National ambient air quality standards (NAAQS)* are those standards established pursuant to section 109 of the CAA.

*NEPA* means the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*).

*NEPA process completion*, for the purposes of this subpart, with respect to FHWA or FTA, means the point at which there is a specific action to make a determination that a project is categorically excluded, to make a Finding of No Significant Impact, or to issue a record of decision on a Final Environmental Impact Statement under NEPA.

*Nonattainment area* means any geographic region of the United States which has been designated as nonattainment under section 107 of the CAA for any pollutant for which a national ambient air quality standard exists.

*Project* means a highway project or transit project.

*Protective finding* means a determination by EPA that a submitted control strategy implementation plan revision contains adopted control measures or written commitments to adopt enforceable control measures that fully satisfy the emissions reductions requirements relevant to the statutory provision for

which the implementation plan revision was submitted, such as reasonable further progress or attainment.

*Recipient of funds designated under title 23 U.S.C. or the Federal Transit Laws* means any agency at any level of State, county, city, or regional government that routinely receives title 23 U.S.C. or Federal Transit Laws funds to construct FHWA/FTA projects, operate FHWA/FTA projects or equipment, purchase equipment, or undertake other services or operations via contracts or agreements. This definition does not include private landowners or developers, or contractors or entities that are only paid for services or products created by their own employees.

*Regionally significant project* means a transportation project (other than an exempt project) that is on a facility which serves regional transportation needs (such as access to and from the area outside of the region, major activity centers in the region, major planned developments such as new retail malls, sports complexes, etc., or transportation terminals as well as most terminals themselves) and would normally be included in the modeling of a metropolitan area's transportation network, including at a minimum all principal arterial highways and all fixed guideway transit facilities that offer an alternative to regional highway travel.

*Safety margin* means the amount by which the total projected emissions from all sources of a given pollutant are less than the total emissions that would satisfy the applicable requirement for reasonable further progress, attainment, or maintenance.

*Standard* means a national ambient air quality standard.

*Transit* is mass transportation by bus, rail, or other conveyance which provides general or special service to the public on a regular and continuing basis. It does not include school buses or charter or sightseeing services.

*Transit project* is an undertaking to implement or modify a transit facility or transit-related program; purchase transit vehicles or equipment; or provide financial assistance for transit operations. It does not include actions that are solely within the jurisdiction of local transit agencies, such as

changes in routes, schedules, or fares. It may consist of several phases. For analytical purposes, it must be defined inclusively enough to:

- (1) Connect logical termini and be of sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scope;
- (2) Have independent utility or independent significance, i.e., be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made; and
- (3) Not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements.

*Transportation control measure (TCM)* is any measure that is specifically identified and committed to in the applicable implementation plan, including a substitute or additional TCM that is incorporated into the applicable SIP through the process established in CAA section 176(c)(8), that is either one of the types listed in CAA section 108, or any other measure for the purpose of reducing emissions or concentrations of air pollutants from transportation sources by reducing vehicle use or changing traffic flow or congestion conditions. Notwithstanding the first sentence of this definition, vehicle technology-based, fuel-based, and maintenance-based measures which control the emissions from vehicles under fixed traffic conditions are not TCMs for the purposes of this subpart.

*Transportation improvement program (TIP)* means a transportation improvement program developed by a metropolitan planning organization under 23 U.S.C. 134(j).

*Transportation plan* means the official intermodal metropolitan transportation plan that is developed through the metropolitan planning process for the metropolitan planning area, developed pursuant to 23 CFR part 450.

*Transportation project* is a highway project or a transit project.

*Written commitment* for the purposes of this subpart means a written commitment that includes a description of the action to be taken; a schedule for the completion of the action; a demonstration that funding necessary to implement the action has been authorized by the appropriating or authorizing body; and an acknowledgment that the commitment is an enforceable

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obligation under the applicable implementation plan.

[62 FR 43801, Aug. 15, 1997, as amended at 69 FR 40072, July 1, 2004; 71 FR 12510, Mar. 10, 2006; 73 FR 4439, Jan. 24, 2008; 75 FR 14283, Mar. 24, 2010; 77 FR 14986, Mar. 14, 2012]

### § 93.102 Applicability.

(a) *Action applicability.* (1) Except as provided for in paragraph (c) of this section or § 93.126, conformity determinations are required for:

(i) The adoption, acceptance, approval or support of transportation plans and transportation plan amendments developed pursuant to 23 CFR part 450 or 49 CFR part 613 by an MPO or DOT;

(ii) The adoption, acceptance, approval or support of TIPs and TIP amendments developed pursuant to 23 CFR part 450 or 49 CFR part 613 by an MPO or DOT; and

(iii) The approval, funding, or implementation of FHWA/FTA projects.

(2) Conformity determinations are not required under this subpart for individual projects which are not FHWA/FTA projects. However, § 93.121 applies to such projects if they are regionally significant.

(b) *Geographic applicability.* The provisions of this subpart shall apply in all nonattainment and maintenance areas for transportation-related criteria pollutants for which the area is designated nonattainment or has a maintenance plan.

(1) The provisions of this subpart apply with respect to emissions of the following criteria pollutants: ozone, carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), particles with an aerodynamic diameter less than or equal to a nominal 10 micrometers (PM<sub>10</sub>); and particles with an aerodynamic diameter less than or equal to a nominal 2.5 micrometers (PM<sub>2.5</sub>).

(2) The provisions of this subpart also apply with respect to emissions of the following precursor pollutants:

(i) Volatile organic compounds (VOC) and nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) in ozone areas;

(ii) NO<sub>x</sub> in NO<sub>2</sub> areas;

(iii) VOC and/or NO<sub>x</sub> in PM<sub>10</sub> areas if the EPA Regional Administrator or the director of the State air agency has made a finding that transportation-re-

lated emissions of one or both of these precursors within the nonattainment area are a significant contributor to the PM<sub>10</sub> nonattainment problem and has so notified the MPO and DOT, or if the applicable implementation plan (or implementation plan submission) establishes an approved (or adequate) budget for such emissions as part of the reasonable further progress, attainment or maintenance strategy;

(iv) NO<sub>x</sub> in PM<sub>2.5</sub> areas, unless both the EPA Regional Administrator and the director of the state air agency have made a finding that transportation-related emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> within the nonattainment area are not a significant contributor to the PM<sub>2.5</sub> nonattainment problem and has so notified the MPO and DOT, or the applicable implementation plan (or implementation plan submission) does not establish an approved (or adequate) budget for such emissions as part of the reasonable further progress, attainment or maintenance strategy; and

(v) VOC, sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and/or ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) in PM<sub>2.5</sub> areas either if the EPA Regional Administrator or the director of the state air agency has made a finding that transportation-related emissions of any of these precursors within the nonattainment area are a significant contributor to the PM<sub>2.5</sub> nonattainment problem and has so notified the MPO and DOT, or if the applicable implementation plan (or implementation plan submission) establishes an approved (or adequate) budget for such emissions as part of the reasonable further progress, attainment or maintenance strategy.

(3) The provisions of this subpart apply to PM<sub>2.5</sub> nonattainment and maintenance areas with respect to PM<sub>2.5</sub> from re-entrained road dust if the EPA Regional Administrator or the director of the State air agency has made a finding that re-entrained road dust emissions within the area are a significant contributor to the PM<sub>2.5</sub> nonattainment problem and has so notified the MPO and DOT, or if the applicable implementation plan (or implementation plan submission) includes re-entrained road dust in the approved (or adequate) budget as part of the reasonable further progress, attainment or maintenance strategy. Re-entrained