SUMMARY OF BOARD ITEM

ITEM NO. 01-5-2: PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER ISSUES RELATED TO THE REVIEW OF THE CALIFORNIA AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS FOR PARTICULATE MATTER AND SULFATES

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: This is an information item to update the Board on the issues and status of the review of these standards.

DISCUSSION: The Children's Environmental Health Protection Act [Senate Bill 25, Escutia; Stats. 1999, Ch. 731, Health and Safety Code section 39606 (d)(1)] requires the Air Resources Board, in consultation with the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, to review all California health-based ambient air quality standards to determine if any are inadequate to protect public health including infants and children. At the December 7, 2000, Board meeting, staff presented their evaluation, which identified the standards for particulate matter, including sulfates, to have the highest priority for review and revision. Health and Safety Code section 39606 (d) (2) requires that the Board revise the highest priority California ambient air quality standard by December 31, 2002. Due to the importance of the matter, the Board directed the staff to present their recommendations for revisions in April rather than December 2002.

Currently, the State has three standards to protect from pollution from particulate matter. They are a 24-hour standard for PM10 (particles less then 10 microns in diameter), an annual average PM10 standard, and a 24-hour sulfate standard (measured as total suspended particles). Staff from the Board and the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment will discuss issues related to the review of these standards. Issues to be addressed will include health effects, pollutant definition and particle size range, averaging times, and monitoring methods to support the standards. Staff will also discuss the schedule and important upcoming steps in the review.

SUMMARY AND IMPACTS: During the ongoing standards review, ARB and OEHHA staff are considering and evaluating new health and scientific information regarding the impacts of particulate matter air pollution. Staff will present an overview and update on issues involved in setting the standards and on the status of the review.