

Meeting Summary of the Senate Bill 375
Regional Targets Advisory Committee (RTAC)

Tuesday, February 3, 2009
Byron Sher Auditorium
Cal/EPA Headquarters Building
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Discussion Highlights

Market and Economic Trends

RTAC members discussed the influences that current market and economic trends might have on their mission to provide ARB with recommended factors and methodologies for setting targets. No conclusions were reached; however, the RTAC requested additional information for their discussion on the topic. RTAC members discussed a number of issues including:

- Factors that could help achieve an appropriate jobs/housing balance, including the provision of affordable housing near job centers and ensuring that private infrastructure costs and permitting timelines are minimized for commercial relocation or infill housing
- How income impacts consumer choice of location, and how location subsequently affects vehicle choice
- How to determine whether workers living in households located near job locations are commuting to those jobs or going to other job locations farther away
- How ARB would account for the varying costs associated with transportation when setting targets

Modeling

In addition to presentations by SACOG and Jerry Walters on modeling techniques and the “4-D” concepts, the RTAC discussed a number of issues related to available modeling tools, their capabilities, and the ability of the MPOs to use them. The RTAC expressed interest in additional information on this topic area as well. Other modeling issues discussed included:

- The relationship between RTAC efforts and the California Transportation Commission’s modeling guidelines
- The recognition that MPOs have varying modeling capabilities, and how the RTAC recommendations impact an MPO’s ability to provide adequate data to help ARB set regional targets

The Three-Legged Stool

The RTAC discussed the interaction between vehicle technology, fuels, and VMT. Members had differing views about the extent to which each should be considered in the RTAC's recommendations to ARB, and in particular, whether VMT is an appropriate metric. No conclusions were reached. RTAC members discussed a number of issues including:

- The impact of fuel price volatility and the ability to evaluate the impacts of price variations on greenhouse gas emissions
- The relationship between income, housing choice, and VMT generation
- The impact of infrastructure investments on induced travel
- The time component of realizing the benefits of policies that influence development
- The influence of transit service and its proximity to development

Suggested Key Questions for the RTAC to Address

The RTAC discussed and edited ARB staff's suggested key questions. The revisions will be posted separately.

Guiding Principles

The RTAC agreed to discuss guiding principles at a future meeting. The suggested list includes the following:

- Minimize administrative burden in program implementation and tracking
- Encourage sub-regional cooperation rather than competition
- Avoid conflicting statutory requirements, if any
- Maximize integrated system approach allowable under law
- Maximize co-benefits of air quality and economic growth
- Maximum transparency and clarity to gain public support
- Ensure adequate means of monitoring regional emissions to assess the target setting process in the future

Public Comment Highlights

There were six individuals who offered public comment. Their comments included the following observations and suggestions:

- The SACOG blueprint map does not consider existing environmental baselines (e.g. vernal pools, grasslands). SB 375 creates CEQA exemptions that reduce review, which could affect sensitive or irreplaceable habitats or resources.
- SACOG's MTP efforts have achieved significant air quality benefits for the region.
- Health-based issues must be considered.
- If the RTAC only addresses VMT, changing land use patterns could be left out of the discussion.
- Metrics may present a significant challenge for RTAC; greenhouse gas emissions are important as a metric, but the RTAC needs to measure how effective such metrics and strategies are.

RTAC Requests to Staff

1. RTAC requested additional background information on the current economic situation (e.g. the demand for housing, and the general trends of the housing market) so they can discuss how these factors will impact their deliberations.
2. RTAC also requested a Broad assessment of the modeling capabilities of the state's 18 MPOs.

Members Present:

Chesley, A.	Parkinson, P.
Cohen, S.	Parks, L.
Deveraux, G.	Rawson, M.
Doyle, S.	Wallerstein, B.
Eaken, A.	Walters, J.
Gallegos, G.	Whiteside, C.
Katz, R.	Wunderman, Jm.
Leahy, A.	Woo, M.
McKeever, M.	