



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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October 26, 2021

Richard Corey
California Air Resources Board
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Corey,

South Coast AQMD staff appreciates the opportunity to comment on CARB's Proposed Final Mobile Source Strategy (MSS). We appreciate the willingness of CARB staff to engage with us at length on the development of this document, and in related State Implementation Plan (SIP) planning processes. We recognize the value of the approach taken in the MSS to evaluate the emission reduction targets, and associated level of vehicle turnover needed to meet a variety of state goals. This comprehensive look at all vehicle types is a critical first step in an analysis of how to meet the primary goal of CARB and South Coast AQMD – achieving clean air that meets federal and state air quality standards for our millions of residents.

The significant challenge of achieving the mandates laid out in the Clean Air Act is made clear in the MSS as it demonstrates the immense scale of vehicle turnover that will be required. We share with CARB the important vision of a zero-emission future for our region and the state and applaud CARB's leadership in this area. But we cannot lose sight of the need to protect the public from smog and toxic diesel pollution today. Mobile sources make up more than 80 percent of the smog-forming emissions in our region, and CARB is the agency with primary authority in the state to regulate mobile sources. CARB recognizes this need; just four years ago CARB committed to reducing NO_x emissions from mobile sources by 113 tons per day in 2023, and 111 tons per day in 2031 in the South Coast Air Basin in their previous Mobile Source Strategy. South Coast AQMD relied on this commitment when we adopted our 2016 Air Quality Management Plan. We had no choice – with limited regulatory authority over mobile sources we have to rely on CARB, the state legislature, and the federal government to meet federal and state air quality standards. Absent action from these entities, our residents will continue to suffer from poor air quality and our region could face substantial economic impacts from federal sanctions. The current proposed MSS does not address the emission reductions that CARB previously committed to for the mandated 2023 deadline for the 1997 ozone standard, nor is it clear that the emission reductions envisioned in this MSS will be sufficient to meet the 2031 deadline for the 2008 ozone standard. Even if federal air quality standards cannot be met on time, we both have an obligation – legally and to the public – to meet them as quickly as possible.

We are concerned about the disconnect between the emission reductions needed, CARB's previous commitments, and what CARB has outlined in the proposed MSS. Because of the ongoing impact to public health from both smog and diesel, and the economic impacts from federal sanctions, it is imperative that we achieve emission reductions as quickly as feasible, regardless of technology type. This approach does not trade off achieving our shared vision of a zero emissions future for clean air goals – they go hand in hand. CARB's own analysis shows that after accounting for all of CARB's and EPA's current and proposed regulations, by 2031 over half of the heavy-duty truck fleet will still consist of older diesel vehicles. The current MSS ignores the hundreds of thousands of diesel trucks that need to be turned over – trucks that will continue emitting both NO_x and cancer-causing diesel pollution for decades.

CARB has stated in multiple public forums that addressing air pollution inequity and environmental justice is one of their highest priorities, and then lists the recent rulemaking efforts for heavy-duty trucks, including the Advanced Clean Truck, Advanced Clean Fleet, and Low NO_x Omnibus regulations. These are significant activities, however the emission reductions from these rules do not start until the 2024 to 2027 timeframe, and they are phased in slowly over time. To better demonstrate CARB's concern about environmental justice, there should be definitive actions in the near-term to reduce NO_x and diesel particulate from on-road sources before 2031. One of the primary near-term measures that CARB is relying on is the Heavy-Duty Inspection and Maintenance Rule. While this rule will provide a welcome means to address in-use emissions, the rule itself primarily corrects an unexpected increase in these emissions and does not appreciably reduce CARB's SIP obligation.

In addition to not laying out how the mandates of the Clean Air Act will be achieved, the proposed MSS does not appear to meet the full requirements of the authorizing statute for development of the MSS [Senate Bill 44 (2019)]. That statute requires that *“The state board's updates to the mobile source strategy shall include both of the following: (A) An identification of policies that provide advantages to fleets that reduce greenhouse gas emissions earlier than required by law. (B) The coordination of plans for the attainment of federal ambient air quality standards with relevant greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.”*¹ Since the MSS does not identify how federal ambient air quality standards will be achieved, it is not clear how the proposed actions are coordinated with the GHG reduction goals. Further, we are disappointed that while there are technologies available at scale today and in the near term that reduce GHGs, criteria pollutants, and toxics (e.g., trucks that meet CARB's lowest Optional Low NO_x standard and that use renewable fuels certified under CARB's Low Carbon Fuel Standard), CARB's actions clearly discourage their use, both through recent regulatory approaches and through its approach on funding programs.

Further, *“The state board shall recommend reasonable and achievable goals for reducing emissions from medium-duty and heavy-duty vehicles...based on factors that include...technological feasibility, and cost-effectiveness.”* The MSS does not contain any analysis of whether the technologies it recommends are cost-effective, nor what the potential

¹ Similarly, Health and Safety Code 39602.5 requires CARB to adopt measures that, together with District and EPA measures, are sufficient to meet the federal ambient air quality standards in all areas of the state.

costs could be. The analysis of potential costs of our transition to a zero emissions future is critical. This analysis must include both the costs expected to be borne by individuals, including owners of new vehicles and other mobile source equipment, and equally importantly, the anticipated level of public and private funding and resources that are needed to support this transition. There are multiple pathways to achieve that vision, and some necessarily will be more expensive than others, either collectively or for certain specific industries. We disagree with those who would argue that these costs are a reason not to act. Rather, we recommend that an analysis be conducted of the anticipated costs for these potential pathways, including a MSS-style comprehensive look across all mobile sources. From this analysis, the most cost-effective pathways can be pursued, and importantly, new policy actions can be identified and developed to reduce costs as much as possible. This push towards making cleaner technologies more affordable is critical given the significant scale of vehicle turnover that is needed. Absent this type of analysis, cost-effective technologies will be bypassed in favor of more expensive technologies, ultimately leaving much needed emission reductions on the table.

South Coast AQMD stands ready to continue its partnership with CARB in achieving clean air for our region. We stand side-by-side with CARB in pushing for widespread conversion of fleets to zero emissions as soon as feasible. However, this partnership must come with a shared understanding of the obligations we both face. Nonattainment is not only South Coast AQMD's burden to bear. Achieving clean air requires collective action by South Coast AQMD and the state and federal government. Given CARB's authority and mandate, it must lead. This leadership must not prioritize long-term goals over previous commitments and federal and state statutory mandates for near term action. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wayne Natri", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Wayne Natri
Executive Officer
South Coast AQMD

cc: Clerk of the Board, CARB