



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200
DALLAS, TX 75202-2733

JUL 17 2013

Mr. Robert Tally
Division Administrator - Texas
Federal Highway Administration
826 Federal Building, 300 East 8th Street
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Mr. Tally:

In May 2013, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) received conformity determination documents for the Houston-Galveston Area Council's (HGAC) 2035 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update and the FY 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), submitted by the HGAC (HGAC) for interagency consultation and review. A new conformity determination is necessary for the Houston/Galveston/Brazoria (Houston) Texas 8-hour ozone nonattainment area due to amendments of the RTP and TIP, the EPA's designation of the HGB area as nonattainment of the 2008 8-hour ozone standard (77 FR 30088), and the need to comply with the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act signed into law on July 6, 2012.

Any issues associated with the demonstration of conformity were addressed in conference calls and e-mails with the HGAC, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the Texas Department of Transportation, and the EPA. The criteria for our review and the interagency consultation process can be found at 40 CFR Part 93, Subpart A and guidance memoranda issued by the FHWA and the EPA for transportation conformity determinations.

Based on the documentation submitted to the EPA and discussed during the interagency consultation process, the estimated emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) for the 2035 RTP and the FY 2013-2016 TIP will be below the Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets (MVEB) established for these pollutants in the State Implementation Plan (SIP): The NO_x and VOC MVEBs were found adequate by the EPA on January 25, 2011 (76 FR 4342). We have no further comments and are supportive of a positive conformity finding by the Federal Highway Administration for the Houston area.

I appreciate your cooperation in consulting with us and ensuring all provisions of the transportation conformity rules have been properly addressed. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Jeff Riley of my staff at (214) 665-8542.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Guy Donaldson".

Guy Donaldson
Chief
Air Planning Section

cc: Mr. Alan Clark
Houston-Galveston Area Council

Dr. Graciela Lubertino
Houston-Galveston Area Council

Mr. Jose Campos
Federal Highway Administration

Ms. Shundreka Givan
Federal Highway Administration

Ms. Jamie Zech
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Ms. Jackie Ploch
Texas Department of Transportation

Ms. Michelle Conkle
Texas Department of Transportation