



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 6

1201 ELM STREET, SUITE 500
DALLAS, TX 75270

July 29, 2019

Mr. Al Alonzi
Division Administrator - Texas
Federal Highway Administration
300 East 8th Street, Suite 826
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Mr. Alonzi:

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed conformity determination documents for the *2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)*, and the *2019-2022 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)*, submitted by the Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC) for interagency consultation and review. A new conformity determination is necessary for the Houston/Galveston/Brazoria, Texas (HGB) 8-hour ozone nonattainment area due to the adoption of the new RTP and amended TIP, and EPA's June 4, 2018, designation of the HGB area as nonattainment of the 2015 8-hour ozone standard. The effective date of this nonattainment designation is August 3, 2018. Therefore, a transportation conformity determination for the HGB nonattainment area is required by August 3, 2019, to comply with 40 CFR 93.102(d) (*grace period for new nonattainment areas*).

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 information submitted to the EPA and discussed during the interagency consultation process, the estimated emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOC) for the 2045 RTP and 2019-2022 TIP will be below the motor vehicle emissions budgets (MVEBs) established for these pollutants in the State Implementation Plan: The NO_x and VOC MVEBs became effective on June 21, 2017, (82 FR 26091). We have no further comments and are supportive of a positive conformity finding by the FHWA for the HGB 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 at (214) 665-8377, or Jeff Riley of my staff at (214) 665-8542.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary A. Stanton".

Mary A. Stanton
Chief
State Implementation Section

cc: Mr. Chris Van Slyke
Houston-Galveston Area Council

Dr. Graciela Lubertino
Houston-Galveston Area Council

Ms. Barbara Maley
Federal Highway Administration

Mr. Jose Campos
Federal Highway Administration

Ms. Jamie Zech
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Mr. Carlos Swonke
Texas Department of Transportation

Mr. Peter Smith, P.E.,
Texas Department of Transportation