



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

September 17, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Tally:

In March 2012, 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 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) submitted by the HGAC for interagency consultation and review. A new conformity determination is necessary for the Houston/Galveston/Brazoria (Houston) 1997 8-hour ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard nonattainment area due to amendments of the RTP and TIP and the need to comply with the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users signed into law on August 10, 2005.

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 EPA for transportation conformity determinations.

Based on the documentation submitted to EPA and discussed during the interagency consultation process, the estimated emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) for the 2035 RTP, the 2011-2014 TIP, and the 2013-2016 TIP will be below the Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets (MVEB) established for these pollutants in the Attainment Demonstration and Reasonable Further Progress State Implementation Plans. The NOx and VOC MVEBs were found adequate by EPA on January 25, 2011 (76 FR 4342). We have no further comments and are supportive of a positive conformity finding by the FHWA 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,



Guy Donaldson
Chief
Air Planning Section

cc: Mr. Alan Clark
Houston-Galveston Area Council

Dr. Graciela Lubertino
Houston-Galveston Area Council

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