

AIR QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

Background

H-GAC staff has assembled a report which gives an overview of the current air quality situation within the region and details the actions being taken by H-GAC along with local governments and businesses which result in improved air quality within the Houston-Galveston-Brazoria (HGB) region. An electronic version of this report will be available for review at www.cleanairaction.org/2010progressreport.html on January 13, 2010.

Current Status

This report has been completed and covers many issues related to air quality in the Houston-Galveston-Brazoria region. Specifically included in the report are highlights of H-GAC funded or administered air quality programs including:

Vanpool Program:

This program is currently in its 12th year of operation and is the third largest vanpool program in the nation, serving 7,481 persons. There are currently 739 vanpools with 62,975,633 VMT and 54.91 tons of NO_x reduced from January 2009-October 2009.

- The CMAQ cost of the vanpool program is approximately \$142,381 per ton of NO_x reduced.
- The STP cost of the vanpool program is approximately \$327,977 per ton of NO_x reduced.
- The combined cost of the vanpool program is approximately \$235,179 per ton of NO_x reduced.

NuRide:

H-GAC's contract with NuRide is now in its third year of operation and, with over 13,000 participants, is one of the largest and most successful virtual rideshare programs in the nation. Since its inception in 2005, the program has achieved a VMT reduction of nearly 25,000,000 (excluding vanpools) and a reduction of 15.16 tons of NO_x and 14.95 tons of VOC.

- The cost of the NuRide program is approximately \$152,511 per ton of NO_x reduced.

Pilot Programs:

H-GAC's commuter and transit services pilot projects were initiated in 1999 and are focused on providing additional commuting options for the region. Currently, H-GAC funds five pilot programs with a combined monthly ridership of 21,744 and a combined monthly VMT reduction of 362,046, with a sixth program awaiting final approval.

- By utilizing buses meeting the .2 grams per brake horsepower-hour standard and by calculating cost effectiveness over a five year period, future projects should be able to meet or exceed a cost effectiveness threshold of \$150,000 per ton of NO_x reduced.

Telework:

H-GAC's Regional Teleworking Program is now in its tenth year and is currently tracking over 2,000 teleworkers from 27 organizations. Program staff anticipates an additional 1,500 teleworkers will join the program by the end of 2010.

- The cost of the Telework program is approximately \$87,796 per ton of NO_x reduced.

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Best Workplaces for Commuters:

As of August 2009, 132 employers have received recognition as BWC companies. Through these participating companies, the Houston-Galveston Area BWC program has made significant strides in changing employers' understanding of their role in congestion mitigation and improving air quality in the region.

- Significant emission reductions have resulted from this program in conjunction with other commute alternatives: these are not quantified here to prevent double counting of reductions.

Clean Vehicles/Clean School Buses:

Over the past five years, H-GAC's Clean Vehicles Program has replaced over 2,045 heavy duty engines and alternative fueling stations and reduced approximately 1,089 tons of NOx per year. The Clean School Buses program has replaced 417 school bus engines which have reduced approximately 45 tons of NOx. Due to the recent downturn in the regional economy, more stringent financial standards have been adopted by H-GAC when evaluating potential private business recipients (For a detailed description of these requirements, please see attached).

Drayage Emission Reduction Act (DERA):

The Environmental Protection Agency announced that \$9 million of the ARRA SmartWaySM DERA grant had been awarded to H-GAC to develop a bridge loan program to help drayage owner-operations, and related small businesses, cover the cost of purchasing cleaner, more fuel-efficient trucks. Drayage trucks are heavy-duty vehicles that transport shipping containers over very short distances within an urban area, and are known to be a significant contributor to air pollution.

Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP):

SEP funds come from SEP funds consist of fines levied by the TCEQ or EPA and are administered locally by the Houston-Galveston Area Emission Reduction Credit Organization (AERCO). Historically SEP funds have been distributed through H-GACs Clean School Bus Program. Recently local government fleets with diesel engines were added to the list of eligible projects.

Outreach Events 2009/2010:

In 2009, Air Quality/Commute Solutions staff participated in or hosted 18 major events as well dozens of other smaller events and spoke with tens of thousands of citizens in the region. Staff also gave presentations in seven of the eight non-attainment counties and met with numerous local municipalities. For 2010, preparation has already begun for such annual events as "Fresh Air Friday," "Advancing the Choice," "Commute Solutions Month," Drayage Port Truck Workshops, "Clean School Bus Workshops," and many more.

Action Requested

For information only