

**AGENDA ITEM 11**

Consider approving resolution to adopt air quality control measures for regional Ozone Flex Agreement.

Moved: **Commissioner Heiligenstein**

Seconded: **Commissioner Boatright**

Motion: To approve a resolution to adopt air quality control measures for a regional Ozone Flex Agreement.

Vote: 4 - 0 with Commissioner Limmer absent from the dais.

< Attachment >



## **O3 Flex Plan Overview**

### **What Is The O3 Flex Plan?**

A cooperative effort being made by local governments in the 5-county potential ozone nonattainment area that includes Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, and Williamson counties. By voluntarily committing to adopting emissions reduction strategies, we can begin to see results sooner, and potentially affect our standing with regard to the ozone standard. Because everyone contributes to the problem, then everyone should contribute to the solution, proportionate to their contribution. In other words, those who contribute most to the problem will contribute the most to the solution.

### **Who Has Committed to the Plan?**

Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, and Williamson counties, as well as the cities of Bastrop, Elgin, Luling, Lockhart, San Marcos, Round Rock, and Austin.

### **What Are We Trying To Accomplish?**

By being pro-active, we are controlling our future. Rather than sitting back and waiting for the federal government to impose sanctions or a prescribed plan, we are crafting a plan that is locally generated and is fair and equitable for all those involved. While our region has been prosperous and realized significant growth over the last decade, we have seen a resulting decline in air quality. There are a number of negative outcomes that can result from this. These include impacts to our health, quality of life, and economy. Therefore, it is in our best interest to voluntarily adopt measures that reduce emissions of ozone forming NOx (nitrogen oxides) and VOCs (volatile organic compounds).

As a region, we have a unique opportunity to work with EPA and TNRCC to create a local plan to improve our air quality and facilitate compliance with the health based standards for ground level ozone. By doing so, we are not subject to being designated as a nonattainment area for the one-hour ozone standard for a period of five years, even if we violate the standard during this time. Additionally, measures taken now to improve our status in meeting the eight-hour standard will be taken into consideration if we are designated in nonattainment or being considered for designation by EPA.

### **What Led to the Creation of the O3 Flex Plan?**

In 1997, EPA implemented a new standard for exposure to ground level ozone known as the eight-hour standard. Due to the findings of numerous health studies, it was determined that the one-hour ozone standard might not provide the "ample margin of safety" called for in the Clean Air Act. This was due to ozone health effects occurring in humans at levels below the one-hour 125 parts per billion (ppb) standard during medical research studies. As a result,