

March 9, 2012

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EPA Docket Center
EPA West (Air Docket)
Attention Docket ID Number EPA-HQ-OAR-2011-0435
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mailcode: 2822T
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Sir/Madam:

On behalf of the National Association of Clean Air Agencies (NACAA), thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposed National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants: Group IV Polymers and Resins; Pesticide Active Ingredient Production; and Polyether Polyols Production, which were published in the *Federal Register* on January 9, 2012 (77 *Federal Register* 1268). NACAA is a national, non-partisan, non-profit association of air pollution control agencies in 45 states, the District of Columbia, four territories and over 165 metropolitan areas. The air quality professionals in our member agencies have vast experience dedicated to improving air quality in the U.S. The comments we offer are based upon that experience. The views expressed in these comments do not necessarily represent the positions of every state and local air pollution control agency in the country.

Eight years after the establishment of the Maximum Achievable Control Technology (MACT) standard for a source category, EPA is required to assess the residual risk that remains from emissions from the source category, as well as examine whether advancements in control technology warrant additional requirements. NACAA supports EPA's decision to require additional emission reductions beyond the original MACT standard for the subject source categories. We offer the following comments about specific elements contained in the proposal.

Additional Requirements – Because of the adverse health effects associated with exposure to the substances emitted by the Group IV Polymers and Resins facilities, NACAA is pleased that EPA is proposing additional control requirements in this action.¹ For example, the agency evaluated and is proposing measures for previously unaddressed emission points, such as from equipment leaks and process contact cooling towers in one of the Group IV subcategories. We commend EPA for identifying these hazardous emissions and for proposing to regulate them at this point.

¹ 77 *Federal Register* 1294.

Unacceptable Risks – We note that the some of the risks are above the threshold amount of one for the maximum chronic noncancer inhalation Target Organ-Specific Hazard Index (TOSHI).² We are concerned that EPA has not reduced this risk to below one and recommend that EPA reexamine these findings and take the necessary steps to ensure that the public is protected in accordance with the intent of the Clean Air Act. In addition to concerns about these specific findings, NACAA is troubled by deficiencies in the risk assessment methodology upon which EPA bases its proposed decisions and recommends that EPA address them as well prior to issuing a final standard. These are discussed further in the following points.

Allowable Emissions – NACAA recommends that EPA consider potential or allowable emissions, rather than actual emissions, as much as possible in evaluating residual risk. Since facility emissions could increase over time for a variety of reasons, and with them the associated impacts, the use of potential or allowable emissions is more appropriate. We believe an analysis based on actual emissions from a single point in time could underestimate the residual risk from a source category. Further, the major source hazardous air pollutant (HAP) thresholds are based on maximum potential-to-emit, as opposed to actual emissions, and air agencies issue permits based on potential emissions. Limiting the scope of a risk evaluation to actual emissions would be inconsistent with the applicability section of Part 63 rules. We were pleased to see that EPA used allowable emissions in parts of the rulemaking but were concerned about the fact that EPA continues to use actual emissions in other parts of its assessment.³ NACAA encourages the agency to use allowable emissions in this rule and in the future.

Property-line Concentrations – In assessing the cancer risks related to the source category, EPA used long-term concentrations affecting the most highly exposed census block for each facility.⁴ This analysis dilutes the effect of sources' emissions by estimating the impact at the centroid of the census block instead of at the property line or wherever the maximum exposed individual is. Census blocks can be large geographically, depending on the population density, so the maximum point of impact can be far from the centroid, including at or near the property line where people may live or work. EPA itself alludes to this problem in the preamble to the proposed rule.⁵ Further, even if the area near the property line is not developed, over time homes and businesses could locate closer to the facility. While it is possible that population distribution is homogenous over a census block, this assumption is not necessarily accurate in considering the predicted impacts from the location of a source. Using HEM-3, EPA can identify the maximum individual risk at any point in a census block that is within a 50-kilometer radius from the center of the modeled facility. Based on HEM-3's power and ability, NACAA suggests that EPA abandon its use of the predicted chronic exposures at the census block centroid as surrogates for the exposure concentrations for all people living in that block. Rather, we recommend that EPA use the truly maximum individual risk, irrespective of its location in the census block, in its section 112(f)(2) risk assessments.

Environmental Justice – We commend EPA for considering environmental justice (EJ) issues by expressing concern about the disproportionate impacts of HAP emissions on certain social, demographic and economic groups.⁶ NACAA has recommended in the past that EPA conduct

² 77 *Federal Register* 1286-1298.

³ 77 *Federal Register* 1276.

⁴ 77 *Federal Register* 1277.

⁵ 77 *Federal Register* 1281.

⁶ 77 *Federal Register* 1306.

the demographic analysis on individuals projected to experience a risk greater than 1-in-1-million and *also* on individuals living within five kilometers of the facility, regardless of projected risk, consistent with the approach used for the Hard and Decorative Chromium Electroplating and Chromium Anodizing Tanks source category.⁷ Therefore, we commend EPA for focusing on those populations within three miles (approximately five kilometers) of the affected sources.⁸

NACAA continues to recommend that the rule writers work with the EPA Office of Environmental Justice to develop criteria and specific guidance on how to interpret and apply the outcome of EJ analyses in the rulemaking process. Additionally, poverty statistics used to identify low-income communities should be updated to include 2010 census data, rather than relying on older information. The number of people in poverty in 2010 is the largest number in the 52 years for which poverty estimates have been published.⁹

Acute Exposure – We have expressed our concerns in the past with EPA’s use of Acute Exposure Guideline Levels (AEGLs) or Emergency Response Planning Guidelines (ERPGs) values to address acute exposures in the residual risk assessments. These limits were developed for accident release emergency planning and are not appropriate for assessing daily human exposure scenarios. In the December 2002 EPA document, "A Review of the Reference Dose and Reference Concentration Processes," EPA stated that the primary purpose of the AEGL program is to develop guidelines for once-in-a-lifetime short-term exposures to airborne concentrations of acutely toxic chemicals. They are not meant to evaluate the acute impacts from routine emissions that occur over the life of a facility. Unlike the reference concentrations (RfCs) for chronic exposures, the AEGLs and ERPGs do not include adequate safety and uncertainty factors and cannot be relied upon to protect the public from the adverse effects of exposure to toxic air pollutants. The use of AEGLs or ERPGs in residual risk assessments is not appropriate and does not ensure that public health is adequately protected from the acute impacts of HAP exposure. We are gratified to see that EPA has increased its reliance on the California Reference Exposure Levels (RELs) to address acute exposures in the residual risk assessments and we continue to urge EPA to use the RELs for these assessments.¹⁰

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposal. Please contact us if we can provide additional information.

Sincerely,



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Michigan
Co-Chair
NACAA Air Toxics Committee



Robert H. Colby
Chattanooga, Tennessee
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⁷ 75 *Federal Register* 65089.

⁸ 77 *Federal Register* 1307.

⁹ US Census 2011. *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2010*. Available at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p60-239.pdf>.

¹⁰ 77 *Federal Register* 1278.