

TREASURE VALLEY AIR QUALITY COUNCIL

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Treasure Valley Air Quality Council Presents Idaho Lawmakers with Plan to Improve Air Quality

Boise, Idaho-The Treasure Valley Air Quality Council presented its final plan to Idaho lawmakers today. The contents of the plan are designed to further the mission of the council, which is to protect, preserve, and improve air quality in the Treasure Valley.

The 100-plus page final plan includes data, research, and statistics regarding air quality standards, forecast for future air emissions, options for improving air quality, and conclusions and recommendations. The majority of the plan is a summary of the science surrounding air quality issues in the Treasure Valley airshed.

During two hearings held in Boise and Nampa in January the council received public feedback to the plan. The council also collected written responses from the public, local business and government leaders, and government entities.

"We believe we have done what the legislature asked us to do which included making modifications to our final plan in response to the concerns we heard," said Pete O'Neill, chairman, Treasure Valley Air Quality Council. "We now need to move forward with diligence and momentum. There are consequences for not meeting federal air quality standards. The findings of this council and the recommendations in this plan are important for economic vitality and for our health."

The plan includes a request to develop a legislative task force to be comprised of representatives from Ada and Canyon counties. This task force will work with the council to write specific legislation and ordinances required for implementation of an emissions testing program in Ada and Canyon counties. The council has submitted the plan to the 2007 Idaho Legislature as required.

"We think the creation of a legislative task force to work with the council over the next year is the best step forward for developing legislation and ordinances that will be embraced and implemented by both Ada and Canyon counties," said Dale Stephenson, vice-chairman of the Treasure Valley Air Quality

Council. “We look forward to working closely with lawmakers as we prepare our detailed implementation of an emissions testing model for legislative consideration next year.”

The final plan identifies cost-effective and research-based findings to complement or modify existing methods to improve air quality and increase public awareness. It also emphasizes the value of public education about emissions contributions and regional partnerships that support uniform ordinances for local air quality.

The Regional Air Quality Council Act defines the Treasure Valley as the geographic areas of Ada and Canyon counties, although it recognizes that the airshed extends beyond those boundaries. Because air quality is undeniably tied to population growth, the plan addresses current and future growth estimates in both counties where projected growth rates indicate the Treasure Valley airshed will be home to approximately one million people by 2030, according to U.S. Census forecasts.

Recommendations in the Treasure Valley Air Quality Council Plan include:

- **Enhance public education and awareness and establish an air quality recognition and award program** – Implement an enhanced and coordinated education and awareness program and fund the program through the allocation of a portion of the vehicle emissions testing fee. Strengthen and expand the existing “Treasure the Valley’s Air” education and awareness program, and then operate the program in cooperation with existing Commuterride, ride-share, and other alternative transportation programs. Establish an annual “Treasure the Valley’s Air” award and present it to businesses, public agencies, or other entities who voluntarily implement actions to reduce air pollution.
- **Establish a vehicle emissions testing program in both Ada and Canyon counties** – Create an on-board diagnostic (OBD) vehicle emission testing program in both counties. The emissions testing program should be implemented through the adoption of legislation and ordinances that require one entity to oversee vehicle emissions testing for both counties. All vehicles 1996 or newer should be tested every other year, with the exception that new vehicles need not be tested until they are five years old. A remote sensing program should be implemented to identify gross polluters for all model year vehicles. A portion of the vehicle emissions testing fee should be used to fund the comprehensive air quality education and awareness program.
- **Implement stage one vapor recovery at retail gas stations** - DEQ must adopt rules through the negotiated rule-making process requiring stage one vapor recovery to be installed and operational

at all retail gasoline stations in Ada and Canyon counties by the end of 2011. The negotiated rules should consider the establishment of incentives, low-interest loans, or other funding mechanisms to assist station owners with the expense of installing the required equipment.

- **Adopt uniform ordinances for local air quality problems** - Uniform ordinances must be adopted by all municipalities within both counties to address open burning, burning bans, and fugitive dust control from road building, dirt hauling, construction, and related activities.
- **Implement regional land use and transportation planning** - All state and local government agencies with jurisdiction over land use and transportation planning should implement the goals, objectives, and policies established by Communities in Motion and Blueprint for Good Growth.
- **Establish a legislative task force** – A legislative task force should be created to assist the council with the analysis and development of the legislation and ordinances necessary to implement an emissions testing program in Ada and Canyon counties.

The Treasure Valley Air Quality Plan is available in electronic form at www.treasurevalleyair.org. It is also available for review at DEQ, 1410 N. Hilton, Boise.

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About the Treasure Valley Air Quality Council:

The Treasure Valley Air Quality Council was formed by the Treasure Valley and Regional Air Quality Act that was signed into law in March, 2005. The 14-member council was appointed by former Governor and current U.S. Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne in November, 2005. As mandated by the act, the council has submitted a Treasure Valley Air Quality Plan for review to the Idaho legislature. For more information visit www.treasurevalleyair.org