



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

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OFFICE OF
AIR AND RADIATION

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Transportation Conformity Pilot Program: Request for Expedited Review of Conformity SIPs for the Pilot Program

FROM: Mary D. Nichols *Mary D. Nichols*
Assistant Administrator
for Air and Radiation

TO: EPA Regional Administrators

I am writing to describe how I envision the roles that headquarters and regional offices can play in implementing the Conformity Pilot Program. As you may know, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed the Conformity Pilot Program's application and selection process on July 9, 1996, and we are currently developing the final rule. In response to comments and with the advice of the Office of General Counsel (OGC), EPA intends to require that, in order for selected areas to participate in the pilot program, EPA must approve conformity state implementation plans (SIPs) containing the pilot area conformity procedures. I appreciate your cooperation and any assistance that your offices can provide in expediting review and approval of these SIPs.

The Conformity Pilot Program is a collaborative effort by EPA and the Department of Transportation (DOT) to seek out and test innovative methods to satisfy conformity regulatory requirements. The original transportation conformity rule was published in November of 1993 in response to the conformity provisions of the Clean Air Act. The transportation conformity rule requires federally funded or approved transportation activities to be consistent with air quality planning and SIP mobile emissions targets.

I look forward to working with you in a joint effort to implement a successful Conformity Pilot Program and provide areas flexibility in achieving cleaner air. Although EPA has not received any pilot applications since the program was proposed, several agencies have expressed interest in submitting pilot applications. These agencies are the Southern California Association of Governments, Washington Department of Ecology, Birmingham Regional Planning Commission in Alabama, San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District, Idaho's Division of Environmental Quality, and the Regional Transportation Commission in Clark County, Las Vegas.

Thank you again for your assistance in the Conformity Pilot Program. Please have your staff contact Meg Patulski at (313) 741-7842 with any comments or concerns about the SIP review process outlined above.

cc: Regional Air Division Directors
Richard D. Wilson
John Seitz