

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Pete Lahm, FEJF Co-Chair

FROM: Carl Gossard, NBTT Co-Chair  
Darla Potter, NBTT Co-Chair

DATE: October 16, 2000

RE: WRAP B FEJF B Natural Background Task Team Briefing

The WRAP Ambient Monitoring and Reporting Forum (AMRF) is charged with developing an approach for estimating the haze levels associated with natural sources by January 1<sup>st</sup> 2002. The AMRF has requested that the Fire Emissions Joint Forum (FEJF) develop a tracking system as well as a policy recommendation that allows for the classification of all fire emissions into natural and man-made source categories that will be used to estimate natural emissions from fire for the WRAP. As a result of that request the FEJF formed a Natural Background Task Team (NBTT).

The FEJF formed the NBTT to accomplish two tasks. These tasks are to:

- < Develop and utilize a methodology to classify fire and their subsequent emissions into visibility impairment classifications (e.g., Anatural@ or Aanthropogenic@), and
- < Develop guidelines for tracking each fire=s visibility impairment classification in conjunction with the tracking of each fire=s emissions.

### ISSUE

The FEJF and its NBTT are addressing the following issue.

Under the federal Regional Haze Rule issued in July 1999, natural visibility conditions must be defined for each of the federally protected Class I parks and wilderness areas in the United States. In the West, a variety of natural and human-caused sources affect our ability to see the distance, color and clarity for which our landscape is famous.

In the Preamble to the Regional Haze Rule, the Environmental Protection Agency recognized the need for land managers to utilize fire as a resource management tool. Fire B wildland, prescribed and agriculture B can, on an episodic basis, contribute significantly to visibility impairment. Land managers B federal, tribal, state and private B recognize that clean air and visibility, as well as the protection of public health, must be considered in managing lands with fire.

Should some amount of prescribed fire be considered part of natural visibility? How much? Where? When? How do allowances for emissions from fires affect the allowances available for other human activities?

## **WORKSHOPS**

Two workshops will be conducted by the FEJF and its NBTT to explore the above questions. Specifically, workshop participants will assess the potential policy options supported by a process and product based on a method to classify fires and their subsequent emissions into two classifications of visibility impairment such as **Natural** or **Anthropogenic**, as well as guidelines for tracking each fire's visibility impairment classification in conjunction with tracking each fire's emissions.

On January 24-25 in Denver, approximately 75 senior staff members will review, critique, and modify a draft methodology to classify fire, and the guidelines for tracking each fire's visibility impairment classification. On March 15 in Phoenix, approximately 20 policy makers and opinion leaders will evaluate and modify the classification method and identify the policy implications of its implementation. They will be supported by approximately 20 senior staff members.

Workshop results will be approved by the FEJF for submission to the WRAP's AMRF for inclusion in their overall package examining a full range of natural background conditions. That overall package will be subject to public review and comment. The final package will be subject to WRAP approval.

The Northern Air Managers Committee has approved \$50,000 for the preparation and hosting of the Natural Visibility Workshops for Senior Staff and Policy Makers/Opinion Leaders.

## **WORKSHOP NOMINEES**

The NBTT will be soliciting nominations of individuals willing to roll up their sleeves and dedicate themselves to the task at hand. Participants in both workshops will engage in facilitated discussions to fulfill each workshop's objectives. Participants should expect to bring their skills and expertise to the table, while representing their respective stakeholder group. Nominees should represent federal, tribal, state, and local governments, large and small industries, agriculture, environmental and citizen groups, and the academic community.

Participants will be chosen from the list of nominees on the basis of the agency, tribe, business, or organization they represent, their experience and expertise in fire and air quality matters, and geographical representation. Workshop participants will be notified at least one month prior to their respective workshop. Those not chosen to participate will remain on the notification list for future activities about fire and visibility impairment.

Please contact either of the Natural Background Task Team Co-Chairs, Carl Gossard (208-387-5419) or Darla Potter (307-777-7346), for further information.