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DOT, EPA JOIN TO COMBAT  
TRANSPORTATION-CAUSED  
POLLUTION IN URBAN AREAS

The Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency announced today a joint effort to help cities improve air quality through transportation planning.

"Motor vehicles are a major source of urban smog," Deputy EPA Administrator Barbara Blum pointed out. "We must improve the use of cars, trucks and buses, plan and manage our urban transportation systems more efficiently in order to reduce air pollution."

In accordance with the 1977 amendments to the Clean Air Act, DOT and EPA released guidelines today to help urban planning agencies in their efforts to attain the national air quality standards required by December 31, 1982.

At a news conference, Assistant Secretary of Transportation Chester Davenport, Jack Watson, Assistant to the President, and Blum, set forth the goals of the two agencies in responding to President Carter's directives for cooperation on major urban programs.

Davenport said the joint planning guidelines EPA and DOT are releasing "provide guidance to metropolitan planning agencies in developing their local programs to reduce transportation-related air pollution."

In addition, Davenport said, a memorandum of understanding between the agencies "establishes a DOT/EPA coordination process to reduce potentially overlapping and inconsistent activities and provide for a single federal decision on local clean air proposals."

EPA estimates that a number of large urban areas will need to improve transit systems, build bus lanes, establish car pools, adopt staggered work hours, start van pool programs and search for other ways to make the transportation of people less polluting and more efficient.

Under the 1977 law, national air quality standards must be attained by December 31, 1982. Under certain conditions, the law allows urban areas with extremely bad air quality extensions of time to 1987.

"Although some urban areas may be granted extensions beyond 1982," Blum said, "badly polluted areas must establish an effective planning process as outlined in these guidelines before such extensions will be granted."

Cities considered by EPA most likely to be unable to meet the 1982 deadline include, among others, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Philadelphia, San Diego, Baltimore, Milwaukee, Denver, San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Detroit and Pittsburgh.

Davenport noted that urban areas "unable to meet national air quality standards will be required to establish transportation programs such as improved public transit, incentives for increasing bus and carpool use and possibly parking management and auto-restricted zones."

The guidelines apply to all public agencies responsible for planning or implementing the transportation portions of clean air plans. DOT and EPA regional offices will be responsible for monitoring the process outlined in the guidelines.

Blum and Davenport both pointed out that the agreement between the two agencies was specifically encouraged by President Carter. It supports the President's desire that federal agencies work more closely together to solve mutual problems.

DOT and EPA will hold workshops for local officials in the near future to discuss the guidelines.

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