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EPA's Transport Rule is Positive Step Toward Meeting New Air Standards & Protecting Public Health

(July 6, 2010, Washington, DC) – The Ozone Transport Commission (OTC), an organization of twelve northeastern states and the District of Columbia, today commends EPA on taking an innovative and progressive approach to deal with air pollution that crosses state boundaries and causes lung damage, respiratory illness and premature mortality. EPA's proposed rule responds to the legal issues that caused the D.C. Circuit Court to remand the 2005 Clean Air Interstate Rule (CAIR) back to EPA. The proposed rule provides a strong, science-based methodology that can achieve significant reductions in air pollution from large power plants. The OTC states encourage EPA to base the final version of the rule it has proposed today on the tighter, health-based ozone standard that EPA is expected to issue in August.

There are a number of provisions in EPA's proposed rule that will significantly reduce air pollution from power plants transported from upwind states into and within the OTC region. The proposed rule limits the degree to which such plants can engage in interstate trading of emissions. By restricting interstate trading, each state will be required to reduce its share of transported pollution, as required by the DC Court decision. The proposal also features a methodology for more quickly assessing transported air pollution. The OTC states support EPA's use of a streamlined methodology for getting additional emission reductions in the timeframe needed to meet the new ozone standard and will review EPA's methodology in detail.

"We applaud EPA's commitment to providing healthy air through a combination of new strong, health-based standards and new tools to reduce transported air pollution," said MassDEP Commissioner Laurie Burt, OTC's Chair. "We are relying on EPA to set the most stringent caps that are feasible in the final transport rule to ensure additional emission reductions, as they will be needed to attain the more health protective ozone standard anticipated in August."

"The OTC states will review the details of the proposed transport rule and provide additional feedback to EPA," said Anna Garcia, OTC's Executive Director. "We look forward to working with EPA to ensure that there is a strong final rule to achieve cleaner air and improve public health as quickly as possible. The health of our citizens depends on these steps being taken now."