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### **STUDY SHOWS VISIBILITY SIGNIFICANTLY DEGRADED BY AIR POLLUTION**

(Washington, DC)-- The Ozone Transport Commission (OTC) released a new report today which documents the nature of regional haze across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic States. The report, which was produced for OTC's regional haze planning effort by the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM), indicates that atmospheric visibility in the region has been degraded by air pollution sources, and that the problem is regional, extending over hundreds of miles.

"Air pollution issues, such as haze, are multi-State issues, not just local problems," said Jane Nishida, Chair of OTC, and Secretary of the Maryland Department of the Environment. "This report will help public understanding of the nature of the haze problem in our region."

Bob Varney, Vice Chair of OTC and Commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, stated "Understanding the regional haze problem is the first step towards improvement of visibility in our cities, our parks, and our wilderness areas."

"This report represents the first comprehensive effort to assess the causes of regional haze in our region. In combination with anticipated EPA regulations on the application of retrofit technology, this analysis will form the early basis for State efforts to address our regional haze problem," said Carmine DiBattista, Chairman of NESCAUM and Air Management Bureau Chief of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

The report finds that current visibility conditions in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic are significantly degraded relative to natural conditions and that sulfates are a major contributor to visibility impairment in the region. The fine particles that contribute to haze in the Northeast are also significant contributors to acid deposition and eutrophication of bays and coastal estuaries, and also pose a significant risk to public health.

OTC has been developing long term plans to evaluate the nature of the haze problem, in collaboration with NESCAUM and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Air Management Association (MARAMA). States are required over the next

several years to submit plans to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), under EPA's regional haze rule, which was finalized in 1999. States that contribute to regional haze problems are encouraged to cooperate with other States through multi-State organizations like OTC to develop regional solutions. Regional haze is related to other regional pollutants, such as fine particles and ground-level ozone, the primary constituent in smog.

OTC was created by Congress through the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont, are working with OTC on this effort, in addition to NESCAUM, MARAMA, Federal land managers, and Indian Tribes.

A copy of the report can be found on OTC's website at [www.sso.org/otc](http://www.sso.org/otc), and also on NESCAUM's website at [www.nescaum.org](http://www.nescaum.org).