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STUDY IDENTIFIES PRIORITIES FOR REGIONAL HAZE INVENTORIES

(Washington, DC) - The Ozone Transport Commission (OTC) and the Southeastern States Air Resource Managers (SESARM) announced the release of a report that recommends actions by state, local, and tribal agencies and by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to improve the emissions inventories needed to understand the sources of pollutants that cause regional haze. Regional haze is caused by gases and particles in the atmosphere that scatter and absorb light. The report suggests regional collaboration and notes that resource needs are substantial.

"It's very important for us to gain a better understanding of which sources of fine particle emissions contribute to unhealthy air quality and degrade visibility," said Ann Marie DeBiase, Director of Maryland's Air and Radiation Management Administration. "Implementing these recommendations will help us develop better air quality improvement plans."

Ken Colburn, Director of New Hampshire's Air Resources Division, commented, "Getting a better handle on emissions that cause fine particle pollution will help us address a number of important air quality problems. We need a multi-pollutant approach to solving our air pollution problems," he continued. "There are important links between fine particle pollution, visibility, acid rain, and ozone smog pollution. For example, sulfate particles contribute to both haze and acid rain."

Phil Brantley, Executive Director of SESARM, said, "It is important that we enhance our emissions inventories because they form the basis for decisions about pollution control strategies. A partnership between states, local governments, and EPA will improve our efforts to achieve clean air."

The report was prepared for OTC and SESARM by Pacific Environmental Services, Inc. under a contract managed by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Air Management Association (MARAMA), and is available on the MARAMA website at www.marama.org.

The report indicates that an updated emissions inventory for the eastern US will be needed to assess contributions to regional haze at certain parks and wilderness areas in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions. Such inventories must include emissions of fine particles, sulfur dioxide, organics, nitrogen oxides and ammonia, all of which contribute to the formation of regional haze. While EPA's existing National Emissions Inventory provides good data for some air pollutants and sources, such as sulfur dioxide, volatile organic compounds (VOC) and nitrogen oxides for major sources, there is a great deal of uncertainty for other pollutants, such as ammonia and non-VOC organics. Furthermore, the fine particle emissions inventories for most states have not undergone the extensive review and quality assurance that are needed to develop emissions control plans and programs.

OTC was created by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 to coordinate ground-level ozone planning in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic region. It was selected to coordinate the development of one of five regional haze planning organizations (RPOs) in the country to address visibility concerns and assist states and tribes in complying with EPA's regional haze rules. MARAMA is a cooperative association of Mid-Atlantic air pollution control agencies that promotes cooperation and coordination among the air quality programs of member state and local agencies. MARAMA and the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM) conduct technical work in cooperation with OTC as part of the RPO effort. SESARM is a nonprofit corporation representing southeastern states and one of its purposes is improving the overall effectiveness of states in meeting national air quality goals. SESARM is one of the five national RPOs, and has joined with OTC to co-sponsor this project.