



BILL WHITE
MAYOR

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF HOUSTON
TEXAS

August 2, 2005

Jane D. Owen, President
Citizens League for Environmental Action Now
5120 Woodway, Suite 9004
Houston, Texas 77056

Dear Jane:

Thank you for your letter of July 18. Your tireless work for clean air in Houston is greatly appreciated. I share your goal in making Houston known as a leader in energy solutions and environmentalism.

I have seen the agreement you referenced, including the twelve items for suggested action. The City of Houston is already engaged in several of the items, and we plan to do more as time goes on. I am enclosing a copy of our Air Quality Plan for FY2006 which outlines the specific goals and objectives of my administration over the coming twelve months. The first item in our plan involves evaluating and refining our emissions reduction plan, and for the first time we have included CO2 in our emissions inventory.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill White".

Bill White
Mayor

BW:lvv

Attachment

CITY OF HOUSTON'S AIR QUALITY PROGRAM OPERATING PLAN FY06

GOAL #1: Provide regional leadership for the governmental sector by reducing emissions in City operations, including the operations of city contractors.

Objective #1: Refine the Emissions Reduction Plan of 2000 based upon the evaluation of the plan that will be completed in August 2005.

Objective#2: Continue to reduce emissions from the city's fleet by purchasing hybrid and other lower emissions vehicles and by converting or retrofitting diesel equipment.

Objective #3: Work with Greater Houston Partnership, HGAC, the University of Houston, and HARC to obtain CARB and/or EPA certification for the diesel engine testing facility at the University of Houston.

Objective #4: Provide incentives to the City's contractors to use clean construction equipment and work with other governmental entities to encourage their use of such contract provisions.

Objective #5: Develop an Urban Heat Island plan for the City focusing first on tree planting, roofing materials, and paving surfaces.

Objective #6: Increase recycling within the City through the development of a new model and implementation of a pilot program to test the model.

Objective #7: Develop sustainability indicators for Houston.

Objective #8: Develop and, where possible, implement new "commute solutions" programs including hybrid vehicles' use of HOV lanes and development of HOT lanes.

GOAL #2: Support initiatives to study and address the health effects of air pollution

Objective #1: Participate in the Mayor's Task Force on the Health Effects of Air Pollutants and provide data and technical support to the Task Force.

Objective#2: Through participation in TERC, ensure that health effects research is undertaken by qualified scientists with all available funding.

Objective #3: Ensure that TCEQ engages in health effects research for which it is funded.

GOAL #3: Participate in and enhance the ambient-air monitoring network to ensure high quality data for emissions tracking and health risk evaluations, integrating data from external monitoring sources.

Objective #1: Pursue funding for mobile monitoring equipment for the City of Houston.

Objective#2: Assess the gaps in the monitoring network and advocate for placement of additional monitors by TCEQ to fill those gaps.

GOAL #4: Enforce existing air quality regulations through all available means

Objective #1: Review permitting applications that affect the City and intervene when public health would be adversely affected by the granting of the permit.

Objective #2: Reduce emissions identified through inspection, surveillance, monitoring, data analysis, and complaints, using all available legal and regulatory mechanisms, including litigation.

GOAL #5: Advocate for more effective air quality regulations regarding ozone and its precursors, particulates, and air toxins

Objective #1: Negotiate environmental commitment agreements that include (1) reductions of emissions; (2) scheduled commitments of capital and operating resources; (3) sufficient monitoring and sharing of the data with the City at or near real-time; and (4) a mechanism for compelling compliance with the agreements.

Objective #2: Review City ordinances concerning air quality to ensure maximum effectiveness and recommend changes where necessary.

Objective #3: Work with the City's Government Affairs office and state and local elected officials to strengthen legislation, rules, and regulations affecting air quality at the state and federal levels.

Objective #4: Develop a SIP compliance verification program and advocate for the adoption of the program by TCEQ.

Objective #5: Participate in the 8-hour SIP development process to ensure timely development and implementation.

Objective #6: Review trends regarding particulates and, if necessary, advocate for additional emissions reductions to ensure attainment is maintained and public health is protected.

Objective #7: Advocate for the development of ambient air standards for air toxins that are among the most protective in the nation and advocate for changes in the permitting process to ensure that permitted emissions do not result in excessive levels of toxins.

Objective #8: Advocate for the placement of more ambient air monitors throughout the Houston area to detect criteria pollutants, VOCs, and air toxins that are prevalent in our community, including public access to the data in near real time.

Objective #9: Study TCEQ permitting requirements and process, including those affecting grandfathered facilities, and advocate for changes, if necessary.

GOAL #6: Conduct an inspection, monitoring, and compliance program that leads to reduced emissions of ozone precursors, particulate matter, and air toxins.

Objective #1: Develop a model inspection program, in conjunction with Galveston and Harris Counties and TCEQ if possible, with protocols designed to identify and lead to the remediation of the most likely sources of emissions.

Objective #2: Develop a risk-based work plan for inspections to direct resource allocation, based upon SIP and health effects concerns.

Objective #3: Implement an effective field-sampling program for detecting biological agents.

GOAL #7: Enhance our community engagement program

Objective #1: Work with the community to develop a sustainable partnership for clean air initiatives, including involvement in monitoring and advocacy activities.

Objective #2: Improve complaint process so that it is more responsive to citizens.

Objective #3: Become the preeminent source of information on air quality for citizens through web-based communications.

Objective #4: Participate in the identification, preparation, and implementation of grants to support air quality improvements throughout the City.

Objective #5: Support the strengthening of local non-profit environmental groups with a national base and local expertise.