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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Air Quality Alert Issued for Monday**

### **Ozone Pollution Levels Expected to be Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups**

(COLUMBUS, April 18, 2016) –The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is issuing an **Air Quality Alert for Monday, April 18**. The region – Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Knox, Madison and Licking counties – is likely to experience ground-level ozone pollution levels that are Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups on [the national Air Quality Index \(AQI\) scale](#). Today’s AQI is forecasted to be 105.

Today’s Air Quality Alert is the first one of the year. Ground-level ozone pollution is a colorless, odorless gas produced when emissions from our cars, lawn equipment and industry react together in the presence of sunlight. Continued warm temperatures and sunny skies will enhance ozone formation today. An upper-level ridge of high pressure over Ohio will inhibit vertical mixing in the atmosphere that may otherwise disperse the pollutants that form ozone. Light westerly winds will further limit pollutant dispersion, leading to ground-level ozone levels that are unhealthy for certain sensitive groups of people, including people with heart disease, respiratory disease (such as asthma), active children, active adults, and seniors.

MORPC uses the national AQI scale to inform the public about daily ozone and particle pollution levels in Central Ohio. The AQI scale runs from 0 to 300—the higher the AQI value, the greater the health concern. When levels reach above 100, air quality is considered to be Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups. MORPC issues an Air Quality Alert to the public when pollution levels reach 101 or higher.

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*Working to Build a Better Region*

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## 2-2-2

Ozone season in Central Ohio began April 1. Last fall, U.S. EPA strengthened the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone to 70 parts per billion (ppb) from 75 ppb, based on scientific evidence of effects that ground-level ozone pollution has on public health. Because the evidence points to pollution being harmful at this lower level to sensitive groups of people such as children, the elderly, and those with respiratory disease, the region may experience an increase in Air Quality Alerts this year. MORPC has not issued an Air Quality Alert in April since it began forecasting for the pollutant in 2000.

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*The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is a voluntary association of local governments and regional organizations which envisions and embraces innovative directions in economic prosperity, energy, the environment, housing, land use, and transportation. Our transformative programming, services and innovative public policy are designed to promote and support the vitality and growth in the region.*