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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MORPC Invites Comments on U.S. EPA Proposal to Strengthen Ozone Pollution Standard

(Columbus-February 9, 2015) On November 25, 2014, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed to strengthen the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone pollution to better protect public health, particularly for children, the elderly, and people with respiratory diseases such as asthma. The proposal would strengthen the primary (health) standard of 75 parts per billion (ppb) to a level within a range of 65 to 70 ppb. The proposal is based on a large body of scientific evidence demonstrating harmful effects of ozone on human health and the environment.

The proposal by U.S. EPA is in an open comment period until March 17, 2015. The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is soliciting comments on the proposal and encourages input in order to best reflect the interests of Central Ohio. MORPC is currently accepting public comments on the proposal until **March 4, 2015**. MORPC will consider the public's input before submitting comments to U.S. EPA by the March deadline.

The Clean Air Act requires the U.S. EPA to set a NAAQS for six criteria pollutants, including ozone, which is considered to be harmful to public health. U.S. EPA is required to review, and if necessary, revise these standards every five years. U.S. EPA last revised the ozone standard in 2008 when the standard was lowered to 75 ppb. In its November statement in the Federal Register, U.S. EPA stated that the current ozone standard of 75ppb is not requisite to protect public health with an adequate margin of safety and should be revised to provide increased public health protection.

"Air quality is an important issue that affects Central Ohio including the region's transportation, energy, public health and economic sectors," said Christina O'Keeffe, MORPC Director of Energy & Air Quality. "As a voluntary association of local governments and the regional expert to monitor and forecast levels of ozone, MORPC is uniquely positioned to submit comments to the U.S. EPA that is representative of the entire region and is actively seeking input from diverse viewpoints."

The proposed rule and more information can be found on the U.S. EPA website at <http://www.epa.gov/airquality/ozonepollution/actions.html#current> and a presentation with more information can be found [here](#). Please contact Evelyn Ebert, Air Quality Program Coordinator at eebert@morpc.org or 614-233-4168 for more information or to provide your comments by **March 4, 2015**.

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Working to Build a Better Region

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