

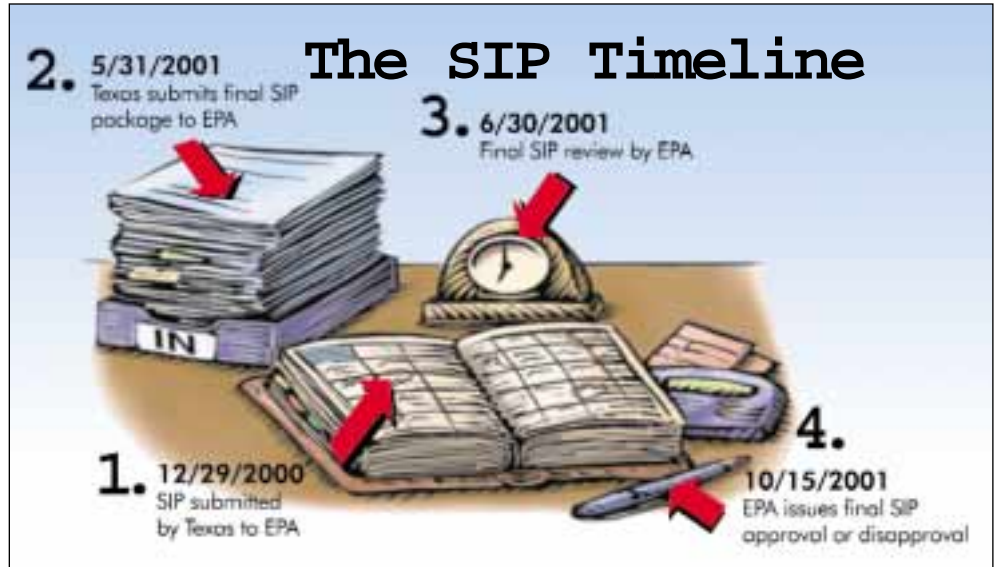
## Houston-Galveston Area SIP Sent to EPA For Approval

### TNRCC Adopts Eight-County State Implementation Plan

The three-member panel of the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) approved the Houston-Galveston State Implementation Plan (SIP) on Wednesday, December 6, 2000. The pollution reductions measures are designed to bring the eight-county nonattainment area into compliance for ground-level ozone. An area violates the standard if the highest one-hour reading exceeds 125 ppb more than three times during a three year period. From 1998-2000, the Houston-Galveston area exceeded the standard 136 days.

In order to clean the air and bring the region into compliance, the TNRCC and various local entities and stakeholders developed a regional plan that is expected to reduce Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) emissions by 75 percent and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) by 40 percent. Reductions will come from all types of sources. The biggest cut will come from industry, which accounts for approximately two-thirds of the NOx emissions. Industrial sources will be asked to reduce their emissions by 90 percent.

The Commissioners emphasized that the plan will remain a work in progress, as a scientific review and necessary adjustments will be preformed before the 2007 deadline. However, if the region fails to follow the SIP, federal law provides for the imposition of sanctions, including the loss of federal highway funds, and the modification of air permits to any new business or expanded business, or the implementation of Federal Implementation Plan (FIP).



### Legislature Comments

The Texas Legislature, which convenes this month, has been paying close attention to the region's air quality issues. Chairman Warren Chisum's Houston Committee on Environmental Regulations recently made recommendations on the Houston-Galveston SIP to the legislature and senate committees. The committee's findings and recommendations are as follows:

**Finding #1:** If Texas fails to comply with the Clean Air Action Amendments (CAAA), federal law requires the EPA to implement a FIP and additional severe sanctions.

**Recommendation #1:** The State should make every effort to comply with the CAAA.

**Finding #2:** Although the TNRCC rules impose substantial burden on both the public and industry, the rules were made with a great deal of public input, and opportunities exist for the plan to be adjusted during the mid-course correction.

**Recommendation #2:** Texas should move forward with plan, but should continue to search for better methods to reduce air pollution.

**Finding #3:** Though compliance will provide notable health benefits, compliance will be costly.

**Recommendation #3:** Legislature should provide incentives to encourage voluntary steps toward emission reduction and mitigate cost of compliance.

### 2000 Air Quality Reference Guides are still available!!!!!!

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TRANS&Air Editor: **Anna Davis**

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**Next Issue:** VMEPs- What you can do to reduce NOx and VOCs emissions.

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



A program of the Houston-Galveston Area Council

The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) is a voluntary association of local governments and local elected officials in the 13-county Gulf Coast Planning Region. The Gulf Coast Planning Region consists of Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller, and Wharton counties. Organized in 1966, H-GAC provides a forum for the discussion of area-wide concerns, promoting regional cooperation through comprehensive planning and services to local governments.



## TNRCC Approves SIP Rules for the Houston-Galveston Region



Rules requiring an average 90 percent reduction in NO<sub>x</sub> emission from new controls on major industrial sources in the nonattainment area. Rules to be phased in by March 31, 2007.



A ban on the use of diesel construction equipment and commercially operated lawn equipment from 6 a.m. to noon from April 1 to Oct. 31, starting in 2005. Chambers, Liberty and Waller counties are exempt.



A reduction in highway speed limits in the eight-county area to 55 mph on May 1, 2002.



Rules that require the early retirement of off-highway diesel equipment in all eight counties starting in 2004.



A ban on excessive engine idling which applies to large commercial trucks in the eight counties starting in 2001.



A more effective vehicle emissions testing program will start in Harris County in May 2002; in Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston and Montgomery counties in 2003, and Chambers, Liberty and Waller counties in 2004. Alternative reduction measures can be adopted in the latter three counties.



A statewide rule requiring the sale of cleaner diesel fuel used in on-road vehicles starting in 2002. Rule also applies to off-road vehicles in East Texas.