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NORTHEAST STATES FOR COORDINATED AIR USE MANAGEMENT
(NESCAUM)

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VERMONT AIR POLLUTION
CONTROL DIVISION

PRESS RELEASE

April 2, 1992

NESCAUM Releases Recommendation for Nitrogen Oxides Emissions
Control from Existing Utility Boilers

The recommended NESCAUM NO_x emission control strategy for utility boilers will result in a regionwide NO_x reduction of more than 50 percent by the Clean Air Act mandated compliance date of May 31, 1995. The recommended strategy uses an emissions performance approach, as opposed to requiring specific control technologies for each utility boiler in the region, and through the use of multi-facility emissions averaging, provides utilities with a high degree of flexibility to select the most appropriate and cost effective control measures for their boilers. The May 31, 1995 NO_x emissions limitations set forth in the strategy represent RACT for utility boilers as required in the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments.

While the 1995 emission reduction requirements can be complied with using boiler combustion modifications, such as low NO_x burners and enhanced overfired air systems, the strategy also establishes a preliminary second phase of NO_x emission reduction targets that the NESCAUM states believe will be needed to ensure attainment of the ozone health standard. The second phase emission limitations will require the use of additional control technologies, such as selective catalytic reduction and selective non-catalytic

reduction and should be complied with by May 15, 1999, which is the attainment deadline for serious nonattainment areas.

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By 1994, refined ozone modeling using the urban airshed model will be completed, providing a more precise assessment of the extent to which Phase II NO_x controls will be necessary to attain and maintain the ozone health standard. The NESCAUM Directors believe that it is prudent for utilities to include the Phase II emission targets in their longterm air quality compliance planning process.

In recognition of the additional air quality and efficiency benefits associated with repowering old utility boilers, the NESCAUM strategy recommends that utilities which commit to repowering boilers be exempt from complying with the May 1995 emission limits. To take advantage of this exemption, utilities must agree to complete repowering projects by May 1999, and comply with Phase II emission targets.

The NESCAUM strategy is consistent with the utility boiler NO_x RACT memorandum of understanding agreed to on March 10, 1992 by the twelve Ozone Transport Commission (OTC) states. Although the NESCAUM strategy includes specific combustion modification emissions performance criteria for the various boiler types and fuels (coal, oil, and natural gas), both agreements include two control phases with the first phase relying primarily on combustion modifications and the second phase relying on the use of add-on controls, to the extent determined necessary by refined ozone modeling. The NESCAUM and OTC policies also utilize identical compliance schedules.

The need to achieve substantial regionwide NO_x emission reductions is based on results of U.S. EPA's Regional Oxidant Modeling for Northeast Transport (ROMNET) report (June 1991). This report, which is regarded as the most sophisticated analysis of the regional ozone problem indicates that a NO_x emission reduction of more than 55% in conjunction with substantial volatile organic compound (VOC) emission reductions will be necessary to achieve the ozone health standard. The ROMNET findings have recently been

reinforced by the National Academy of Sciences report entitled "Rethinking the Ozone Problem in Urban and Regional Air Pollution" (December 1991), which specifically cites the need to substantially reduce NO_x emissions in many areas of the country as a means of reducing ozone levels.

This recommendation has been developed in response to Section 182(f) and 182(b)(2) of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA), which requires states to impose RACT for major stationary sources that are located in ozone nonattainment areas or in the Northeast ozone transport region. The 1990 CAAA requires states to develop and submit NO_x RACT regulations to US EPA by November 15, 1992. In addition, the CAAA requires that all regulated sources be in compliance with the NO_x RACT regulations by May 31, 1995. NESCAUM intends to issue separate but comparable RACT recommendations for combustion turbines, industrial boilers, reciprocating engines, and incinerators.

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In the Northeast, approximately 40 percent of the annual NO_x emissions are from stationary sources and 60 percent are from mobile sources. NO_x emissions also react to form gaseous and particulate acids and other toxic air pollutants. In 1987, NO_x emissions from all sources in the NESCAUM region totalled approximately 1.6 million tons. Utility boiler NO_x emissions totalling almost 335,000 tons account for 20 percent of the inventory and represent the largest stationary source category of NO_x emissions in the NESCAUM region. In some states in the NESCAUM region, utility boiler NO_x emissions represent more than 20 percent of the inventory. The NESCAUM states are also in the process of developing a variety of motor vehicle emission control strategies that will result in significant NO_x emission reductions.

The adoption of state NO_x RACT requirements will be subject to each state's regulatory adoption process and public comment process. NESCAUM is an interstate association of the air quality control directors in eight Northeast states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

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