

David Killam
Chairman



D. Todd Staples
President

November 6, 2019

Mr. Aaron Yeow
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW,
1400R
Washington, DC 20460

Mr. Yeow,

Please find the written comments below that were made on the Chartered Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC) Teleconference on October 22, 2019. We respectfully submit them as written comments during the advisory process.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide oral testimony regarding the Draft Policy Assessment (PA) for the Review of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}). I am Shana Joyce, Director of Government and Regulatory Affairs at the Texas Oil and Gas Association. The Texas Oil & Gas Association (TXOGA) is a statewide trade association representing every facet of the Texas oil and gas industry including small independents and major producers. Collectively, the membership of TXOGA produces in excess of 90 percent of Texas' crude oil and natural gas, operates over 80 percent of the state's refining capacity, and is responsible for the vast majority of the state's pipelines. These National Ambient Air Quality Standards have impact throughout the nation and are therefore of great interest to our organization.

The reason for today's testimony is to urge the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC) to provide key feedback to the EPA staff as they finalize the Policy Assessment. The Policy Assessment provides EPA Management the scientific basis for their policy options to propose either retaining or revising the current NAAQS. We understand that the mission of the EPA under the Clean Air Act is to protect public health by setting NAAQS with an adequate margin of safety. In fulfilling this mission, we support the Agency's commitment to sound science and methodology, transparency and reproducibility, and science-driven policy decision making, while taking into consideration weight of evidence approaches to understanding potential PM health effects. We also note that since the PM Standard (2.5) was first established in 1998, the concentration in our atmosphere is still decreasing.

However, we believe the draft approach presented in this Policy Assessment and its' review process have major limitations. Retaining the current standard should be more heavily weighted in the options included in the Policy Assessment. The draft Policy

Assessment appears to deemphasize various issues such as exposure measurement errors, the exclusion of key studies in estimating pseudo-design values, and an over-reliance on controlled human exposure studies, which have been conducted at concentrations orders of magnitude higher than are found in the ambient air. Much of the discussion of these studies relies on such phrases as ‘could plausibly’, “generally positive associations’ and “mainly positive” correlations. Most of the epidemiological studies have extended back decades, with correspondingly higher concentrations. Indeed, the more recent studies, when the ambient air levels are lower appear to be confounded by other pollutants. For these reasons, we do not believe adequate data has been compiled to support changing the particulate matter standard.

Ensuring the robustness and completeness of the science requires that it be transparent “in the evaluation, assessment, and characterization of [the] scientific evidence.” Such transparency requires that the evidence “describes and documents any assumptions and methods used and should address variability and uncertainty” in pivotal science.

Transparency is increased when a systematic strategy is used to identify studies for consideration in a review and to evaluate study quality.

The current draft of the Particulate Matter Policy Assessment does not clearly articulate the quality, transparency, reproducibility and uncertainties inherent in the science being reviewed. TXOGA requests CASAC encourage EPA to address these shortcomings in the particulate matter Policy Assessment and provide an accurate summary of potential actions for the Administrator to evaluate as he proposes to retain or change the particulate matter standard.

We fully support EPA’s schedule to complete the NAAQS review for particulate matter as quickly as possible, with a proposal no later than early 2020. The federal Clean Air Act calls for a 5-year NAAQS review cycle, and the most recent particulate review completed in 2012, so this review is already overdue. Thank you for the opportunity to provide a public statement today on behalf of The Texas Oil and Gas Association.