

TO: CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2004 05 13
FROM: DIRECTOR ENGINEERING **FILE:** 33200-02
SUBJECT: CANADA-U.S. AIR QUALITY AGREEMENT
PURPOSE: To advise Council on inclusion of the Georgia Basin / Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy under existing or new Annex to the Canada-U.S. Air Quality Agreement

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council support including the Georgia Basin / Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy under the existing or new Annex to the Canada-U.S. Air Quality Agreement.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to:
 - a) Hon. David Anderson, Minister of the Environment, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1A 0H3;
 - b) Greater Vancouver Regional District, 4330 Kingsway, Burnaby, B.C. V5H 4G8
 - c) Environment Committee

REPORT

At the May 10, 2004 Council Meeting, Council received a correspondence from Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) requesting support to include Georgia Basin / Puget Sound International Airshed Strategy under the existing or new Annex to the Canada-U.S. Air Quality Agreement. Upon further discussion, Council requested staff to prepare a report on the subject matter.

In August 2002, Environment Canada (EC) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) signed a Statement of Intent to work with interested stakeholders to address current and future air quality issues in the Georgia Basin / Puget Sound (GB/PS) Region. To this end, representatives from the FVRD, GVRD, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, Environment Canada, US Environmental Protection Agency, Washington Department of Ecology, Puget Sound Clean Air Agency, Northwest Air Pollution Agency, and First Nations and Tribes have been meeting to develop a GB/PS International Airshed Strategy (IAS) to help guide actions. The key "driver" is the increasing concern about links between air quality and human health. Fossil fuel combustion is a key component in the link. The drafting of this strategy is underway and is expected to be completed in June of this year. For Council's information, GB/PS airshed includes the coastal region

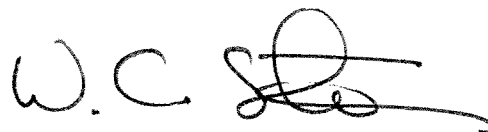
roughly from Campbell River and Whistler in the north to Olympia, Washington in the south, including the shared Strait of Juan de Fuca. The Lower Fraser Valley airshed is included in this area.

It is to be noted that concurrent to this process, the GVRD is in a process of updating its Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP). According to the GVRD, their most recent Emission Inventory and forecast predicts that, although emissions of some contaminants are expected to continue to decline over the next few years, some are expected to increase - notably fine particulate matter (PM2.5), including diesel particulate matter, sulphur dioxide and ammonia. The forecast shows that a lot of these increases are due to factors beyond the GVRD's jurisdictional control, such as marine vessel emissions of diesel particulate matter, sulphur oxides and nitrogen oxides, and agricultural ammonia emissions. These emissions all contribute to concentrations of PM2.5 in our ambient air. Health studies indicate that PM2.5 is the main contributor to air pollution related to health effects in the region followed by ground level ozone. Airshed modelling has also shown that our air quality is affected by air emissions and movement across the international atmospheric border under such conditions.

Given the above, and the recent proposals to build large power plants close to the Canada-U.S. border, it is fairly evident that, if we are to improve the regional air quality, we will need to address these sources of emissions, which are of "international" nature.

In 1991, the Canada-U.S. Air Quality Agreement was signed by the federal Minister of Environment and the Administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency. In 2000, an Ozone Annex was added to this Agreement. The Annex outlines commitments by the US and Canada for the reduction of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds (precursors to the formation of ozone in the air) in 18 northeast states, the District of Columbia and southern Ontario and Quebec. It also specifies, in part, that this Annex is to be reviewed in mid-2004 to determine whether or not southern British Columbia and the US Pacific Northwest (i.e the GB/PS airshed) should be added as a western component. Another option is for a separate Annex under the Agreement to be developed which focuses on the GB/PS airshed.

While the GB/PS IAS Committee has not yet taken a position on whether or not to recommend extending the current Canada-U.S. Air Quality Agreement to include this region either as an expanded "Ozone Annex" or a new "PM Annex", given the potential impact of cross border pollution on health, it is prudent to include the GB/PS International Airshed Strategy under the existing or new Annex to the Canada-U.S. Air Quality Agreement, especially regarding fine particulate matter.



W.C. Sinclair, P. Eng.
DIRECTOR ENGINEERING