



707 North Robinson, P.O. Box 1677, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73101-1677

News Release

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Contact: Skylar McElhaney, (405) 702-7167

Oklahoma DEQ Accepting Public Comment on Use of Volkswagen Settlement Funds

In 2016, the United States settled claims against Volkswagen, et al., concerning the use of a “defeat device” installed on 2.0 Liter and 3.0 Liter vehicles, which resulted in emissions from these vehicles exceeding federal guidelines. Each of these vehicles can emit up to 40 times more than the legal limit for nitrogen oxides, air pollutants which negatively impact Oklahoma’s air quality and the health of citizens.

As part of this settlement, the State of Oklahoma has been allocated approximately \$21 million to be used over the life of the program toward reducing nitrogen oxide emissions in the transportation sector. Executive Order 2017-33, signed by Governor Mary Fallin, on October 30, 2017, designates the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) as Lead Agency for the administration of Volkswagen settlement trust funds within the State of Oklahoma. The Office of the Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and Environment is providing oversight and final approval of the mitigation plan.

In order to receive these funds, DEQ must submit a Beneficiary Mitigation Plan (BMP). The BMP will be a high-level plan, describing the state’s intentions for utilizing Oklahoma’s funding allocation, including estimated emissions reductions, along with general project descriptions and locations. Funds may go toward any of ten eligible mitigation project categories. A detailed description of these categories and eligible projects are available on the DEQ website (www.deq.state.ok.us/aqdnew/vwsettlement) in Appendix D-2 of the Agreement.

DEQ will conduct a public meeting to collect information from stakeholders and receive comments concerning the BMP. This public meeting is a listening session, to provide those interested with the opportunity for input into the BMP; DEQ will not respond to questions or comments regarding the contents of the BMP at this meeting. DEQ will refer to received comments as a resource in development of the BMP.

During the comment period, DEQ encourages submission of detailed information regarding all eligible mitigation action categories, including but not limited to, technical information, technology availability, cost, and estimated emission reductions, if available. DEQ intends to identify eligible mitigation action categories that will provide the state with the most emission reductions for the least cost in geographic areas that carry a disproportionate share of air pollution burden, without duplicating or competing with existing assistance programs and resources. After the BMP has been written, it will be made available on the DEQ website, and there will be another opportunity for public comment.

The public meeting will be held from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., December 5, 2017, in the Multipurpose Room at the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, 707 N. Robinson Ave, Oklahoma City, OK, 73101. Following presentations by the Secretary of Energy and Environment and DEQ staff, attendees can present oral statements. DEQ recommends that a written summary be submitted when making an oral statement. Additionally, written comments may be submitted either before or during the meeting. All comments received will become public record. Persons with disabilities who have special communication or other accommodation needs, who plan to attend the meeting, can contact the Air Quality Division at (405) 702-4100.

The public comment period is currently open. Comments may be submitted to Mrs. Heather Lerch, (405) 702-4100, Air Quality Division, PO Box 1677, Oklahoma City, OK, 73101 or heather.lerch@deq.ok.gov. Comments must be received by December 5, 2017.

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