

JIM MURPHY

Member

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

District 133 • Harris County

October 4, 2018



COMMITTEES

Special Purpose Districts, *Chairman*
Ways & Means

Commissioner Jon Niermann
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Air Quality Division
Implementation Grants Section, MC-204
P.O. Box 13087
Austin, TX 78711

Commissioner Niermann,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the proposed VW Draft Beneficiary Mitigation Plan. Please consider the following suggestions to the plan related to allocation of funds and local match requirements, especially as they relate to the Houston-Galveston-Brazoria Area.

- Regional funding allocations should reflect the percentage of affected vehicles identified in each priority area. This distribution method would provide appropriate restitution to the HGB Area for harm caused by the illegal VW devices and will make a significant impact in addressing the Area's non attainment status. Considering the Area's high population, the number of vehicles in the Area that are eligible for mitigation actions, and the Plan's goal to reduce the public's exposure to pollutants, an increased allocation of dollars to the HGB Area represents an efficient use of settlement funds. The Plan acknowledges HGB as a priority Area that fails to meet current EPA guidelines for ground level ozone and that this particular pollutant is the most challenging to deal with in terms of complying with federal air quality standards. An increase in the share of funds will further enhance efforts to reduce ground level ozone and will have secondary benefits to other areas of the state that are impacted by the transport of local emissions. The Area will also see public health and economic benefits through increased application of available funds.
- Consider lowering the local match requirement for drawing down grant funds from the 60 percent proposed in the draft Plan. Many local governments, especially in the HGB Area, have delayed routine capital projects as a result of Hurricane Harvey, choosing instead to prioritize resources and serve the immediate needs of their citizens. Reducing the match requirement for all applicants will expand participation in the application process and will especially assist local governments as they continue to recover from the effects of Harvey.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and for your service to our state. As always, please let me know how I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Murphy".