



**Summary  
GreenPrint Committee**

**Date:** Tuesday, July 7, 2009    **11:00 am**    **Location:** Council Conference Room 391

**Committee Members Present:** Nevitt, Chair; Linkhart, Vice-Chair; Lehmann

**Committee Members Absent:** Brown

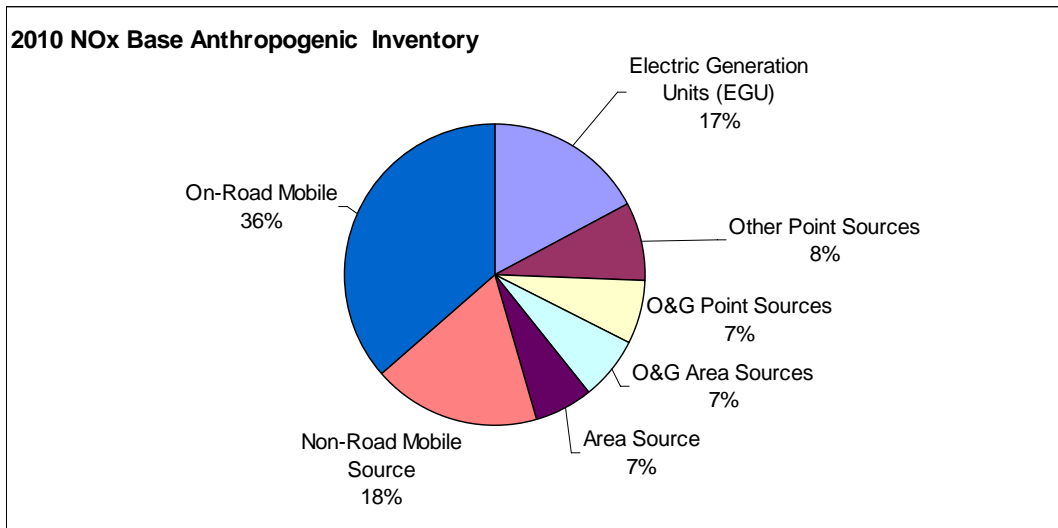
**Agenda:** 1) Denver's Air Quality Future: Can we meet new regulations?

**1. Denver's Air Quality Future: Can we meet new regulations?**

Summary of Discussion

James Martin, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, discussed current and future federal air quality standards making the following points:

- Ozone is a regionally pervasive pollutant comprised of oxygen atoms that react in sunshine with volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxide.
- Ozone pollution causes a host of health problems including respiratory diseases and heart ailments.
- The Denver area and the north front range communities are not in compliance with the old (.08 parts per million (ppm) or 80 parts per billion (ppb)) and new federal standards for ozone pollution (.075 ppm or 75 ppb over eight hours). Ozone standards could become even more stringent in the future.
- Compliance with ozone standards is the biggest air pollution problem in the state. The state must submit a pollution-control plan (to meet 75 ppb) to the federal Environmental Protection Agency by 2013.
- Sources of nitrogen oxide in the Front Range--are depicted in the following chart:



- To achieve the more stringent health-based standards, additional regulations on industry will be needed as well as reducing vehicle miles traveled; if standards are lowered even more, there will be additional time for the metro region to come into compliance.
- Cities and towns play a role in shaping development that emphasizes walking over driving.
- Ozone concentrations in Denver County are not as high as those in the southern and western suburbs (i.e. Littleton, Golden, South Boulder). However, emissions in the urban core contribute significantly to the regional problem.
- State efforts to reduce ozone levels include:
  - Stricter regulation of the oil and gas industry and emissions from condensate tanks (adopted in 2004 and 2008).
  - Xcel Energy's intention to close two boilers at the Arapahoe coal-fired plant in Denver by 2012.
  - Reorganizing the Regional Air Quality Council from nine to 22 members including more local officials, business leaders, and conservationists with the goal of coming up with solutions.
- The solution is not going to be top down from the General Assembly or Governor's Office; it's going to be getting all the interested groups together and working out solutions over a year or more.
- Mr. Martin is seeking that sweet spot in regulation of stationary sources whose costs can be born without closing or imposing unreasonable burdens on ratepayers, but he said that the state cannot achieve the standards without looking beyond the typical regulatory approach and tackling vehicle miles traveled.
- The State must carefully balance options like requiring refineries to provide reformulated fuel versus the costs to the refineries, such as Suncor Energy in Commerce City—a major employer--which provides 30 percent of Colorado's fuel.
- If the state fails to act or meet the federal standards, fines and penalties could result, or ultimately, federal regulators could take over and develop a pollution plan for Colorado (this is a very rare occurrence).

*Shelley Smith, July 16, 2009*

*Council Legislative Services*

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