



NEWS

Four Corners Air Quality Task Force



Colorado Department
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and Environment

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Four Corners Air Quality Task Force to Meet Again in Farmington; Public Comment Period on Task Force Report to Begin in June

Farmington, New Mexico – With the public comment period on its full report a little more than a month away, the Four Corners Air Quality Task Force will hold its final working meeting on Wednesday, May 9, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Courtyard (Marriott) Farmington.

The task force first met in November 2005, to begin a broad and inclusive collaborative examination of air quality in the burgeoning Four Corners Region. Work groups have been crafting the Task Force Report for more than a year.

The draft report, in its sixth version, is available to all at the task force's website (<http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/aqb/4C/DraftTaskForceReport.html>). It is a compilation of mitigation option papers written by members of the Four Corners Air Quality Task Force. The report is intended to serve as a resource for the various agencies, land managers, tribes and other stakeholders to consider upon the completion of the task force's work.

“We’re excited about the upcoming public comment period,” said Mary Uhl, bureau chief for the Air Quality Bureau of the New Mexico Environment Department. “It’s really what we’ve been working toward all this time. It’s the culmination of a lot of hard work by a lot of people.”

Uhl continued, “We’re looking forward to the feedback we expect to receive. We’ve had a great deal of input throughout the process. The public comment period is the last, best opportunity for the type of interaction that makes processes like this one so valuable.”

The public comment period is slated to run from June 22 through July 13. The task force will utilize a Web-based tool that will be easy to access through the task force's web site. Written comments also will be welcome and can be submitted to the New Mexico Environment Department's Air Quality Bureau office in Farmington (724 West Animas Street, Farmington, 87401).

“We believe using the web tool will make this so easy and accessible that anyone interested in providing comment can feel comfortable doing so,” said Michael Silverstein, deputy director of the Colorado Air Pollution Control Division. “We’re going to do our best to get the information out to the public about where to go to comment and how to participate. We want to hear from everyone with an interest.”

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Four Corners Air Quality Task Force/page 2

The May 9 meeting in Farmington will include discussion of some final additions to the draft task force report. New information on task force efforts and activities during the past several months will be presented. The meeting will feature an update on ammonia monitoring in the Four Corners Region from representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Region 6 Offices. Members of the task force's monitoring work group also will talk about their efforts.

The Four Corners Air Quality Task Force is made up of federal land managers; federal and state environmental regulators; representatives from industry and tribal nations; and interested residents from the affected states of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah.

Originally convened by the states of New Mexico and Colorado, the task force recognizes the region's abundance of oil, gas and coal reserves. Oil and gas production, existing and planned coal-fired power plants, and population growth all are having an impact upon air quality in the region.

The task force's five work groups (oil and gas development, power plants, other air pollution emission sources, cumulative effects and air quality monitoring) meet face-to-face at each quarterly task force meeting, and typically have conference calls monthly. The work groups' products are combined into the full task force report.

The task force expects to hold two more meetings – one in August that will focus on the review of public comments and a final meeting in November. Both are expected to be held in Durango, Colorado.

Individuals wanting to learn more about the Four Corners Air Quality Task Force should contact either Christopher Dann (Colorado residents) at 303-692-3281 or christopher.dann@state.co.us, or Mark Jones (New Mexico residents) at 505-327-6854 or mark.jones@state.nm.us. Information also may be obtained by visiting the Task Force's website at <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/aqb/4C/index.html>.