

## **Fall Line Air Quality Study (FAQS)**

### **Memorandum of Understanding**

#### Purpose of the Study

- Whereas: Air quality is important to quality of life and economic development in every metropolitan and rural area; and
- Whereas: The Atlanta, Georgia metropolitan area is already designated “nonattainment” for ground-level ozone, its citizens subject to unhealthy concentrations of air pollution, and its economic prosperity threatened; and
- Whereas: The Georgia Environmental Protection Division has recently measured concentrations of ground-level ozone in metropolitan areas outside of Atlanta that approach or exceed the existing and proposed US Environmental Protection Agency’s standards for clean air; and
- Whereas: The metropolitan areas of Augusta, Macon, and Columbus wish to initiate proactive and preventative measures to avert the adverse consequences of air pollution and “nonattainment” designations; and
- Whereas: The information concerning the composition, source, and fate of air pollution in and around these metropolitan areas is insufficient to develop effective and efficient action plans;

It is herein proposed that Augusta, Macon, and Columbus initiate an alliance in which resources are pooled and shared for the purpose of studying air quality issues from the unique perspective of each of these metropolitan areas; and working with the State Environmental Protection Division, local governments, businesses, and industries, the citizenry, and other stakeholders to develop effective, efficient, and permanent solutions to any potential or realized air quality problem.

### Nature of the Study

For the purpose of identifying this study as unique to the Augusta, Macon, and Columbus metropolitan areas, this study shall be referred to as the “Fall line Air Quality Study (FAQS).”

The FAQS should address the following concerns relative to the unique perspective of each of the alliance’s metropolitan areas:

- What are the local contributions to local air pollution? What are the regional background contributions to local air pollution? Does pollution from other metropolitan areas, other states, or sources outside of the local area contribute to local air pollution, and if so, in what amount?
- What are the natural contributions to air quality relative to the contributions of human origin?
- What sources or types of sources are most important to air quality? What sources or types of sources are most effectively and efficiently modified for the benefit of improving air quality?
- In addition to investigating all typical regulatory approaches, the FAQS should also identify novel or alternative options that may achieve similar or superior results.

In order to address these questions, the FAQS should provide in the study areas:

- Enhanced ambient monitoring of air pollutants and their precursors;
- Development of regional emission inventories;
- Computer simulations sufficient to provide guidance to decision-makers considering potential actions;
- Objective, expert, and frank analysis of all information; and
- Timely, relevant, and understandable communication of study results to the individual and collective members of the alliance, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, and any other stakeholder or interested party.

Resources to carry out the FAQS will be sought from local, state, and federal sources including private business and industry, municipal, county, and state governments, US EPA and other federal agencies. Resources of private or local origin will be used to enhance the FAQS initiative at the discretion of the provider. Resources acquired from state and federal sources shall be distributed so as to provide an equivalent level of service to each of the three metropolitan areas.

## The Alliance

The primary beneficiaries of the FAQS are the citizens of the Augusta, Macon, and Columbus metropolitan areas. By endorsing this alliance, municipal, county, and regional leaders from these communities pledge to share any state or federal resources made available to the FAQS; to cooperate fully and openly with the study; to share readily findings from this study; and to invite and court active participation from all local, state, and national stakeholders.

Recognizing the diverse and expert technical skills required to meet the purposes of the FAQS; recognizing the need for objectivity and a commitment to sound science; and recognizing the contributions and abilities of the University System of Georgia and other in-state universities in general, and the Georgia Institute of Technology in particular, to the study of urban and regional air quality in the Southeast United States; all technical aspects of the FAQS will be coordinated and executed directly or by subcontract to the Georgia Institute of Technology. More specifically, researchers in the Center for Urban and Regional Ecology based at Georgia Tech, the School of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at Georgia Tech, and the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Georgia Tech, in close consultation with the alliance, will plan, manage, and implement all technical research related to the FAQS. Whenever possible however, resources and expertise local to each of the metropolitan areas will be utilized to the extent feasible.

Major federal facilities exist within or near to all of the metropolitan areas in the FAQS. Mission success vitally depends on the participation and cooperation of these entities. By endorsing this alliance, each facility pledges to acknowledge the goals and desires of the greater metropolitan area in initiating this study; to participate to the fullest extent possible in the FAQS; and to provide reasonably requested information in a timely and useful manner. To further facilitate active and meaningful participation, the Army Environmental Policy Institute, based at Georgia Tech, will work with the Southern Regional Environmental Office to coordinate the activities of the primary military facilities in the alliance communities (Fort Gordon and the Savannah River Plant near Augusta, Robins Air Force Base near Macon, and Fort Benning in Columbus).

Businesses and industries, community advocates, and other stakeholders local to the study's metropolitan areas also have vested interests in the FAQS. Their participation in the study and the process of generating solutions to the problems identified by the study is critical for meeting the alliance's goals. Their endorsement here signals their commitment to actively participate in all aspects of the study, to provide alternative or additional real or in-kind support to the study, and to acknowledge the credibility, accuracy, and relevancy of the study.

As the agencies with real or potential authority to plan and implement measures for the purpose of meeting state and federal air quality standards, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority acknowledge and give due credit to the proactive and preventative actions initiated by the alliance for the purpose of improving air quality in the Augusta, Columbus, and Macon metropolitan areas. Further, at the request of the alliance, these agencies agree to provide recommendations and other assistance so as to ensure that the study meets the agencies' criteria for credibility, accuracy, and relevancy. Finally, these agencies agree to duly consider the outcomes and recommendations from the FAQs.

## Signatories