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033950-0007

September 7, 2018

VIA EMAIL

Dr. Philip Fine
Deputy Executive Officer
South Coast Air Quality Management District
21865 Copley Drive
Diamond Bar, CA 91765

Re: Proposed Amended Rules 2001 and 2002

Dear Dr. Fine:

We are submitting these comments on behalf of our client Western States Petroleum Association (“WSPA”) on the most recent round of proposed amendments to South Coast Air Quality Management District (“SCAQMD”) Rules 2001 and 2002. The amendments are being proposed in connection with the transition of the Regional Clean Air Incentives Market (“RECLAIM”) program to a command-and-control regulatory structure. WSPA is a non-profit trade association representing companies that explore for, produce, refine, transport and market petroleum, petroleum products, natural gas and other energy supplies in five western states including California. WSPA has been an active participant in air quality planning issues for over 30 years. WSPA-member companies operate petroleum refineries and other facilities in the South Coast Air Basin that will be impacted by the transition out of the RECLAIM program.

General Comments

The proposed amendments to Rules 2001 and 2002 are primarily interim measures intended to establish new eligibility criteria for exiting RECLAIM, provide opt-out procedures, and address, on a temporary basis, unresolved issues surrounding compliance of new source review (“NSR”) for former RECLAIM facilities once they have transitioned out of the RECLAIM program. As WSPA and others have expressed in numerous meetings, workshops and hearings conducted in connection with the RECLAIM transition, we have serious concerns about the lack of clarity surrounding NSR in a post-RECLAIM regime.

We believe current SCAQMD staff’s (“staff”) proposed approach is premature, as staff has not addressed all of the underlying issues surrounding a RECLAIM sunset. RECLAIM is a comprehensive, complex program that was adopted as a whole. In the development of RECLAIM, staff not only determined current and future effective best available retrofit control

technology (“BARCT”), but also examined and addressed NSR, reviewed socioeconomic impacts, mitigated implications of emissions trading, resolved enforcement and monitoring issues, and understood a host of other consequences of adopting such a program. This comprehensive approach ensured the overwhelming success of the RECLAIM program as it was designed. In contrast for this rulemaking, staff is dismantling the RECLAIM program without analyzing any of the consequences of the proposed approach. Most importantly, staff has not addressed NSR, nor the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of a RECLAIM sunset.

Our strong preference is that staff prioritizes resolution of the NSR issues and conduct an analysis of the entire RECLAIM transition project comparable with the same full analysis that was done during the implementation of RECLAIM before initiating rulemaking. There is no evidence that this has been done to date. We believe that addressing fundamental programmatic issues that will affect all former RECLAIM facilities, such as NSR, early in the transition process, and then moving on to the more narrowly applicable landing rules, would result in a more orderly and efficient transition in the following ways:

- It would provide facilities with an understanding of the NSR requirements and procedures that will apply to modifications required to comply with updated BARCT rules. It is not possible to develop a final and comprehensive plan for implementing new BARCT requirements without knowing the NSR requirements and procedures and how those will impact post-RECLAIM operating permits.
- It would result in a more efficient use of staff resources. For example, the proposed amendments to Rules 2001 and 2002 are essentially “stop-gap” measures that are necessary because the NSR and other programmatic issues remain unresolved. If the NSR and other programmatic issues were addressed, it would not be necessary to develop and implement such measures.
- It would avoid the current ad hoc, piecemeal approach to the RECLAIM Transition Project which results in additional confusion and uncertainty. This is illustrated by the fact that staff’s positions with respect to certain issues related to the proposed amendments to Rules 2001 and 2002 are quite different than positions taken when these two rules were amended in January of this year in what we view as a rush to get the RECLAIM transition process underway.
- It would avoid legal vulnerabilities that we believe are inherent in the current ad hoc, piecemeal approach because the environmental and socioeconomic assessments of incremental rulemaking are disjointed and incomplete.

Should the District continue with this piecemeal approach, we offer the comments set forth below on the proposed amendments:

Specific Comments on Proposed Amended Rule 2002(f)(11) – “Stay-In” Provision

The proposed amendments to Rule 2002 would allow facilities to remain in the RECLAIM program, and thereby avail themselves of the RECLAIM NSR program set forth in SCAQMD Rule 2005 for some period of time. Our understanding, which was confirmed by staff during the RECLAIM Working Group meeting on August 9, 2018, is that the decision of whether or not to remain in the RECLAIM program is completely within the discretion of the facility (assuming the facility meets the specified criteria). Some of the language in the proposed amendments could be read to grant the Executive Officer discretion (beyond merely confirming that the facility meets the specified criteria) to decide whether or not the facility may remain in the program. The following proposed changes are intended to better reflect staff’s intent.

(11) An owner ~~of~~ **or** operator of a RECLAIM facility that receives an initial determination notification may elect **that** ~~for~~ the facility ~~to~~ remain in RECLAIM **by submitting** if a request to the Executive Officer to remain in RECLAIM is submitted, **together with** ~~including~~ any equipment information required pursuant to paragraph (f)(6).

(A) Upon **receiving a request to remain in RECLAIM and any equipment information required pursuant to paragraph (f)(6)**, ~~written approval by~~ the Executive Officer **shall notify the owner or operator in writing** that the facility shall remain in RECLAIM **subject to the following**:

- (i) The facility shall remain in RECLAIM until a subsequent notification is issued to the facility that it must exit by a date no later than December 31, 2023.
- (ii) The facility is required to submit any updated information within 30 days of the date of the subsequent notification.
- (iii) The facility shall comply with all requirements of any non-RECLAIM rule that does not exempt NOx emissions from RECLAIM facilities.

Specific Comments on Proposed Amended Rule 2002(f)(10) – “Opt-Out” Provision

Proposed Amended Rule 2002 includes an “opt-out” provision for those facilities that may be ready to voluntarily exit RECLAIM prior to the time that they might otherwise be transitioned out. The current staff proposal differs from previous proposals in that it places

certain restrictions on facilities after they have exited the program that we believe are unfair and unwarranted. Specifically, proposed paragraph (f)(10)(B) would prohibit such facilities from taking advantage of otherwise available offset exemptions in SCAQMD Rule 1304. In the event that an NSR event requiring offsets were to occur after the facility exited the RECLAIM program, it would be required to obtain emission reduction credits on the open market, which the staff acknowledges are “scarce.” (July 20 Preliminary Draft Staff Report, p. 8).¹ We believe that it is unnecessary, unfair, and possibly contrary to state law, to deny former RECLAIM facilities advantages that they would otherwise be entitled to and that are available to all other non-RECLAIM facilities.

The Preliminary Draft Staff Report expresses concern that the potential impacts associated with emission increases from facilities that might exit the RECLAIM program, even if limited to the 37 facilities the staff initially identified as eligible to exit, could impose a demand on Rule 1304 offset exemptions that could approach or surpass the cumulative emissions increase thresholds of SCAQMD Rule 1315. (Preliminary Draft Staff Report, p. 8). In other words, staff is concerned that if former RECLAIM facilities were permitted to utilize Rule 1304 offset exemptions, the demand on the SCAQMD’s internal emission offset bank, which supports the offset exemptions, might exceed previously analyzed levels. This concern seems inconsistent with positions taken by staff in connection with the January 2018 amendments to these two rules, and with more recent statements by staff suggesting that it believes the internal emission offset bank is the most viable source of emission offsets for former RECLAIM facilities on a long-term basis.

The January 2018 amendments established the criteria and procedures pursuant to which eligible facilities would be identified and exited from RECLAIM. According to the Final Staff Report, “. . . the proposed amendments would remove approximately 38 facilities from NOx RECLAIM.” (January 5 Final Staff Report, p. 2).² Staff determined that the impact of exiting the initial round of facilities, including impacts associated with reduced demand for RTCs, would be minimal:

Given the analysis above and the fact that the 38 facilities—which are potentially ready to exit out of the NOx RECLAIM program into command-and-control—account for about one percent of NOx emissions and NOx RTC holdings in the NOx RECLAIM universe, staff concludes that the potential impact of PAR 2002 on the demand and supply of NOx RTC market is expected to be

¹ References herein to “July 20 Preliminary Draft Staff Report” refer to the Preliminary Draft Staff Report, Proposed Amendments to Regulation XX- Regional Clean Air Incentives Market (RECLAIM), Proposed Amended Rules 2001 – Applicability and 2002 – Allocations for Oxides of Nitrogen (NOx) and Oxides of Sulfur (SOx), dated July 20, 2018.

² References herein to “January 5 Final Staff Report” refer to the Final Staff Report Proposed Amendments to Regulation XX – Regional Clean Air Incentives Market (RECLAIM) Proposed Amended Rules 2001 – Applicability and 2002 – Allocations for Oxides of Nitrogen (NOx) and Oxides of Sulfur (SOx), dated January 5, 2018.

minimal and large price fluctuations in the NOx RTC market are unlikely to result directly from the potential exit of the 38 directly affected facilities out of the NOx RECLAIM program. Therefore, PAR 2002 would have minimal impacts on the existing facilities that are not yet ready to exit the NOx RECLAIM program. (January 5 Final Staff Report, p. 12.)

To support its conclusion that exiting the initial round of facilities from the program would have minimal impacts as a result of foregone market demand for RTCs, staff analyzed three scenarios in which NOx emissions from the subject facilities were: i) 5% below 2015 NOx emissions; ii) the same as 2015 NOx emissions; and iii) 5% above 2015 NOx emissions. (January 5 Final Staff Report, p. 11). Staff determined that foregone market demand for RTCs associated with exiting the initial group of facilities under each of the three scenarios would be 0.073 tons per day (TPD), 0.080 TPD, and 0.086 TPD, respectively. Based on this analysis, staff concluded that the anticipated future demand for NOx RTCs associated with the exiting facilities was minimal, and that eliminating that demand would not materially impact the remaining market. In other words, staff concluded that the exiting facilities would have a negligible demand for RTCs in the future, including RTCs required to satisfy NSR requirements. As stated in the Summary of the Proposal:

Considering the past market behavior by these facilities, staff concludes that the potential impact of PAR 2002 on the demand and supply of NOx RTC market is expected to be minimal and large price fluctuations in the NOx RTC market are unlikely to result directly from the potential exit of these facilities out of the NOx RECLAIM program. (Summary of Proposal, Agenda Item No. 18, January 5, 2018, p. 3.)

Notably, staff did not even address the impact that the January 2018 amendments might have on the internal bank even though those amendments were intended to result in precisely the situation about which staff is now expressing concern – the removal of 38 facilities from the RECLAIM program that would then be eligible to take advantage of offset exemptions in Rule 1304 like any other RECLAIM facility.

In contrast with the January 2018 Final Staff Report, the July 2018 Preliminary Draft Staff Report expresses serious concerns about the potential for increased NOx emissions from facilities exiting the program, stating that “[e]ven among the first 37 facilities identified that may be eligible to exit, any impacts from potential emissions increases are unknown and if significant enough, can approach or surpass the cumulative emissions increase thresholds of Rule 1315.” (July 2018 Preliminary Draft Staff Report, p. 8).

Clearly, the conclusions reached by staff in the January 2018 Final Staff Report, upon which the Governing Board relied when it adopted the current versions of Rules 2001 and 2002, are inconsistent with the concerns being raised by staff in the current proposal. Either staff erred in January by underestimating the impacts on the RECLAIM market and failing to even analyze

the potential impacts on the internal bank, or it is overstating the potential impacts associated with the current proposal. In either case, this inconsistency illustrates the problem with undertaking the RECLAIM transition in an ad hoc, piecemeal fashion.

California Environmental Quality Act Considerations

WSPA and others have expressed concerns regarding the “piecemeal” manner in which the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) analysis for the RECLAIM transition is being conducted. “. . . CEQA’s requirements ‘cannot be avoided by chopping up proposed projects into bite-size pieces which, individually considered, might be found to have no significant effect on the environment or to be only ministerial.’ [Fn. omitted.]” *Lincoln Place Tenants Assn. v. City of Los Angeles* (2005) 130 Cal.App.4th 1491,1507 quoting *Plan for Arcadia, Inc. v. City Council of Arcadia* (1974) 42 Cal.App.3d 712, 726. Staff explained its CEQA strategy for the RECLAIM transition in an April 25, 2018 letter to the Los Angeles County Business Federation in which it stated:

The potential environmental impacts associated with the 2016 AQMP, including CMB-05, were analyzed in Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) certified in March, 2017 . . . In other words, the environmental impacts of the entire RECLAIM Transition project . . . were analyzed in the 2016 AQMP and the associated PEIR, which was a program level analysis . . . Since the SCAQMD has already prepared a program-level CEQA analysis for the 2016 AQMP, including the RECLAIM Transition, no additional program-level analysis is required and further analysis will be tiered off the 2016 AQMP PEIR.
(<http://www.aqmd.gov/docs/default-source/rule-book/Proposed-Rules/regxx/aqmd-response-letter-to-bizfed-042518.pdf?sfvrsn=6>).

Consistent with the staff’s explanation described above, SCAQMD staff has prepared a Draft Subsequent Environmental Assessment (“Draft SEA”) to analyze environmental impacts from the proposed amendments to Rules 2001 and 2002.
(<http://www.aqmd.gov/home/research/documents-reports/lead-agency-scaqmd-projects>). The Draft SEA attempts to tier off of the March 2017 Final Program Environmental Impact Report for the 2016 AQMP and tries to obscure the issue by citing to several other previously certified CEQA documents, including the December 2015 Final Program Environmental Assessment completed for the amendments to the NOx RECLAIM program that were adopted on December 4, 2015, and the October 2016 Addendum to the December 2015 Final Program Environmental Assessment completed for amendments to Rule 2002 to establish criteria and procedures for facilities undergoing a shutdown and for the treatment of RTCs. Consistent with the staff’s earlier explanation, the Draft SEA states:

“The decision to transition from NOx RECLAIM into a source-specific command-and-control regulatory structure was approved by the SCAQMD Governing Board as control measure CMB-05 in

the 2016 AQMP and the potential environmental impacts associated with the 2016 AQMP, including CMB-05, were analyzed in the Final Program EIR certified in March 2017. This Draft SEA relies on the analysis in the March 2017 Final Program EIR for the 2016 AQMP.” (Draft SEA, p. 2-5).

The proposed amendments to Rules 2001 and 2002 implement that portion of control measure CMB-05, written after the Governing Board’s adoption of the 2016 AQMP that calls for the transition of the RECLAIM program to a command and control regulatory structure. As stated in the July 2018 Preliminary Draft Staff Report, “Proposed Amended Rules 2001 and 2002 will continue the efforts to transition RECLAIM facilities to a command-and-control regulatory structure . . .” (July 2018 Preliminary Draft Staff Report, p. 2). The problem with the proposal to tier the CEQA analysis for the currently proposed amendments to Rules 2001 and 2002 off from the March 2017 Final Program EIR for the 2016 AQMP is that control measure CMB-05 as proposed at the time the March 2017 Final Program EIR was prepared did not include a transition out of the RECLAIM program. That language was added well after the CEQA analysis was complete. Furthermore, no additional CEQA analysis was conducted to address the changes to CMB-05.

The Final Draft 2016 AQMP, which was ultimately presented to the SCAQMD Governing Board, was released in December 2016. Control measure CMB-05 called for an additional five tons per day of NOx reductions from sources covered by the RECLAIM program by the year 2031. CMB-05 also called for convening a Working Group to consider replacing the RECLAIM program with a more traditional command-and-control regulatory program, but did not include a mandate to undertake such a transition. SCAQMD Governing Board action on the Final Draft 2016 AQMP was noticed for February 3, 2017. When the 2016 AQMP item came up on the agenda, SCAQMD staff made a presentation, as is typical. No substantive questions were asked of the staff by Board Members, and no Board Members indicated an intention to offer amendments to the staff proposal. The public was then provided an opportunity to comment, and approximately five hours of public comment ensued.

Following the close of the public comment period, Board Member Mitchell stated her intention to introduce amendments to the staff proposal for control measure CMB-05 that would: i) accelerate the additional five TPD of reductions to 2025 from 2031; and ii) transition to a command-and-control program as soon as practicable. Board Member Mitchell did not provide any specific proposed language and did not make a formal motion to amend the staff proposal. For reasons that are not relevant here, action on the item was continued to the March 3, 2017 Governing Board hearing. The Governing Board stated its intention not to take additional public comment on the item at the March 3, 2017 hearing.

At the hearing on March 3, 2017, Board Member Mitchell introduced the following amendments to CMB-05 that included a direction to staff to develop a transition out of the RECLAIM program:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the SCAQMD Governing Board does hereby direct staff to modify the 2016 AQMP NOx RECLAIM measure (CMB-05) to achieve the five (5) tons per day NOx emission reduction commitment as soon as feasible, and no later than 2025, and to transition the RECLAIM program to a command and control regulatory structure requiring BARCT level controls as soon as practicable and to request staff to return in 60 days to report feasible target dates for sunseting the RECLAIM program.

There was no Board Member discussion of the proposed amendments, and they were approved on a vote of 7-6.

The CEQA analysis supporting the 2016 AQMP commenced with a Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (“EIR”) released on July 5, 2016. The Draft EIR was released on September 16, 2016, with the comment period closing on November 15, 2016. In mid-November 2016, four public hearings related to the AQMP were held in each of the four counties within the SCAQMD territory, at which comments on the Draft EIR were taken. After incorporating comments and making minor textual changes, the Final EIR was released in January 2017. No material changes or additional analysis were undertaken subsequent to the release of the Final EIR, which was certified by the Governing Board on March 3, 2017 as the March 2017 Final Program Environmental Impact Report for the 2016 AQMP, upon which staff now seeks to rely.

Thus, the transition out of the RECLAIM program, which the currently proposed amendments to Rules 2001 and 2002 seek to implement, was not included in the version of CMB-05 presented to the Governing Board as part of the 2016 AQMP. The March 2017 Final Program EIR for the 2016 AQMP, which was completed in January 2018, did not analyze the transition of the RECLAIM program because that was not prescribed by the CMB-05 measure at that time. Therefore, tiering off of the March 2017 Final Program EIR for the 2016 AQMP to support rule amendments that seek to implement the transition is not possible since there is no analysis from which to tier off. In the absence of a program level CEQA analysis that includes the RECLAIM transition, staff’s segmented analysis of each proposed rulemaking action in the transition process constitutes classic “piecemealing” contrary to the requirements of CEQA.

Staff’s attempt to tier without having completed a programmatic analysis of the RECLAIM Transition Project ignores the fact that RECLAIM is a comprehensive program that includes an assessment of BARCT for all of the sources in the program. It was adopted as a whole, a single package, not as a series of individual rules and regulations. There are no separate BARCT regulations in the RECLAIM program. Because RECLAIM allows for BARCT to be implemented on an aggregate basis, all BARCT determinations had to be made together. Furthermore, all RECLAIM rules are dependent upon one another, and none of these can stand alone. By attempting to analyze the impact of a single RECLAIM rule, i.e., BARCT determination, staff is ignoring the interdependency of the program, and thus, improperly disregarding the impacts of the comprehensive program.

In the draft SEA, staff claims that it is speculative to determine what BARCT may be for all the various sources under the RECLAIM program. This underscores the fact that a comprehensive program transitioning RECLAIM sources to command and control rules was never developed or analyzed. Rather, staff is piecemealing the analysis of the RECLAIM transition. Such an approach has been rejected by the courts: “Instead of itself providing an analytically complete and coherent explanation, the FEIR notes that a full analysis of the planned conjunctive use program must await environmental review of the Water Agency’s zone 40 master plan update, which was pending at the time the FEIR was released. The Board’s findings repeat this explanation. To the extent the FEIR attempted, in effect, to tier from a *future* environmental document, we reject its approach as legally improper under CEQA.” *Vineyard Area Citizens for Responsible Growth, Inc. v. City of Rancho Cordova* (2007) 40 Cal.4th 412, 440 [emphasis in original].

Furthermore, RECLAIM is an emissions trading program. It allows facilities to choose to implement specific controls or to purchase emissions credits. Staff’s piecemealing of the analysis does not account for those facilities that have implemented other means to comply with the program and the additional impacts the transition to individual command and control rules may have on these facilities. Additionally, these impacts cannot be captured in a single rule analysis. Rather, staff’s piecemealing further ignores the impacts on facilities that are subject to multiple BARCT determinations.

Health & Safety Code Section 39616

The current staff proposal for amending Rule 2002 to prevent former RECLAIM facilities from accessing offset exemptions in Rule 1304 would place former RECLAIM facilities at a significant disadvantage relative to other non-RECLAIM facilities. California Health & Safety Code Section 39616(c)(7) prohibits imposing disproportionate impacts, measured on an aggregate basis, on those stationary sources included in the RECLAIM program compared to other permitted stationary sources. Creating a new category of sources without access to either RTCs or Rule 1304 offset exemptions to satisfy NSR requirements runs afoul of this prohibition.

Statement Pertaining to SCAQMD Rule 1306

The July 2018 Preliminary Draft Staff Report contains the following statement: “Moreover, Rule 1306 – Emission Calculations would calculate emission increases of exiting RECLAIM facilities based on actual to potential emissions, thereby further exacerbating the need for offsets.” (Preliminary Draft Staff Report, p. 8). It is not clear why this would be the case. Furthermore, it is premature to make such assertions outside the context of an overall analysis of what the NSR requirements for former RECLAIM facilities might be. This is a critical issue that must be addressed in the overall development of the NSR program for former RECLAIM facilities.

LATHAM & WATKINS^{LLP}

Conclusion

Thank you for considering these comments. We look forward to continuing to work with you on these rulemakings which are critically important to stakeholders as well as the regional economy. If you have any questions, please contact me at (714) 401-8105 or by email at michael.carroll@lw.com or Bridget McCann of WSPA at (310) 808-2146 or by email at bmccann@wspa.org.

Sincerely,


Michael J. Carroll *due*
of LATHAM & WATKINS LLP

cc: Cathy Reheis-Boyd, WSPA
Patty Senecal, WSPA
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