

Coleen Anderson

I just recently learned about your open meeting to give comments on your proposed SIP. I understand that YRCAA is our local organization tasked with enforcing the federal and state air quality laws. As you know, President Biden has set targets lowering GHG emissions 50-52% by 2030 from 2005 levels, achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by no later than 2050, and limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. On the State level, Governor Inslee has set goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 to 45% below 1990 levels, by 2040 to 70% below 1990 levels, and by 2050 to 95% below 1990 levels to achieve net zero emissions. These targets are grounded in analysis that explored sectors of the economy that produce CO₂ and non-CO₂ greenhouse gases: electricity, transportation, buildings, industry, and lands. I would like to see YRCAA pledge its alliance with these targets in ALL of these sectors. These goals and targets should be included in the current SIP. Currently neither in its SIP nor on its website does YRCAA commit to these incremental reductions over time nor does it express its desire to adhere to the federal and state targets. I would like assurances that the local agency is in line with our nation's goals.

The only specific pollution sources the SIP includes are the dry-cleaning Industry and various burning scenarios. The only time CAFOs are mentioned is with regard to "dust from cattle feeding operations." Besides particulate matter and lowering air quality in the areas around them, CAFOs also emit greenhouse and methane gases and contribute to climate change. The EPA attributes manure management as the fourth leading source of nitrous oxide emissions and the fifth leading source of methane emissions. It can only be assumed that these and other greenhouse gas emissions from CAFOs will rise and continue to contribute to climate change and unhealthy air quality. As an example, one way emissions could be curtailed is that before CAFO permits are renewed, they would be required to install anaerobic digesters to capture the CO₂, methane and gases that are being emitted from their operations. I don't know if your agency has the authority to make those kinds of rules, but if it does it needs to start focusing on them now. Insofar as your agency is empowered to create rules and regulations, or to approve permits, the urgency of these federal, state and local emissions reduction goals should be emphasized. Until emissions from CAFOs are controlled, we are spinning our wheels in reaching our targets.

References:

Center for Disease Control:

https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/docs/understanding_cafos_nalboh.pdf