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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Air Quality Alert Issued for July 21 in Central Ohio **Air Pollution Levels Expected to be Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups**

(COLUMBUS – July 21, 2016) – The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is issuing an Air Quality Alert for Thursday, July 21. The region – Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Knox, Madison, and Licking counties – is likely to experience ground-level ozone pollution levels that are Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups on the national Air Quality Index (AQI) scale. Thursday’s AQI is forecasted to be 115.

A strong upper-level ridge persisting over the Buckeye State will inhibit atmospheric mixing. In addition, mostly sunny skies and very warm temperatures will enhance ozone production, and southwesterly winds will bring regional pollutants into the area. These conditions, combined with pollutant carryover from Wednesday, will lead to Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups AQI levels.

MORPC uses the national AQI scale to inform the public about daily ozone and particle pollution levels in Central Ohio. The AQI scale runs from 0-300 – the higher the AQI value, the greater the health concern. When levels reach above 100, air quality is considered to be Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups. MORPC issues an Air Quality Alert to the public when pollution levels reach 101 or higher.

People with asthma are more likely to suffer an increase in the number and severity of symptoms during an Air Quality Alert. To decrease the potential for health implications, sensitive groups of people are urged to limit prolonged outdoor exertion. Those who are experiencing breathing difficulties should consult with their doctor. More information on the health effects of ozone pollution is available at:

www.myfcph.org/air.php and www.publichealth.columbus.gov.

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Working to Build a Better Region

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On Air Quality Alert days, MORPC recommends taking actions to improve air quality. When everyone pitches in, our communities breathe better air.

- Travel by carpooling, combining trips, riding COTA, bicycling, or walking to nearby destinations. For more information contact MORPC RideSolutions at (888) 742-RIDE.
- Turn off your engine instead of idling your vehicle to cut down on vehicle emissions.
- Avoid refueling your vehicle, or wait until dusk to refuel your vehicle. Filling up your tank when the daytime heat has diminished helps to reduce harmful ground-level ozone pollution.
- Avoid topping off your tank at the gas station. Spilled gasoline pollutes the air when it evaporates.
- Avoid mowing your lawn on an Air Quality Alert day. Longer grass in your yard is good for the air, as well as the lawn.

Visit <http://airquality.morpc.org> for more information about MORPC's Air Quality Program.

– 30 –

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is a voluntary association of local governments and regional organizations which envisions and embraces innovative directions in economic prosperity, energy, the environment, housing, land use, and transportation. Our transformative programming, services and innovative public policy are designed to promote and support the vitality and growth in the region.