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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Air Quality Alert Issued Today

Ozone Pollution Levels expected to be Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups

(COLUMBUS, May 25, 2016) –The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is issuing a **same-day Air Quality Alert for Wednesday, May 25**. 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](#). Today's AQI is forecasted to be 101.

Ground-level ozone pollution is a colorless, odorless gas produced when emissions from our cars, lawn equipment and industry react together in the presence of heat and sunlight. Partly sunny skies and temperatures in the 80s will support ozone formation. In addition, moderate south-southwesterly winds will transport regional pollutants and moisture into the Columbus area. These conditions, combined with pollutant carryover from Tuesday, will lead to ozone levels that are unhealthy for certain sensitive groups of people, including people with heart disease, respiratory disease (such as asthma), active children, active adults, and seniors.

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 to 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.

On Air Quality Alert days, MORPC recommends taking actions to improve air quality. **For those planning to travel over Memorial Day weekend, MORPC recommends carpooling, combining trips, riding COTA, and bicycling or walking if possible.** Contact MORPC RideSolutions at 1.888.742.RIDE (7433) for more information.

When everyone pitches in, our communities breathe better air. Here are some more tips to reduce your individual contributions to ozone-producing emissions on Air Quality Alert days:

- Turn off your engine instead of idling your vehicle to cut down on vehicle emissions.

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Working to Build a Better Region

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- 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.

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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.