



Contact: **Bernice Cage**
Tel.: 614-233-4157
Cell Phone: 614-626-1117
Email: bcage@morpc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Air Quality Alert Issued for July 29 in Central Ohio **Air Pollution Levels Expected to be Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups** *Plan Accordingly for the Ohio State Fair*

(COLUMBUS – July 29, 2015) – The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is issuing an Air Quality Alert for Wednesday, July 29. 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. Wednesday’s AQI is forecasted to be 104.

Mostly sunny skies and hot temperatures will continue to enhance ozone production in central Ohio. Furthermore, light winds will limit dispersion. These conditions, combined with pollutant carryover from previous days, will result in Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups AQI levels for ozone.

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 and asthma is the most frequent admitting diagnosis at Nationwide Children’s Hospital. To decrease the potential for health implications, sensitive groups of people such as children, older adults, active adults, and those with respiratory diseases like asthma 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

111 Liberty Street, Suite 100
Columbus, Ohio 43215-5222
Phone (614) 228-2663 Fax (614) 621-2401
www.morpc.org

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On Air Quality Alert days, MORPC recommends taking actions to improve air quality. **For those planning to travel to the first day of the Ohio State Fair tomorrow, MORPC recommends carpooling, combining trips, riding COTA, and bicycling or walking to the fairgrounds 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.
- 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.
- Contact the Ohio Air Quality Development Authority for financing programs to assist large and small Ohio businesses in the purchase, construction and installation of new facilities and equipment that help abate air pollution. More information is available at www.ohioairquality.org.

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.