

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program

The purpose of the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program is to fund transportation projects or programs that will contribute to attainment or maintenance of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone and carbon monoxide. The TEA-21 also allows CMAQ funding to be expended in particulate matter nonattainment and maintenance areas.

All projects and programs eligible for CMAQ funds must come from a conforming transportation plan and TIP, and be consistent with conformity provisions contained in section 176(C) of the Clean Air Act and the Transportation Conformity Rule. Projects need to be included in TIPs or statewide transportation improvement projects developed by MPOs or States respectively, under the metropolitan or statewide planning regulations. Projects also need to complete the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements and meet basic eligibility requirements for funding under titles 23 and 49 of the United States Code.

Project types typically considered eligible for CMAQ funding include:

- ❖ Transportation Activities in an Approved SIP or Maintenance Plan
- ❖ TCM's - Transportation Control Measures that result in air quality benefits
- ❖ Extreme Low-Temperature Cold Start Programs
- ❖ Public-Private Partnerships
- ❖ Alternative Fuel Programs
- ❖ Traffic Flow Improvements
- ❖ Transit Projects
- ❖ Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities Programs
- ❖ Travel Demand Management
- ❖ Outreach and Rideshare Activities
- ❖ Telecommuting
- ❖ Fare/Fee Subsidy Programs
- ❖ Intermodal Freight
- ❖ Planning and Project Development Activities
- ❖ I/M Programs – Emission I/M programs may be eligible
- ❖ Magnetic Levitation Transportation technology Deployment Programs
- ❖ Experimental Pilot Projects

Typical highway improvements that are eligible fall under TCM's or Traffic flow improvements, such as Traffic Signal Control Systems, Incident management programs, High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes, and Truck Climbing Lanes that are not capacity increasing (as defined in the STIP Guidelines).

Projects that are capacity increasing or highway expansion typically are not eligible for this program as they lead to increased vehicle emissions. Similarly, rehabilitation and maintenance activities generally show no potential to reduce vehicle emissions and are not eligible.

The Department of Transportation in partnership with the California Air Resource Board has published "Methods to Find the Cost-Effectiveness of Funding Air Quality Projects" which can be of assistance in determining if a potential project actually does reduce emissions, and to what extent. Also, the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration have published CMAQ Program Guidance to help in administering the program.