



*Department of Environmental Quality*

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July 9, 1985

*Docket # OPMO-0184*

*ITEM # 44*

*n-96-01*

*II-A-981*

Mr. Elkins, Assistant Administrator  
Office of Air and Radiation (AR-443)  
Docket No. OPMO-0184  
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Washington, DC 20460

Re: Docket No. OPMO-0184  
Truck Noise Standards

Dear Mr. Elkins:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on EPA's proposal to amend the new product and in-use truck noise standards. As you know, the State of Oregon has approved standards identical to EPA's and thus we are very interested in the proposal to amend these rules.

In general, we find the justification to defer the MHT 80 dBA standard for new trucks from 1986 to 1988 supports the position of EPA and the truck manufacturers (petitioners). This standard has now been delayed a total of eight years and two more years will likely have little impact on the regulatory strategy. However, it should be noted that a 10 year delay in this standard illustrates EPA's lack of commitment to the intent of the Noise Control Act of 1972.

EPA's proposal to amend the in-use truck standards (IMC standards) will do little to maintain or reduce truck noise levels. First, the lower standards would only apply to 1986 and later models. There is no justification given for not including all trucks built to meet the MHT 83 dB standard that has been in effect since 1978. EPA claims the proposed lower IMC standards would discourage degradation of exhaust noise. However, it fails to show how the proposal would have any effect until perhaps after 1990 when the 1986 model year trucks begin to need replacement mufflers. We recommend the proposed lower IMC standard apply to all trucks built to conform with the MHT 83 dB standards (i.e., those manufactured since January 1, 1978).

Another defect in EPA's IMC proposal is that the recommended limit is approximately 2 dB too high. The current rule is not enforced as the compliance rate is 97 percent (stationary). However, data shows (Table 3 of the Notice) the proposed limits would result in a 96 percent compliance rate. We question whether this new rule would be enforced based on these projections.

New trucks (worst case data) are ranging from 77 to 82 dB with the average

2  
Mr. Elkins, Assistant Administrator

July 9, 1985

Page 2

(worst case) truck at 80.6 dB.. As these data are comparable to the low speed and hard site condition, we recommend the standard in the EPA rule be set 2 dB lower than proposed. At this proposed level, compliance rates 89 to 91 percent could be expected. These rates might justify reinstatement of the enforcement program by the Bureau of Motor Carrier Safety.

In summary, the IMC proposal has two major flaws. First, the scope of the new standard should apply to all trucks constructed since January 1, 1978 rather than the proposed 1986 and later model years. Second, the new standard should be reduced an additional 2 dB to reflect the highest level any new truck produced when new. The 2 dB tolerance provided under the BMCS procedures will ensure no "quiet" truck is identified as "noisy."

Sincerely,



John M. Hector  
Program Manager  
Noise Pollution Control

JMH:ahe