

to be overcome, at enormous expense, before an Orwellian system of government dossiers could be put into operation. But it admits that public apprehension about such a possibility is justified and, therefore, legal barriers should be erected. Weinberger said, "Working from the proposals of the committee, the Department is now developing legislation and appropriate administrative regulations." The legislation is expected to be ready by Oct. 1. □

## How U.S. cities can meet air standards

Holding his last two press conferences as Environmental Protection Agency Acting Administrator, Robert Fri reported on the agency's progress and frustration in negotiating transportation controls with traffic-congested cities and announced a year's extension to automobile manufacturers in meeting the 1976 nitrogen oxides standard.

When the first traffic control regulations were announced in June (SN: 6/23/73, p. 400), they brought cries of anguish from the cities involved. Some said the regulations could not be enforced; others threatened lawsuits, saying EPA had overstepped its bounds. The tumult has now subsided, and a procession of city officials, including Mayor Bradley of hard-hit Los Angeles, have come to Washington to discuss alternative plans with EPA. Emerging from these discussions comes a list of revised deadlines and priorities for 29 urban areas (see chart) which may offer the first realistic picture of what the air over American cities may look like in 1977, and what the impact on the average motorist will be.

In Group I cities, the impact will be minimal. In Rochester, for example, the ambient air quality standard for hydrocarbons will require a 45 percent reduction of emissions from present levels. Most of that will result from cleaner new cars and stationary source controls. Only about 15 percent of the reduction must come from transportation controls—in this case, accomplished by new vehicle inspection and maintenance regulations. The cost to the motorist will be about \$12 a year.

In Group II cities, major mass transit improvements will be required in addition to more stringent inspection and maintenance. Cars in Group III cities must be retrofitted with exhaust catalysts to remove pollutants and must impose some restrictions on downtown driving. The retrofits will cost from \$90 to \$140 and will not be ready until 1977. Traffic reductions up to about 20 percent can probably be accomplished by restricting parking, raising auto taxes and improving mass transit.

STATUS OF REGIONS REQUIRING IN-USE VEHICLE EMISSIONS CONTROLS TO MEET THE OXIDANT AND CARBON MONOXIDE STANDARDS			
Group	Regions	Planned Strategy	Projected Year of Compliance
I	El Paso Rochester Cincinnati	Stringent stationary sources control; automotive inspection and maintenance	1975
II	Springfield Seattle Spokane Dallas Minneapolis-St. Paul Chicago Portland	Same as Group I + major transit improvements	1977
III	Philadelphia Pittsburgh National Capital Salt Lake City San Antonio Downtown New York City (CO)	Same as Group II + hardware retrofit + reductions in vehicle miles travelled of up to 20%	1977
IV	Los Angeles San Francisco Denver Boston Phoenix-Tucson Beaumont Fairbanks Sacramento San Diego San Joaquin Desert near Los Angeles Interstate New York City region (OX) Baltimore Houston	Same as Group III but with reductions in vehicle miles travelled of more than 20%	Post-1977

Reductions of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) of more than 20 percent, as required for Group IV cities, may simply not be possible. "We can't do everything," Fri said, but argument over what reductions are not reasonable has obscured "intelligent acceptance" of "how much we *should* do."

The first problem in reducing private vehicle traffic is to ensure adequate mass transit. Bus manufacturers have so far planned to build only about half the buses that would be required by the regulations. Fri has met with Department of Transportation Secretary Claude Brinegar to establish a high-level task force to correct this deficiency. Brinegar earlier announced a \$2.5 million grant to California's Metropolitan Transportation Commission to promote regional transit planning.

Even if the 1977 goals are not reached, says Fri, creative planning by

"responsible local leadership" could, by then, cut by 50 percent the number of people in the United States exposed to health-threatening levels of oxidants and by 90 percent those exposed to hazardous levels of carbon monoxide.

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Fri also announced a one-year delay of implementation of the 1976 standards for emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>). EPA will recommend a modified NO<sub>x</sub> standard to Congress this fall, and Fri says some sort of special electronic feedback catalyst system will be required to meet that new standard. Under the Clean Air Act, manufacturers were required to reduce NO<sub>x</sub> emissions to 0.4 grams per mile by 1976. Automakers now have an additional year to meet this standard (or a new one) but they must now meet an interim standard of 2.0 grams per mile for 1976.

Fri said he was encouraged by a new technological development that could help automakers meet the interim standard and change the competitive picture of conventional reciprocating engines vs. the Wankel and stratified charged engines (SN: 4/28/73, p. 276). By using a proportional exhaust gas recirculation system (EGR), conventional engines can not only reduce NO<sub>x</sub> emissions but also improve gas mileage over present levels. General Motors is reportedly planning to incorporate EGR into its 1975 models. Other manufacturers are expected to follow suit, ensuring that all 1976 cars can meet the 2 grams/mile standard. □



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Fri: Two important final decisions.