

Ministry for the Environment
PO Box 10362
Wellington 6143

5 July 2010

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Submission on the proposed amendments to the ambient air quality standards

Foodstuffs are a retailer owned co-operative company, wholly owned by South Island grocery retailers. Foodstuffs are the wholesale supplier to PAK'nSAVE Food Warehouses, New World and Four Square Supermarkets, On the Spot dairies and many unaffiliated outlets. Foodstuffs also own a variety of properties throughout the South Island from which many of its retail members undertake their businesses. Foodstuffs also owns a variety of distribution centres which support our retail and wholesale trade, supply to trade businesses and other industrial activities. Foodstuffs South Island Ltd has two sister companies, Foodstuffs (Auckland) Limited, and Foodstuffs (Wellington) Limited.

Foodstuffs is New Zealand's leading retail operation and holds 57% of the New Zealand grocery market.

We submit on the proposed amendments to the ambient air quality standards.

We are very supportive of the proposed amendments and in particular support Option 4b.

The following outlines our views on each of the areas under review.

1) Number of permitted exceedances and exclusion of exceptional events:

The current New Zealand allowance of only one exceedance of the PM₁₀ standard each year is too stringent. The World Health Organisation guideline of three exceedances per annum should be followed. This guideline was established after the 2004 New Zealand standards were promulgated, and New Zealand should follow these later internationally recognised standards.

Exclusion of exceptional events should also be allowed. It is unfair for local councils and communities to be penalised for events beyond their control and as exceptional events do occur (we understand Christchurch had high air pollution on one night last year due to Australian dust storms) these should be omitted.

2) Remove all industry consent restrictions:

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) identified that industry is typically not the key source for breaching the PM₁₀ standard in New Zealand. Hence it is not equitable to place additional restrictions on industry.

We believe therefore that the current restrictions on granting consent (ie reference to the straight/curved line paths when considering consents for significant discharges in polluted airsheds) should be removed. As should the blanket prohibition on any

industry consent after 2013 in polluted airsheds.

These restrictions are inequitable to business and unnecessarily stymie economic growth.

We note that Option 4a, unlike Option 4b, includes the provision to “introduce mandatory offsets for new industry consents in breaching airsheds after 2018”. We support Option 4b’s approach to not include this provision. Any inclusion of this provision would inequitably punish industry and add costs to the establishment of any new business.

In 2005, Christchurch’s local electricity network company, Orion, made submissions to commissioners hearing Environment Canterbury’s clean air plan. Orion calculated that, to achieve a 1% reduction in PM₁₀ levels, any ban on the use of diesel generators by industry would cost the community three times as much as it would to restrict the installation of complying clean air approved woodburners in homes, and be over 35 times as expensive as banning the use of open fires in homes. This analysis showed that it did not make economic sense to focus on “industry pollution” before doing all one could in the home to reduce airshed pollution. We believe that if similar cost effectiveness calculations were made today the results would be similar. Hence placing additional restrictions on industry is illogical.

3) Extend timeframe:

The current regulatory timeline is 2013. The TAG recommended maximum extensions of up to 2020. However as the discussion document points out 2020 would allow another 10 years of polluted airsheds in communities, and would effectively reward those Councils that have failed to take action on their airsheds to date. We believe the timeframe should be around 2015 to 2018, and so support Option 4b’s approach of “extend timeline to 2018 (maximum)”.

4) Place a greater focus on education:

We believe that it should be left up to individual councils to determine how they can best meet the regulations. We do not believe it necessary for the Government to prescribe to councils that greater focus on education should occur, when this may not be the most cost-effective approach.

5) Require mandatory reporting:

The discussion document is light on detail on what the ‘Mandatory reporting of PM₁₀ monitoring data’ would entail.

We note that currently the air quality standards require regional councils and unitary authorities to monitor air quality if it is likely that the ambient standard will be exceeded and to publicly report any breaches of the ambient standards within one month. Within Canterbury we find the information that Environment Canterbury provides in the public domain to be ample.

We do not have any specific views on the need to change reporting requirements.

6) Require councils to submit airshed implementation plans:

Again we find the discussion document light on the current and suggested requirements here. We note Option 4b does not include this requirement. We have no view on this issue.

7) Increased ministerial oversight:

This should only occur should councils not be on a path to meeting regulatory requirements. We therefore see no reason to extend the Ministers powers beyond what is currently in the RMA. We therefore support Option 4b's approach here to 'use existing ministerial powers under the RMA'

8) Establish an air quality compliance schedule:

We have no specific views on this issue as we are uncertain as to whether this would be of benefit to councils.

9) Investigate funding links:

We have no specific views on this issue.

Concluding remarks

We congratulate the Minister and the Ministry for their review of the air quality standard regulations. We support Option 4b of the discussion document.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. No part of this submission is confidential. If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Parish, Property Development Manager, Foodstuffs SI Ltd, Private Bag 4705, Christchurch, email : Rebecca.parish@foodstuffs-si.co.nz, DDI 03 353 8915.

Yours sincerely



Rebecca Parish
PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER