

City Of Grass Valley, California

Resolution to Address Health Concerns Resulting From Ozone Pollution in Grass Valley and Western Nevada County

WHEREAS, ground level ozone is a colorless and invisible pollutant created by chemical reactions between Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) in the presence of sunlight. Emissions from industrial facilities, electric utilities, motor vehicle exhaust and chemical solvents are the major sources of NOx and VOC; and

WHEREAS, the western portion of Nevada County, including the Cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City, have failed to meet reasonable health based standards for air quality and have been designated "non-attainment" zones for ozone pollution by the federal government; and

WHEREAS, according to the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District, nearly all of the ozone in Nevada County is transported by wind from the Sacramento and Bay Areas;

WHEREAS, the American Lung Association in its' 2007 State of the Air Report concluded that Western Nevada County is the 13th most ozone polluted county in the United States and the 1st most ozone polluted rural county in the United States; and

WHEREAS, ozone pollution in Nevada County is significantly worse than in areas commonly associated with air pollution, including New York City; Chicago, Illinois; Washington, DC; Las Vegas, Nevada; and most other US cities; and

WHEREAS, while ozone pollution is decreasing in many other Northern California counties, it is increasing in western Nevada County and exceeded national standards in 2006 on 25 days; and

WHEREAS, according to the US EPA and the American Lung Association, ozone is a powerful respiratory irritant that can lead to asthma, reductions in lung function, inflammation of the lung lining, increased respiratory discomfort, irreversible lung damage in developing lungs, hospitalization and premature death; and

WHEREAS, the US EPA estimates that one out of three residents of Nevada County is at risk of experiencing problems from ground level ozone; and

WHEREAS, ozone pollution is harmful to our children and can cause an increased rate of school absences, reduced athletic participation, diminished physical performance, increased emergency room visits and medical expenses; and

WHEREAS, ozone pollution is harmful to our seniors and can cause emphysema, shortness of breath, asthma, chest pain and premature death; and

WHEREAS, ozone pollution in Nevada County has resulted in families leaving Nevada County and some prospective new residents to reconsider living in Nevada County; and

WHEREAS, continued air degradation resulting from elevated ozone levels will seriously jeopardize Nevada County's long term economic future.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Grass Valley, California, in an effort to create a hospitable and healthy living and working environment for its residents, hereby declares that the City Council understands that ozone pollution in Nevada County constitutes a PUBLIC HEALTH URGENCY and will hereforth act upon data and information in a manner that distinguishes it as such;

AND RESOLVED that the City Council play a leadership role in addressing the ozone issue by convening a "summit" of elected officials; local, state and federal agency representatives; health and science professionals and interested individuals, businesses and organizations who represent ozone-impacted communities in the Sierra foothills to enhance, expand and coordinate data collection and research, build awareness of the health, environmental and economic affects of ozone pollution in the region, and prepare a strategy to address the issue from a regional perspective;

AND RESOLVED that the City Council of Grass Valley support the American Lung Association's plan to reduce ozone air pollution, including;

- Stricter pollution control requirements for power plants, including those that will bring older power plants up to current emissions standards;
- Stronger pollution control requirements for new motor vehicles and small engines;
- Cleaner fuel standards;
- Cleaner diesel vehicles, and
- improved in-use performance of existing pollution control equipment.

AND RESOLVED that the City Council of Grass Valley supports the efforts of parents, seniors, teachers, doctors and businesses to educate the local population as to the effects of ozone pollution, its causes and its remedies;

AND RESOLVED that the City Council of Grass Valley will support all reasonable and available efforts to substantially reduce ozone pollution in Nevada County and create a clean, healthy environment for all of our citizens.