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OTC UNVEILS REGIONAL STRATEGY TO CURB POLLUTION AND PROMOTE CLEAN ENERGY

(Washington, D.C.) - Today the Ozone Transport Commission (OTC) unveiled a regional strategy that will result in cleaner, less polluting paints, consumer products, industrial processes and industrial engines. OTC released six model rules that are the basis of a multi-state agreement to address regional air quality needs. The model rules provide for reductions in ozone-causing emissions of volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides, and will assist several of the OTC states to meet a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency deadline to adopt rules by October 2001. Some of the programs already are in place in some of the states.

"Regional cooperation works," said Jane Nishida, Chair of OTC and Secretary of the Maryland Department of the Environment. "In very short order, we have developed an impressive suite of model rules. Widespread regional adoption and implementation of many of these rules, especially those relating to consumer and commercial products, will maximize environmental benefits."

OTC also heralded the beginning of its clean power initiative by releasing a framework of incentives for cleaner distributed generation, which pertains to on-site electricity generators that are often small, numerous and highly polluting. Over the next 12 to 16 months, OTC will examine a host of energy issues and assess ways in which adverse air quality impacts can be minimized over the short and long term.

"OTC is interested in encouraging the development and implementation of clean energy generation capacity," stated Robert Varney, Vice Chair of OTC and Commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. "Creatively encouraging new technology and developing appropriate incentives and initiatives can help us meet our air quality and energy goals simultaneously."

OTC was created by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 to coordinate ground-level ozone planning in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic region. Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania,

Rhode Island, Virginia, and Vermont are represented on OTC. Ground-level ozone, a key component of smog, forms during warm weather when pollution from vehicles, power plants, households and industry bakes in the sun, making it difficult for some people to breathe.