Status Report From The On-Board Diagnostic Workgroup

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Co-Chairs: Dr. Jerry Gallagher, Colorado Department of Health
Edward Gardetto, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Since the last Subcommittee meeting the OBD Workgroup met on April 16th in Washington, D.C. The workgroup has also had two conference calls since the April meeting. The main work that the group has been addressing is the continued gathering of data on OBD. The following data sources are being followed:

- EPA FTP Testing at Automotive Testing Laboratory in Arizona (40 vehicles completed)
- EPA FTP Testing at NVFEL in Ann Arbor (2 vehicles completed)
- Colorado Dept. of Health FTP Testing (start in Fall of ’98)
- CARB FTP Testing (7 vehicles completed)
- EPA OBD I/M Pilot-lane data from Wisconsin (1200 vehicles through lane)
- Davis County, Utah OBD I/M data (13,000 vehicles through lanes)

Most of the above data is still in the process of being gathered and therefore analysis has not begun. The workgroup has also developed a sampling plan for the EPA testing. Although sampling from the lanes is still being pursued, the rate of vehicles being identified at the I/M lanes was extremely low, therefore procurement from other sources was necessary. The group agreed that vehicles from dealerships and rental agencies could be used for the purposes of this evaluation but the representativeness of the sample needed to be monitored (some makes and models are easier to procure than others). A sampling plan was developed (attached) that the group agreed addressed these concerns. It is recognized by the group that this plan is not random representative procurement, but is the best method available at this time.

One area which the group has identified as an additional area of concern is the plan by some states to implement OBD I/M prior to the federal requirement of January 1, 2001 by some states. Members of the group have expressed concern that if these states implement OBD I/M improperly, the technology may take a public relations hit which will make future implementation more difficult. A subgroup of the workgroup has been working on recommendations on what should be done to guide these “early implementation” states so that OBD I/M is implemented with a complete understanding of the known abilities and pitfalls. This recommendation is to be finalized at the workgroup’s July 16, 1998 meeting and will be forwarded to the full subcommittee.