



## Letter to The Editor – The Jamaica Gleaner

*(March 26, 2015):*

The Editor, Sir:

### **AIR QUALITY STANDARDS DO EXIST IN JAMAICA**

I am writing in response to your editorial of Wednesday, 25 March, 2015 entitled “**Are there air-quality standards?**” We found the editorial thought-provoking and topical to the current discussions now taking place on the air quality issues as a result of the fire at the Riverton waste disposal site.

I am pleased to advise you that there exist national air quality regulations and standards under the Natural Resources Conservation Authority Act (NRCA). The NRCA (**Air Quality Regulations, 2006**) provides the framework for regulating emissions from major and significant point sources and are developed pursuant to the section 38 of the NRCA Act, 1991. The NRCA (**Ambient Air Quality Standards**) Regulations, 1996 underpins the responsibility of the government to ensure that the ambient air quality protects human and environmental health. The Regulations and Standards support the NRCA/NEPA national air quality monitoring programme.

The Regulations outline the ambient air quality limits for specific parameters. Parameters of interest are referred to as critical air pollutants, namely: total suspended particulates, particulate matter having diameters not less than 10 micrometres (PM<sub>10</sub>), lead, sulphur dioxide, photochemical oxides (Ozone), carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide. The Regulations also cover the parameter photochemical oxides which are measured as ozone, an end-product of



# National Environment & Planning Agency

10 & 11 Caledonia Avenue, Kingston 5, Jamaica W.I. Tel: (876) 754-7540 Fax: (876) 754-7595-6, toll free help-line: 1-888-991-5005  
Website: <http://www.nepa.gov.jm>

photochemical reactions. Toxic chemicals, such as benzene and its derivatives are also regulated under the NRCA (Air Quality) Regulations.

It is also useful to note that the National Air Quality Programme covers both public and private sector facilities. Presently, NEPA operates four air monitoring stations in the Corporate Area and St. Catherine : Old Hope Road, Spanish Town Road, Cross Roads and Waterford (fire station). Two additional monitoring stations are operational in Montego Bay, St. James and May Pen, Clarendon. Currently the monitoring programme is being expanded to Spanish Town and Mandeville.

There are seven monitoring stations operated by licensed air pollutant discharge licensee in the KMA. Two are operated by the Jamaica Public Service Company: Rockfort and Marcus Garvey Drive (Garmex). One at Petrojam Limited, Marcus Garvey Drive; three operated by Caribbean Cement Company Limited : Rockfort, Caribbean Maritime Institute premises and College Commons) and one by Jamaica Private Power Company at Rockfort.

Overall, thirty-nine industry facilities islandwide are licensed under the Regulations. All are mandated by conditions of their licence to undertake self-monitoring activities and report on emissions released. This allows NEPA to tabulate and assess air pollutant loadings and air quality levels across the country.

The air quality Standards and Regulations as well as NEPA's National Air Quality Monitoring Programme and Reports can be viewed on its website at <http://www.nepa.gov.jm>.

The website has information on incident reports on the Riverton and other fires, as well as, annual emissions. Finally, please note that the current Regulations do not cover emissions from motor vehicle. The gap is recognized. NEPA is leading the development of national motor vehicle



# National Environment & Planning Agency

10 & 11 Caledonia Avenue, Kingston 5, Jamaica W.I. Tel: (876) 754-7540 Fax: (876) 754-7595-6, toll free help-line: 1-888-991-5005  
Website: <http://www.nepa.gov.jm>

---

emissions standards in collaboration with the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing and other partners. When the process is completed, the Standards will be published and regulated under the Road Traffic Act.

I am etc.

Peter Knight

Chief Executive Officer/Government Town Planner

National Environment and Planning Agency