

U.S. EPA FACT SHEET

EPA Redesignates Sacramento County to Attainment for the Coarse Particulate Matter National Ambient Air Quality Standard

September 12, 2013

Summary

- EPA is approving California's plan for Sacramento County to maintain the inhalable coarse particulate matter 24-hour National Ambient Air Quality Standard (PM₁₀ NAAQS). These particles are commonly referred to as PM₁₀ because they have a diameter of ten micrometers or less.
- EPA is also approving California's request to redesignate Sacramento County to attainment for the PM₁₀ NAAQS.
- Today's actions include approval of the Sacramento County maintenance plan and redesignation request for inclusion in California's state implementation plan.
- Today's actions represent a milestone in air quality improvement in California accomplished through the combined efforts of the Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District, the California Air Resources Board, and EPA.

Background

- EPA initially determined in 2002 that Sacramento County had attained the PM₁₀ NAAQS. Complete, quality-assured, and certified ambient air quality monitoring data for the area shows it has continued to attain the PM₁₀ NAAQS since that time.
- On July 24, 2013, EPA published in the Federal Register (78 FR 44494) a notice proposing approval of the Sacramento County maintenance plan and redesignation request because EPA had determined the plan adequately demonstrated the area will remain in attainment for at least ten years into the future. The proposed rulemaking included a 30-day public-comment period. Today's action finalizes EPA's approval.

Particulate Matter and Public Health

- EPA is concerned about particles that are 10 micrometers in diameter or smaller because those are the particles that generally pass through the throat and nose and enter the lungs. Reducing PM₁₀ levels is essential because, once inhaled, these particles can affect the heart and lungs and cause serious health effects.

- PM₁₀ is a complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets. It is comprised of both “primary particulates,” such as diesel exhaust, organic chemicals, metals, and soil or dust particles that can be emitted directly into the atmosphere, and “secondary particulates” formed in the atmosphere as the result of various chemical reactions from emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, volatile organic compounds, and ammonia.
- Today’s actions only address the PM₁₀ 24-hour NAAQS. While fine particles of 2.5 microns or less (PM_{2.5}) make up a component of PM₁₀, there is a separate PM_{2.5} 24-hour NAAQS with its own set of requirements.
- The Sacramento area is currently nonattainment for the PM_{2.5} 24-hour NAAQS; however, on July 15, 2013, EPA published in the Federal Register a final rule approving the State’s request that EPA determine the Sacramento PM_{2.5} nonattainment area had attained the 24-hour PM_{2.5} NAAQS based on 2010-2012 air quality data.

Next Steps

- Today’s actions will become effective 30 days after publication in the Federal Register.

For More Information:

<http://www.epa.gov/region9/air/actions/ca.html>