

FACT SHEET

Direct Final Approval of Phoenix-Mesa Air Quality Plan

September 25, 2015

Summary of Action

- The EPA is taking direct final action to approve the Maricopa Association of Government's (MAG's) 2014 8-hour ozone plan for the Phoenix-Mesa nonattainment area for the 2008 ozone 8-hour National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).
- Specifically, the EPA is taking direct final action to approve the following elements of the MAG plan for the Phoenix-Mesa nonattainment area:
 - The base year emissions inventory
 - The emission statements
 - The pre-1990 Reasonably Available Control Technology corrections
 - The pre-1990 corrections to previously required vehicle inspection and maintenance programs.

The EPA is not acting on the elements of the MAG Plan related to new source review.

Background

- In March 2008, the EPA strengthened the primary and secondary eight-hour ozone NAAQS to 0.075 ppm (annual fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hour concentration, averaged over 3 years)(73 FR 16436). In accordance with section 107(d) of the CAA, the EPA must designate an area "nonattainment" if it is violating the NAAQS or if it is contributing to a violation of the NAAQS in a nearby area. The EPA designated the Phoenix-Mesa ("Maricopa") area as nonattainment for the 2008 ozone NAAQS on May 21, 2012, effective July 20, 2012 (77 FR 30088). The Maricopa nonattainment area (NAA), which includes a portion of Maricopa County and a portion of Pinal County, was classified by operation of law as a Marginal NAA (40 CFR 81.303).
- The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) submitted the "Maricopa Association of Governments 2014 Eight-Hour Ozone Plan – Submittal of Marginal Area requirements for the Maricopa Nonattainment Area (June 2014)" on July 2, 2014.
- The Phoenix-Mesa Nonattainment area did not attain the 2008 NAAQS by the July 20, 2015 attainment date. Therefore, on August 27, 2015 the EPA proposed to reclassify the area to Moderate nonattainment (80 FR 51992).
- A reclassification would require ADEQ to submit a Moderate Plan in January 2017 that provides for attainment of the 2006 NAAQS no later than July 20, 2018.

- Ground-level ozone is not emitted directly into the air, but forms through a reaction of nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds in the presence of sunlight.
- Exposures to ozone can reduce lung function, making it more difficult for people to breathe, especially for those with lung disease, such as children with asthma, and older adults.

Next Steps

We do not think anyone will object to this approval, so we are finalizing it without proposing it in advance. This rule is effective on 60 days after the date of publication in the Federal Register without further notice, unless the EPA receives adverse comments by 30 days after the date of publication in the Federal Register. If we receive such comments, we will publish a timely withdrawal in the Federal Register to notify the public that this direct final rule will not take effect.

For More Information:

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