

U.S. EPA FACT SHEET

EPA Proposes Determinations that Five Areas Have Attained the 2006 Fine Particulate Matter 24-Hour National Ambient Air Quality Standard

October 15, 2012

Summary

- EPA is proposing to determine that five nonattainment areas have attained and continue to attain the 2006 Fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}) 24-hour National Ambient Air Quality Standard (2006 PM_{2.5} NAAQS).
- The five nonattainment areas are: Nogales in Arizona, and Chico (Butte County), Sacramento, San Francisco Bay Area, and Yuba City-Marysville in California.
- Today's actions signify continued air quality improvement in Arizona and California accomplished through the joint efforts of air districts, states, and EPA to protect public health.
- If these proposed determinations are finalized after notice and public comment, it will suspend certain air planning requirements for these areas as long as they continue to meet the 2006 PM_{2.5} NAAQS.

Background

- EPA's proposed determinations are based upon complete, quality-assured, and certified ambient air quality monitoring data for the 2009-2011 time period.
- If today's proposals are later finalized after notice and comment rulemaking, it would not suspend all of the submittal requirements (e.g., new source review), and the official attainment status for each area would remain nonattainment until the states submit and EPA approves a redesignation request, maintenance plan, and supporting documentation.

Particulate Matter and Public Health

- Today's action only concerns the 2006 PM_{2.5} 24-hour NAAQS.
- Reducing PM_{2.5} levels is essential because fine particles can reach the deepest regions of the lungs and exposure is linked to a variety of significant health problems including damage to lung tissue, cancer and premature death.
- PM_{2.5} can be emitted directly into the atmosphere or formed in the atmosphere as a result of various chemical reactions from emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x), sulfur dioxide, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and ammonia.

Next Steps

- Today's proposed actions will be published in the Federal Register in approximately two weeks and include a 30-day period for public comment.
- After the close of the comment period, EPA will evaluate the comments and respond to them in subsequent rulemaking actions.

For More Information:

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

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