

U.S. EPA FACT SHEET

EPA Determines that Three Areas Attained the 2006 Fine Particulate Matter National Ambient Air Quality Standard

December 18, 2012

Summary

- EPA is taking final actions to determine that three 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 three nonattainment areas are Nogales in Arizona, and 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 efforts of air districts, states, and EPA to protect public health.
- The determinations suspend certain air planning requirements for these areas as long as they continue to meet the 2006 PM_{2.5} NAAQS.

Background

- EPA's determinations are based upon complete, quality-assured, and certified ambient air quality monitoring data for the 2009-2011 time period.
- Today's final rules do not suspend all of the submittal requirements (e.g., new source review), and the official attainment status for each area remains nonattainment until the states submit and EPA approves a redesignation request and maintenance plan.

Particulate Matter and Public Health

- 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, sulfur dioxide, volatile organic compounds, and ammonia.

Next Steps

- Today's final actions will be published in the Federal Register in approximately two weeks and become effective 30 days after publication.

For More Information:

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

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