

U.S. EPA FACT SHEET

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

July 12, 2013

Summary

- EPA is proposing to approve 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 proposing to approve California's request to redesignate Sacramento County to attainment for the PM₁₀ NAAQS.
- Today's actions include proposed 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.
- Today's proposed approval of the maintenance plan and redesignation request indicates EPA has determined the plan adequately demonstrates the area will remain in attainment for at least ten years into the future.

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 June 28, 2013, Deputy Regional Administrator Alexis Strauss signed 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 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 action.

For More Information:

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