

U.S. EPA FACT SHEET

Final Rule to Reclassify the San Joaquin Valley as Serious Nonattainment for the 1997 PM_{2.5} Standards

March 27, 2015

Summary

- EPA is reclassifying the San Joaquin Valley (SVJ) Moderate nonattainment area, including areas of Indian country within it, as a Serious nonattainment area for the 1997 annual and 24-hour PM_{2.5} national ambient air quality standards, (1997 PM_{2.5} standards).
- The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SVJAPCD) requested this reclassification and submitted an analysis to demonstrate that the SVJ cannot practicably attain the 1997 PM_{2.5} standards by April 5, 2015. Our action is based on EPA's independent analysis of air quality data as well as EPA's review of SVJAPCD's analysis.
- As a consequence of this reclassification as a Serious area, the SVJ is now subject to more stringent requirements to implement the 1997 PM_{2.5} standards, including lower new source review (NSR) permitting thresholds for major stationary sources. In addition, California must submit a plan demonstrating attainment of the 1997 PM_{2.5} standards by the December 31, 2015 serious area attainment date, which EPA may extend for up to five years if the State satisfies certain criteria.
- EPA received one comment letter, from the SVJAPCD, requesting that EPA clarify the deadline for submitting revised NSR permitting requirements. EPA is requiring the State to submit these NSR program revisions within 12 months of the effective date of this final rule.

Background

- Standards for PM_{2.5} are periodically updated based on evidence from numerous studies demonstrating that serious health effects are associated with exposures to elevated levels of PM_{2.5}. Epidemiological studies have shown statistically significant correlations between elevated PM_{2.5} levels and premature mortality.
- PM_{2.5} standards are expressed as levels that should not be exceeded, averaged over specific time periods of either a year (annual standards) or a day (24-hour standards).
- On July 18, 1997, EPA established both an annual and a 24-hour standard for PM_{2.5}. The annual standard was set at 15.0 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³) and the 24-hour standard was set at 65 µg/m³. On April 5, 2005, the SVJ was designated nonattainment for the 1997 PM_{2.5} standards. Today's action pertains to the annual and 24-hour 1997 PM_{2.5} standards.
- On October 17, 2006, EPA revised the 24-hour PM_{2.5} standard to 35 µg/m³. On December 14, 2012, EPA revised the annual PM_{2.5} standard to 12 µg/m³. The SVJ is designated nonattainment for both of these PM_{2.5} standards, in addition to the 1997 standards.

More Information: Please visit: <http://www.epa.gov/region9/air/actions/ca.html>