

FACT SHEET

Final Rule for San Joaquin Valley Determination of Attainment of the 1-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards June 30, 2016

Summary of Action

- Today, EPA is taking final action to determine that the San Joaquin Valley (SJV) has attained the 1-hour ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (“standard”).
- This determination is based on sufficient, quality-assured, and certified air monitoring data for 2012-2014.
- Air monitoring data for 2015 are consistent with continued attainment of the standard in the San Joaquin Valley.
- The California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (District) requested this determination of attainment.
- EPA’s proposed determination of attainment published in the Federal Register on May 17, 2016 and was open for comment for 30 days.
- Two commenters submitted letters in support of our proposed action. One commenter recommended that EPA concurrently revoke the Clean Air Act section 185 fees (“section 185 fees”) based on the District’s submittal to support a finding that the improvement in 1-hour ozone in the San Joaquin Valley is due to permanent and enforceable reductions.
- EPA did not propose action on the District’s submittal because by itself, it is not sufficient to suspend the collection of section 185 fees. EPA will consider the submittal in the future if CARB supplements it with a demonstration that the San Joaquin Valley will maintain the 1-hour ozone standard for 10 years, consistent with the “redesignation substitute” mechanism provided for in our ozone implementation rule for the 2008 ozone standard.

Background

- Breathing air containing ozone can reduce lung function and increase respiratory symptoms, aggravating asthma or other respiratory conditions. Ozone exposure also has been associated with increased susceptibility to respiratory infections, medication use by asthmatics, and emergency department visits and hospital admissions for individuals with respiratory disease. Ozone exposure may also contribute to premature death, especially in people with heart and lung disease.
- Ground-level ozone is formed when nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) react in the atmosphere in the presence of sunlight. NO_x and VOCs are called ozone

precursors. Motor vehicle exhaust, industrial emissions, and chemical solvents are the major sources of these chemicals. Ozone pollution is a concern especially when the weather conditions needed to form it, lots of sun and hot temperatures, occur.

- Although EPA has replaced the 1-hour ozone standard with more health protective 8-hour standards, the Clean Air Act (CAA) requires California to have approved plans in place for attaining the 1-hour standard.
- In March 2010, the EPA approved the State's previous plan and its amendments for attaining the 1-hour ozone standard in the SJV area, but in December 2011, the EPA found that the SJV area had failed to attain the 1-hour ozone standard by its November 15, 2010 attainment deadline.
- In response to a decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in *Sierra Club et. al v. EPA*, in November 2012, the EPA withdrew its March 2010 approval of the prior plan. As a result, California was required to submit a new plan demonstrating attainment in the SJV of the 1-hour ozone standard.
- In April 2016, EPA approved the San Joaquin Valley 2013 Ozone Plan that addressed the requirements for the 1-hour ozone standard. Modeling analyses in the 2013 Ozone Plan demonstrated attainment of the 1-hr ozone standard in the SJV area in 2017 as a result of substantial emissions reductions (i.e., 49% for NO_x and 20% for VOCs) occurring since 2007.
- Today's final determination of attainment for the 1-hour ozone standard will suspend certain planning requirements for this standard including the need for EPA to take action on attainment contingency measures in the 2013 Ozone Plan.
- The San Joaquin Valley's attainment of the 1-hour ozone standard is a significant milestone for the Valley's continued efforts to improve air quality to meet the more protective standards for 8-hour ozone and particulate matter.

Next Steps

Today's final action will be published in the Federal Register in approximately two weeks, and will become effective 30 days from the date of publication.

For More Information:

<https://www3.epa.gov/region9/air/sjvalley/index.html>