

FACT SHEET

Proposed Rule for San Joaquin Valley Determination of Attainment of the 1-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards May 3, 2016

Summary of Action

- Today, EPA is proposing to determine that the San Joaquin Valley (SJV) has attained the 1-hour ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (“standard”).
- This proposed determination is based on the most recent three-year period (2012-2014) of sufficient, quality-assured, and certified data.
- Preliminary 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.

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.
- EPA did not take action on the attainment contingency measures for 1-hour ozone in our April 2016 approval. A final action on today's proposed determination of attainment for the 1-hour ozone standard will suspend certain planning requirements for this standard, and therefore, will also suspend the need for EPA to take action on the attainment contingency measures.
- Despite today's significant milestone, the SJV area will need to continue efforts to improve air quality to meet the more protective standards for 8-hour ozone and particulate matter.

Next Steps

Today's action will be published in the Federal Register in approximately two weeks. EPA is requesting comment on this proposed determination of attainment within 30 days from the date of publication in the Federal Register.

For More Information:

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