

## FACT SHEET

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### **Proposed Rule, Clean Data Determination for the South Coast for the 1997 PM<sub>2.5</sub> Standards**

November 20, 2014

#### **Summary**

EPA is proposing to find that California's South Coast (Los Angeles) nonattainment area has attained the 1997 national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS) for fine particulate matter or PM<sub>2.5</sub>.

Air quality data from 2011-2013 show that the area is attaining the 1997 PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards, as measured both on an annual and 24-hour basis.

If we finalize our proposed action, certain air quality planning requirements will be suspended for as long as the South Coast continues to attain the standard.

#### **Background**

Standards for PM<sub>2.5</sub> are periodically updated based on evidence from numerous studies demonstrating that serious health effects are associated with exposures to elevated levels of PM<sub>2.5</sub>. Epidemiological studies have shown statistically significant correlations between elevated PM<sub>2.5</sub> levels and premature mortality.

Other important effects associated with PM<sub>2.5</sub> exposure include aggravation of respiratory and cardiovascular disease (as indicated by increased hospital admissions, emergency room visits, absences from school or work, and restricted activity days), changes in lung function and increased respiratory symptoms, as well as new evidence for more subtle indicators of cardiovascular health. Individuals particularly sensitive to PM<sub>2.5</sub> exposure include older adults, people with heart and lung disease, and children.

PM<sub>2.5</sub> 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<sub>2.5</sub>. The annual standard was set at 15.0 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m<sup>3</sup>) and the 24-hour standard was set at 65 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. On April 5, 2005, the South Coast area was designated nonattainment for the 1997 PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards.

On October 17, 2006, EPA updated the 24-hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard to 35 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. On December 14, 2012, EPA updated the annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard to 12 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. The South Coast continues to be nonattainment for both of these standards. Today's action pertains only to the 1997 PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards, both annual and 24-hour.

#### **For More Information**

<http://www.epa.gov/region9/air/actions/southcoast/index.html#pm25>