

U.S. EPA Fact Sheet

Error Correction and Designation of the Morongo Reservation As Its Own Nonattainment Area for the 1-hour and the 1997 8-hour Ozone Standards

September 4, 2013

Summary:

EPA is correcting a previous error made in revising boundaries between nonattainment areas in Southern California for the federal health-based one-hour ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards. A nonattainment area is an air quality planning area that does not meet the federal air quality standard for a particular pollutant.

Today's correction creates a new air quality planning area for the Morongo Band of Mission Indians (Morongo Reservation) for the one-hour and 1997 8-hour ozone federal health-based standards.

Background:

Initially, the Morongo Reservation, located in the Banning Pass in southern California, was part of the Coachella Valley nonattainment area with a 1-hour ozone classification of Severe-17, and a permitting threshold of 25 tons per year.

In 2003, in response to California's request for a boundary change, EPA unintentionally included the Morongo Reservation when responding to this request, and moved the Morongo Reservation into the adjacent South Coast nonattainment area.

In 2009, the Morongo Tribe requested to be made their own nonattainment area based on a variety of factors that distinguish the Morongo Reservation from adjacent State nonattainment areas.

In 2012, in a separate action, EPA made the Morongo Reservation its own nonattainment area for the 2008 8-hour ozone standard, consistent with the Tribe's request and relevant technical information.

Today's action makes the Morongo Tribe its own nonattainment area for the 1-hour ozone standard and the 1997 8-hour ozone standards, consistent with their designation for the 2008 8-hour ozone standard.

Even though the 1-hour ozone standard has been revoked, many of the required measures associated with it were preserved to prevent backsliding in air quality. Prior to this correction, new or modified sources wishing to expand or build on the Reservation would be required to meet the new source review and title V permitting measures associated with an extreme

classification as a result of their inclusion in the South Coast nonattainment area for 1-hour ozone.

With this final action, these permitting requirements return to the permitting applicability threshold of the 25 tons per year NO_x or VOC limit for major sources that existed prior to 2003. The permitting threshold for an extreme ozone area is 10 tons per year of nitrogen oxide or volatile organic compounds annually, rather than 25 tons per year for a Severe-17 area.

The total emissions associated with the Morongo Reservation comprise approximately 0.5% of the ozone-forming emissions associated with all sources within the South Coast. One or even several new or modified stationary sources emitting within the 10 to 25 tons per year range would likely have a minimal, or no effect, on 'air quality in the Coachella Valley when compared to the overall pollutant burden passing through the Banning Pass from the South Coast to Coachella Valley.

Any new or modified stationary source on the Morongo Reservation with potential emissions large enough to impact Coachella Valley would be subject to major source New Source Review requirements that are designed to avoid such an impact.