

## FACT SHEET

### **Final Rule for Imperial County, California Finding of Attainment for the 1997 8-hour Ozone Standard**

#### **Today's action**

- EPA is notifying the public that the Agency is finding that the Imperial County nonattainment area (Imperial County) has attained the 1997 8-hour ozone national ambient air quality standard. Certified monitored air quality data for 2006-2008 shows the area is attaining the standard. Upon the effective date of this finding, certain air quality planning requirements will be suspended for the Imperial County for as long as the area continues to attain the standard.

#### **Background**

- On July 18, 1997, EPA promulgated a revised 8-hour ozone standard of 0.08 parts per million (ppm). This standard is more stringent than the previous 1-hour ozone standard.
- The Imperial County area was designated nonattainment for the 1997 8-hour ozone standard on April 30, 2004, and classified "marginal" based on a 2001-2003 design value of 0.091 ppm with a maximum attainment date of June 15, 2007.
- We reclassified the Imperial County as a moderate 8-hour ozone nonattainment area in early 2008 based on the County's failure to attain the 1997 8-hour ozone standard. The moderate area attainment date for the Imperial County area was as expeditiously as practicable, but no later than June 15, 2010.
- Certified 2006 to 2008 data indicate that the Imperial County area is now attaining the 8-hour ozone standard and continues to attain the standard to the present.
- Once this attainment determination is effective, the requirements to submit certain plans related to the 8-hour standard – e.g., an attainment demonstration, reasonable further progress plans, and contingency measures – will be suspended so long as the area continues to attain the standard. The area will, however, remain subject to the control requirements of the 8-hour ozone standard, such as the requirements to update New Source Review (NSR) and Reasonably Available Control Technology (RACT) rules.
- Our action will streamline the process for the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District (ICAPCD) to develop a state implementation plan (SIP) meeting the requirements of the 8-hour ozone implementation rule.
- On March 12, 2008, we promulgated a more stringent 8-hour ozone standard of 0.075 ppm. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) recommended that Imperial County be designated nonattainment for this standard. We are currently reconsidering the level of the standard, and are in the process of deferring the designations. We will propose the new standard by December 31, 2009 and finalize it by August 31, 2010.

- Ozone is a major element of urban smog. Ozone can limit the ability to take a deep breath, and it can cause coughing, throat irritation, and breathing discomfort. There is also evidence that ozone can lower resistance to respiratory disease (such as pneumonia), damage lung tissue, and aggravate chronic lung disease (such as asthma or bronchitis).

Additional information

- For more information, please visit our website at: <http://www.epa.gov/region09/air>
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