



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Region 9

FACT SHEET

**BOUNDARY DEFINITION
LAS VEGAS 8-HOUR OZONE NONATTAINMENT AREA
CLARK COUNTY, NEVADA**

September 10, 2004

Today's Action

Today the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets the geographical boundary for the Las Vegas 8-hour ozone nonattainment area, effective September 13, 2004.

Background

- □ Under the authority of the Clean Air Act, EPA identifies or “designates” all areas of the nation as meeting or not meeting a National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS). When an area does not meet a NAAQS, it is designated "nonattainment" for that pollutant.
- □ On April 15, 2004, EPA designated all areas of the country for the 8-hour ozone standard, a new and more health protective air quality standard that will replace the existing 1-hour ozone standard.
- □ Ground-level ozone can irritate the respiratory system, aggravate asthma, reduce lung capacity and increase people's susceptibility to respiratory illnesses like pneumonia and bronchitis. Ozone is a primary component of “smog” and presents a serious air quality problem in many parts of the United States. See April 30, 2004 *Federal Register* notice, 69 FR 23857.
- □ Responding to a request from the State of Nevada, on June 14, 2004 the EPA deferred the effective date, from June 15 to September 13, 2004, for the Las Vegas (Clark County, Nevada) 8-hour ozone nonattainment area. EPA and the State of Nevada used this extra time to assess whether a smaller boundary was appropriate for the nonattainment area. EPA had previously accepted justification for making the Las Vegas nonattainment area smaller than the "default" area, which would have included the three-county Metropolitan Statistical Area, that is, Nye and Clark counties, in Nevada, and Mojave County, Arizona. See June 18, 2004 *Federal Register* notice, 69 FR 34076.
- □ Today's action sets the boundary for the Las Vegas 8-hour ozone nonattainment area. The boundary includes a portion of Clark County, Nevada. The remainder of Clark County now joins the adjacent counties, which were designated as unclassifiable/attainment in April 2004. While the nonattainment area is smaller than the whole County, it is still one of the largest nonattainment areas in the country. Clark

County itself, at almost 8,000 square miles, is one of the largest counties in the nation.

- □ The 8-hour ozone nonattainment area excludes the Moapa River Indian Reservation, located about 40 miles northeast of Las Vegas. Also excluded is the Clark County portion of the Fort Mojave Indian Reservation in the southern tip of Clark County. The designation of the Nevada portion of the Fort Mojave Indian Reservation is consistent with the "unclassifiable/attainment" designations for the other portions of the Reservation.
- □ In taking this action, EPA agrees with the boundary recommendations made by both the State of Nevada and the Moapa Band of Paiute Indians.
- □ As noted in our June 18, 2004 deferral action (69 FR 34076), we do not intend to extend the deadline for state implementation plan (SIP) submission for the Las Vegas nonattainment area. EPA will address the SIP submittal deadline for the entire country in a subsequent action and we believe it is reasonable to require submission for the Las Vegas nonattainment area according to the same schedule to which the area would have been subject without the deferred effective date. Likewise, the time by which attainment occurs should not be affected by the deferral.
- □ Ozone itself is rarely emitted directly by pollution sources. Instead, it forms in the atmosphere under conditions of high temperature, in the presence of oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), volatile organic compounds (VOC) and sunlight. NO_x and VOC are therefore known as ozone precursors. This action requires that major new or modified industrial facilities that emit ozone precursors offset their emissions increases with equal or greater reductions of these pollutants from other sources. These facilities are also required to install pollution controls that have the lowest achievable emission rate.

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