

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Region 9

FACT SHEET

Determination of Attainment of the 1-Hour Ozone Standard
and
Approval of the 2001 Ozone Attainment Plan
San Francisco Bay Area, California

April 1, 2004

Today's Announcement

- EPA is making a finding that the San Francisco Bay Area has attained the national 1-hour ozone standard. EPA is also approving elements of the Bay Area's 2001 ozone attainment plan.

Background

- In 1998, the Bay Area was designated nonattainment for the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ozone (smog).
- Unlike stratospheric ozone, ground-level ozone (the primary ingredient of smog) is harmful to public health. Exposure, even at relatively low levels, can cause respiratory symptoms such as reduction in lung function, chest pain, and cough. Repeated exposure can make people more susceptible to respiratory infection and lung inflammation, and can aggravate preexisting respiratory diseases.
- In 1999, the California Air Resources Board (ARB) submitted an ozone attainment plan for coming back into compliance with the standard. Portions of the 1999 plan were approved and others were disapproved. The disapproval action started a sanctions clock.
- In 2001, ARB submitted a plan designed to correct the deficiencies in the 1999 Plan.
- EPA's proposed approval of most elements of the 2001 plan was published on July 16, 2003.
- At the same time, EPA published an interim final determination that earlier deficiencies had been cured. As a result, the 2:1 offset sanction was stayed and the clock for highway sanctions was deferred.
- Based on air quality monitoring data for the current 3 year period (2001 - 2003), the Bay Area has demonstrated compliance with the 1-hour ozone NAAQS.

- On October 21, 2003, the California Air Resources Board sent a letter requesting that EPA make a finding that the Bay Area has attained the 1-hour ozone standard.
- On October 31, 2003, EPA published a notice that proposed to make a finding that the Bay Area has attained the 1-hour standard. The notice also proposed that, under a finding of attainment, requirements for an attainment demonstration, contingency measures, and a reasonable further progress plan would be suspended.
- EPA is now taking action to finalize the finding that the Bay Area has attained the 1-hour ozone standard and to finalize approval of the following 2001 Plan elements: emissions inventories, control measure commitments, motor vehicle emissions budgets, reasonably available control measures, and commitments to further study measures.
- EPA is also taking interim final action to stay and defer the imposition of, respectively, offset and highway sanctions based on our finding that the Bay Area has attained the 1-hour ozone NAAQS.

What Happens Next in the Bay Area?

- While meeting the 1-hour ozone standard is a notable achievement and illustrates the progress the Bay Area is making in cleaning up the air, there is still work to be done. The ARB and local air quality agencies must ensure that the Bay Area continues to meet the 1-hour standard and must address the issues of downwind transport of air pollution and attainment of both California's 1-hour ozone standard and the new federal 8-hour standard.
- A finding of attainment does not constitute a redesignation to attainment. Before an area can be redesignated to attainment, ARB must submit and EPA must approve a maintenance plan showing, among other things, that the area will continue to maintain the standard for a 10-year period.
- The Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and the Association of Bay Area Governments have convened an ozone working group, which is open to the public, and have undertaken a major effort to evaluate and propose control strategies to be incorporated into a proposed plan this summer.

Further Information

- Copies of EPA's rulemaking actions are available in the Air Programs section of EPA Region 9's website, <http://www.epa.gov/region09/air/sfbayoz/>. EPA will soon publish these rulemakings in the Federal Register.
- For more information, contact Ginger Vagenas at (415) 972-3964, or vagenas.ginger@epa.gov.