

## U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Region 9

### FACT SHEET

#### **Finding of Failure to Submit Clean Air Act Ozone Severe Area Requirements San Joaquin Valley, California**

**September 19, 2002**

#### **Today's Action**

- The San Joaquin Valley was reclassified to a severe ozone area in December 2001. As a result of the reclassification, California was required to submit a 2005 attainment demonstration, a reasonable further progress demonstration, RACT and permit rules to address more stringent stationary source (25 tons per year) and offset (1.3 to 1.0) thresholds, a fee rule for major sources in case the area fails to attain by 2005, an inventory and contingency measures. These requirements were due May 31, 2002.
- The San Joaquin Valley has adopted rules to address many of the above requirements; however, not all the requirements have been addressed. EPA is today issuing a finding of failure to submit the following severe area requirements: a 2005 attainment demonstration, a reasonable further progress demonstration, a lime kiln RACT rule, an inventory and contingency measures.
- EPA expects the Valley to adopt and submit a reasonable further progress demonstration with an inventory and contingency measures and a lime kiln RACT rule by the end of 2002. The Valley is currently considering a reclassification to extreme ozone nonattainment which would change the attainment demonstration date from 2005 to 2010.
- Today's action will begin a set of sanctions and Federal Implementation Plan (FIP) clocks for the Valley. California must make the required submittals by March 2004 to avoid more stringent requirements for new sources and by September 2004 to avoid highway sanctions and a FIP.

#### **Air Quality in the San Joaquin Valley**

- When the Clean Air Act was amended in 1990, the San Joaquin Valley was classified based on its air quality as a serious area with an attainment date of 1999. When the Valley failed to achieve attainment in 1999, EPA made a finding of failure to attain and reclassified the Valley to severe with an attainment date of 2005. EPA set May 31, 2005 as the deadline for California to submit requirements to address the severe classification.
- Today's action does not signify that air quality is worsening in the San Joaquin Valley, but rather helps ensure continuation of the air quality planning process. In general over the past ten years, ozone levels in California have improved greatly, but progress in the San Joaquin Valley has been slower.
- Ground-level ozone is not emitted directly into the air but is formed when nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) react in the atmosphere. The primary sources of NOx and VOCs in the San Joaquin Valley are cars and trucks, other gasoline and diesel-powered equipment such as farm equipment, consumer and industrial solvents and paints, pesticides, and oil and gas production.
- The San Joaquin Valley nonattainment area is the largest nonattainment area in California,

covering seven and a half counties and approximately 25,000 square miles. More than 3 million people currently live in the nonattainment area and this number is growing rapidly.

### **Health Effects of Ozone**

- Exposure to even low levels of ambient ozone (smog) can cause respiratory symptoms such as a reduction in lung function, chest pain and cough. Repeated exposure can make people more susceptible to respiratory infection and lung inflammation, and can aggravate pre-existing respiratory diseases.
- Children are most at risk from exposure to ozone because they are active outside, playing and exercising, during the summertime when ozone levels are at their highest. The elderly and those with respiratory diseases such as asthma are also at high risk.
- Long-term exposure to ozone can cause irreversible changes in lung structure, which can lead to chronic respiratory illnesses such as emphysema, chronic bronchitis and/or premature aging of the lungs.

### **Further Information**

- A copy of the final notice will soon be available in the Air Programs section of EPA Region 9's website, <http://www.epa.gov/region09/air/>.
- For more information, please contact Doris Lo, U.S. EPA Region 9, Air Planning Office, at 415-972-3959; [lo.doris@epa.gov](mailto:lo.doris@epa.gov).