

Direct Final Rule for Approval of Louisiana's Petition to Relax the Summer Gasoline Volatility Standard for the Grant Parish Area

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing a direct final rulemaking to relax the applicable RVP standard in Grant Parish, Louisiana, during the summer season (June 1st to September 15th).

Summary of Final Rule

EPA is approving the State of Louisiana's request to relax the federal Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) standard applicable to gasoline introduced into commerce in the Grant Parish, Louisiana 8-hour ozone attainment area (Grant Parish) during the summer high ozone season - June 1st to September 15th. This action amends our regulations to change the summertime RVP standard for Grant Parish from 7.8 pounds per square inch (psi) to 9.0 psi. EPA has determined that this change to our federal RVP regulations is consistent with the applicable provisions of the Clean Air Act. Louisiana's request is supported by evidence that Grant Parish can implement the 9.0 psi RVP standard and maintain the 8-hour ozone NAAQS and that relaxation of the applicable RVP standard to 9.0 psi will provide economic benefits.

Key Elements of the Direct Final Rule

- This rule relaxes the volatility requirements for gasoline in Grant Parish, Louisiana, during the summer (June 1st to September 15th). It is beneficial to Grant Parish to use the less stringent gasoline. The more stringent fuel can only be delivered from locations about 145 miles away which results in higher fuel costs to consumers.
- This rule was dependent upon the approval of a maintenance plan and a demonstration of maintenance using the less stringent gasoline in Grant Parish. Louisiana submitted this maintenance plan and demonstration to EPA's Region 6 office in August 2006. Region 6 approved this maintenance plan in November 2007 (72 FR 62579).

Background

In 1987, EPA determined that gasoline nationwide had become increasingly volatile, causing an increase in evaporative emissions from gasoline-powered vehicles and equipment. Evaporative emissions from gasoline, referred to as volatile organic compounds (VOCs), are precursors to the formation of tropospheric ozone and contribute to the nation's ground-level ozone problem. Ground-level ozone causes health problems, including damaged lung tissue, reduced lung function, and lung sensitization to other pollutants.

To provide for cleaner air and greater public health protection, EPA enforces maximum limits for the RVP (the most common measure of fuel volatility) of gasoline sold during the summer ozone control season - June 1st to September 15th. EPA's current regulations establish maximum RVP standards of 9.0 psi or 7.8 psi (depending on the State, the month, and the area's initial ozone attainment designation with respect to the 1-hour ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard or "NAAQS") during the ozone control season.

In order to relax the applicable RVP standard in an area where the more stringent RVP level is required, an area must be designated as (or redesignated to) attainment and submit a maintenance plan demonstrating continued attainment of the ozone NAAQS with the less stringent RVP standard in place. In 2004, Grant Parish was designated as attainment for the 8-hour ozone standard and was required to submit an 8-hour maintenance plan. In Louisiana's 2006 8-hour maintenance demonstration, the state modeled 9.0 psi gasoline and demonstrated that Grant Parish will be able to maintain attainment of the 8-hour standard for 10 years, thereby meeting the requirements to have the applicable gasoline volatility standard relaxed.

Public Participation Opportunities

This rule is being released as a Direct Final Rule because we view it as a non-controversial action and anticipate no adverse comment. However, comments can be submitted under a parallel Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. For instructions on submitting written comments, please see the Federal Register notice, which is available from the Web site below or from the EPA Air and Radiation Docket (202-566-1742; please refer to Docket No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2007-0002). You can access the rule and related documents on EPA's Office of Transportation and Air Quality (OTAQ) Web site at: www.epa.gov/otaq/volatility.htm.

For More Information

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