

July 15, 1998

## FACT SHEET

### EPA REVOKES 1-HOUR GROUND-LEVEL OZONE (SMOG) STANDARD FOR SIX AREAS BASED ON 1995-1997 DATA

#### Today's Action...

- ! The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is revoking the 1-hour national ambient air quality standard for ground-level ozone (smog) for six areas. The EPA is revoking the 1-hour standard for these six areas since they have not measured a violation of the 1-hour ozone standard over the most recently available three year period of time (using air quality data from 1995-1997).
- ! The revocation of the 1-hour ozone standard in these areas will become effective upon publication in the Federal Register. The Agency expects to publish this notice in the next several days.
- ! The six areas are: Detroit-Ann Arbor, Michigan; Warrick County, Indiana; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Poughkeepsie, New York; Dayton-Springfield, Ohio and Morgan County, Kentucky.
- ! Although the 1-hour standard will no longer apply in these areas, the new, more protective 8-hour standard does apply. In the year 2000, EPA will formally determine which areas of the country do not meet its new 8-hour ozone standard and “designate” them as “nonattainment.” In the interim, all areas of the country must continue to implement the programs that led to their attaining the 1-hour standard.
- ! Reaching attainment with the 1-hour standard, as reflected in today’s notice, is an important step towards either:
  - (1) Reaching attainment with the new 8-hour standard: areas that are included on this list today (and those that subsequently meet the 1-hour standard before the year 2000) and likewise meet the 8-hour standard in the year 2000 will be considered “attainment” areas for ground-level ozone.
  - or
  - (2) Being classified as a new “transitional” area: areas that are included on this list today (but that do not meet the 8-hour standard when EPA designates areas for that standard in the year 2000), may be eligible for a special “transitional” classification, provided they meet other criteria.

## **Background**

- ! On July 17, 1997, following a lengthy scientific review process, the EPA announced a new national ambient air quality standard for ground-level ozone. Specifically, the EPA is phasing out and replacing the previous 1-hour standard with a new 8-hour standard that is more protective of public health.
- ! In the year 2000, EPA will designate areas which do not meet the 8-hour standard based on the most recently available 3 years of ozone data available at that time (e.g., 1997-1999).
- ! When EPA issued the revised standards in July 1997, President Clinton issued a memorandum which outlined a common-sense implementation strategy for both the 8-hour and 1-hour ozone standard. One of the first steps for areas to take toward eventually meeting the new 8-hour ozone standard is to meet the 1-hour standard.
- ! As called for in the President's memorandum, on January 16, 1998 EPA proposed the list of counties for which the 1-hour standard would no longer be applicable based on the most recent 3 years worth of ozone data (1994-1996). The Agency addressed all relevant public comments received in a subsequent final rule (63 FR 31014), which was published and became effective on June 5, 1998.
- ! On May 18, 1998, the EPA published a proposal to approve the identification of six additional ozone areas attaining the 1-hour standard and to which the 1-hour standard is no longer applicable based on 1995-1997 data (63 FR 27247). Today's final action addresses comments received on the proposal.
- ! EPA intends to publish, on an annual basis, similar actions identifying areas where the 1-hour standard is no longer applicable.

## **For Further Information**

- ! Interested parties can obtain more information about EPA's revocation of the 1-hour standard from EPA's web site on the Internet at the following address: (<http://www.epa.gov/airlinks>). General questions concerning the notice should be referred to Annie Nikbakht (policy issues) at 919 541-5246 or Barry Gilbert (air quality data issues) at 919 541-5238.