

November 29, 1996

## FACT SHEET

### **EPA'S PROPOSAL ON THE INTERIM IMPLEMENTATION POLICY FOR THE ~~OZONE~~ PARTICULATE MATTER NATIONAL AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS**

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

- Along with new proposed national ambient air quality standards for ozone and particulate matter (PM), EPA is also today proposing a policy outlining requirements States must meet in the interim before the new standards become effective.
- When issued in final form, the interim implementation policy will assure that States maintain the momentum of existing control programs for ozone and PM during the time when they are preparing their plans to implement any new or revised ozone or PM standards.
- After considering and incorporating public comment, EPA intends to make this proposed policy effective on the date that EPA promulgates a final decision on the ozone and PM national ambient air quality standards. The policy would remain in effect until EPA approval of State plans that implement any new or revised standards.
- EPA is today proposing revisions to the ozone and PM standards in a separate notice. EPA intends to consider comments from the public, states, industry, environmental groups, and others before making a final decision on any revisions to these standards. EPA plans to issue those final rules by June 28, 1997.

#### **Key Elements of the Interim Implementation Policy...**

- EPA's proposed interim implementation policy will require that existing ozone and PM designations remain in effect until EPA establishes new designations based on any new ozone or PM standard. The policy will provide for redesignation of ozone and PM areas with clean air quality data if certain requirements are met.
- The interim implementation policy is strongly based on the principle of "no backsliding". The key element of this policy is to insure that essential programs required

under the Clean Air Act for attainment of existing air quality standards are continued where it is appropriate to do so. Two specific areas where the proposed policy modifies existing requirements are in the area of attainment demonstrations for existing standards and reclassifications of existing ozone nonattainment areas.

- The proposed policy provides additional flexibility to satisfy control programs for ozone mandated by the Clean Air Act. Specifically, for "serious", "severe" and "extreme" ozone nonattainment areas, the policy would allow credit for emission reductions outside existing nonattainment areas to satisfy the post-1996 rate-of-progress requirements mandated by the Clean Air Act.
- The policy also addresses other issues and programs including the Ozone Transport Region (OTR), which is comprised of 13 northeastern States and the District of Columbia, the Photochemical Assessment Monitoring System, conformity with transportation plans, and new source review requirements.

#### **Other EPA Actions Related to Ozone and PM National Ambient Air Quality Standards Implementation...**

- As stated above, the interim implementation policy will remain in effect until States have approved plans implementing any new or revised ozone or PM standards. EPA is now developing strategic guidance to the States on how they should revise their implementation plans to attain and maintain these standards. The first phase of this strategy will mainly consist of guidance related to designation of areas with regard to their new attainment status. The second phase of the strategy will address remaining implementation plan requirements.
- EPA is scheduled to propose the first phase of the strategy in June 1997 and finalize it in June 1998. EPA is scheduled to propose the remaining portion of the implementation strategy in June 1998 and finalize it in June 1999. An advance notice of proposed rulemaking regarding the development of this strategy is being published today in a separate notice.

#### **Background...**

- EPA created the Ozone/PM/Regional Haze Implementation Programs Subcommittee in August 1995 under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). The purpose of the Subcommittee is to advise EPA on innovative, flexible and cost-effective strategies for integrated implementation of ozone, PM and regional haze control programs.
- The formation of this Subcommittee is an example of how EPA is reinventing government in order to lessen regulatory burdens on State and local control agencies and on affected industry sources by optimizing integrated strategies for reducing emissions of both ozone and fine particulate matter. Ozone and PM are formed under similar atmospheric conditions by gases (NOx and VOCs) and are emitted from the same types of sources, which tend to be located in the same geographic areas. These similarities provide opportunities for optimizing integrated strategies for reducing emissions of both pollutants in the most cost-effective, efficient and flexible manner possible.
- The Subcommittee is working to develop the most effective and common-sense strategies for attaining the ozone and PM standards and making reasonable progress under the regional haze program. The Subcommittee is providing advice to EPA on developing both phases of the implementation policy, and is advising EPA on the strategic guidance to States on how they should revise their implementation plans to attain and maintain any new or revised standards.
- The Subcommittee, which is currently composed of 59 members from State, local and tribal agencies; environmental groups; industry; scientific/academic groups and other Federal agencies, first met in September 1995. Numerous Subcommittee meetings have been held through November 1996. The Subcommittee will continue to meet through 1997, generally every two months unless more frequent meetings are necessary.

For more information...

- Anyone with a computer and a modem can download the proposal from the Clean Air Act Amendments bulletin board (look under "Recently Signed Rules") of EPA's electronic Technology Transfer Network (TTN). For further

information about how to access the board, call (919) 541-5384. The TTN can also be accessed through EPA's homepage on the Internet. The address is:  
<http://ttnwww.rtpnc.epa.gov>

- For further information about this proposal, contact Sharon Reinders at EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-5284.