

Modifications to Utah Recommendations for Areas Not Meeting the 24-hour Fine Particle Standard Established in 2006

PM_{2.5} UTAH FACT SHEET

ACTION

- EPA's recommendations for Utah are based on the Clean Air Act requirement to include a "sufficiently large" area encompassing sources that "cause or contribute to" an area that violates the PM_{2.5} standard. EPA is recommending two nonattainment areas. The goal is to expedite the attainment of the PM_{2.5} standard by recommending a unified nonattainment area for the counties as follows:
 - 1) Greater Wasatch Front: Box Elder (partial), Weber (partial), Davis, Salt Lake, Utah (partial) and Tooele (partial).
 - 2) Cache Valley: Cache County, UT (partial) including Franklin County, ID (partial).
- The most efficient way to achieve this goal is to have one attainment plan for each of the two areas that identify the potential sources of emissions that will need controls to meet the standard. The level of the PM_{2.5} violation in Salt Lake County is 48 micrograms and in Cache County it is 40 micrograms as compared to the 24-hour standard of 35 micrograms. The State must prepare an attainment plan demonstrating attainment of the standard by 2014.
- EPA's nine factor analysis demonstrates that the counties in the Greater Wasatch Front share a common air shed and meteorological conditions under the same jurisdiction of the Utah Department of Environmental Quality. Additionally, the pollutants of greatest concern are NO_x and nitrate which dominates the air quality during the periods when the PM_{2.5} standard is being violated. The common meteorological conditions include frequent and persistent temperature inversions affecting the low lying valley floors. The height of the inversion is typically about 6000ft in elevation. The air is trapped by mountains on both the east and the west sides of the counties within the recommended designation boundaries. This is a wintertime phenomenon of cold air trapped by warm air aloft. This situation can persist for weeks with meteorological conditions of a high pressure cell without wind or precipitation to clean the air out.
- On August 19, 2008, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sent letters to state and tribal representatives responding to their initial recommendations for areas meeting and not meeting the 24-hour national air quality standards for fine particles (PM_{2.5}). States and tribes now have the opportunity to comment on EPA's modifications to their recommendations, and to provide new information and analyses to EPA if appropriate.
- On September 21, 2006, EPA revised its NAAQS for PM_{2.5} by significantly strengthening the 24-hour standard from 65 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) to 35 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Thousands

of scientific studies have linked exposure to these tiny particles - approximately 1/30th the size of a human hair - with serious human health problems including premature death in people with heart and lung disease; nonfatal heart attacks; and increased hospital admissions and doctor and emergency room visits for respiratory and cardiovascular disease.

- After EPA sets a new National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) or revises an existing NAAQS, EPA formally identifies or “designates” areas as attainment/unclassifiable (meeting the standard or expected to be meeting the standard despite a lack of monitoring data), nonattainment (not meeting the standard), or unclassifiable (insufficient data to classify).
- For the first time, EPA will provide the public with a 30-day opportunity to comment on the Agency’s proposed modifications to the state and tribal recommendations and offer additional information that may help establish the final nonattainment area boundaries. EPA will issue a *Federal Register* notice announcing the start of this comment period in the next few weeks.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- For more information on the designation process for the fine particle standards, and to view individual letters from EPA to states and tribes, go to EPA’s Web site at www.epa.gov/pmdesignations.
- Where do I get general background information about PM, and designations?
www.epa.gov/pmdesignations
- Can I read the Governors recommendations for each state?
Where can I read EPA’s responses?
<http://www.epa.gov/pmdesignations/2006standards/state.htm> (select a state/region)
- What about Tribal recommendations?
<http://www.epa.gov/pmdesignations/2006standards/tribal.htm>
- This is the first time Utah could have a fine particle nonattainment area – does the state meet the other national air quality standards?
<http://www.epa.gov/oar/oaqps/greenbk/anc13.html>
- Does Utah have any other nonattainment areas?
<http://www.epa.gov/oar/oaqps/greenbk/astate.html>