

FACT SHEET
PROPOSED RULE TO EXCLUDE TWO COMPOUNDS FROM CONTROL
AS VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS (VOC)

ACTION

- On September 25, 2007, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed to stop regulating two compounds as volatile organic compounds (VOC).
- The compounds are propylene carbonate and dimethyl carbonate. They are used in a variety of products such as paints, inks and adhesives.
- Scientific evidence shows the compounds to be “negligibly reactive,” meaning they contribute little or nothing to the formation of ground-level ozone, a primary component of smog.
- Areas with ozone air pollution levels that exceed national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) must develop state implementation plans, or SIPs, that include strategies for reducing ground-level ozone. These plans may include VOC emission limits.
- The proposed rule would allow, but does not require, states to remove emissions controls on these two chemical compounds if they are part of SIPs for ground-level ozone. This would allow states to focus on controlling emissions of more reactive compounds.
- Today's action would make it easier and less expensive for industry to use these compounds as solvents. The compounds could substitute for other solvents that are more harmful to the environment and more strictly regulated.
- As part of this action, EPA is also taking comment on which measuring basis to use when determining VOC exemptions. EPA currently uses a mass basis to set the exemption cutoff. The Agency will take comment on whether a mole, or molecule, basis should be used instead.
- If the mole basis is adopted, only dimethyl carbonate would be eligible for VOC exemption. The reactivity of propylene carbonate would be slightly above EPA’s exemption cutoff if measured on a mole basis.

BACKGROUND

- EPA issued its policy on VOCs, "Requirements for Preparation, Adoption, and Submittal of State Implementation Plans," on February 3, 1992.
- The public may petition EPA to exclude a compound from the definition of a VOC. EPA reviews available scientific data that demonstrate its negligible effect on the

formation of ground-level ozone before taking action.

- The Huntsman Corporation and Kowa America Corporation petitioned EPA to exclude these compounds from the definition of a VOC.
- Since 1977, EPA has removed 54 specific compounds or classes of compounds from the list of VOC that contribute to smog formation.
- VOC contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone, the primary component of smog. Breathing air containing ozone can reduce lung function, thereby aggravating asthma or other respiratory conditions.

HOW TO COMMENT

- EPA will accept public comments for 30 days after the proposal is published in the *Federal Register*.

Comments should be identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2003-0948 and submitted by one of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal (<http://www.regulations.gov>)
- e-mail (a-and-r-docket@epa.gov)
- Mail (EPA Docket Center, Environmental Protection Agency, Mail code 6102T, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460), or
- Hand delivery (EPA Docket Center, Environmental Protection Agency, Room 3334, 1301 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- To download a copy of the rule, go to EPA's Worldwide Web site at: <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg>.
- For further information about the proposed rule, contact Bill Johnson at EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards by phone at (919) 541-5245 or by email at johnson.williamL@epa.gov.
- The Web site for EPA's Office of Air and Radiation contains a wide range of information on the air pollution programs including air toxics issues. The Office of Air and Radiation Web site is <http://www.epa.gov/oar>.