

12-09-98

FACT SHEET

EPA PROPOSES REVOCATION OF 1-HOUR GROUND-LEVEL OZONE (SMOG) STANDARD FOR TEN AREAS BASED ON 1996-1998 DATA

TODAY'S ACTION...

- ! The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing a list of 10 areas where the 1-hour ozone standard would no longer be applicable. The 1-hour standard would cease to apply for these areas since no current violation of the 1-hour ozone standard, based on the most recent available data (i.e., 1996-1998), has been measured.
- ! The proposed areas are: Boston-Lawrence-Worcester (East Massachusetts), Massachusetts-New Hampshire; Memphis, Tennessee; Muskegon, Michigan; Portland, Maine; Portsmouth-Dover-Rochester, New Hampshire; Providence (all Rhode Island), Rhode Island; Allegan County, Michigan; Oceana County, Michigan; Mason County, Michigan; Door County, Wisconsin.
- ! Although the 1-hour standard would 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, EPA announced a new national ambient air quality standard for ground-level ozone. Specifically, 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).
- ! 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 three years worth of ozone data (1994-1996). The Agency addressed all relevant public comments received in a subsequent final rule, 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. The Agency addressed all relevant public comments received in a subsequent final rule, which was published and became effective on July 15, 1998. Similarly, today's action proposes ten additional areas where the 1-hour standard would no longer be applicable based on 1996-1998 data.
- ! 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.
- ! 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 proposal to revoke 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.