

Adding the Illinois portion of the St. Louis, Illinois-Missouri Ozone Nonattainment Area to the Federal Reformulated Gasoline (RFG) Program

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is adopting regulations that extend the Reformulated Gasoline (RFG) Program to the Illinois portion of the St. Louis, Illinois-Missouri Ozone Nonattainment Area.

Summary of the Final Rule

This Final Rule responds to the Governor of Illinois' July 10, 2006, request to have the Illinois portion of the St. Louis, Illinois-Missouri ozone nonattainment area opt into the Federal RFG program. Section 211(k)(6) of the Clean Air Act states that "[u]pon the application of the Governor of a State, the Administrator shall apply the prohibition" against the sale of conventional gasoline in any area of the State classified as marginal, moderate, serious, or severe for ozone.

EPA consulted with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and evaluated the industry's ability to meet the volumes necessary for implementation. Based on our evaluation of the appropriate lead time and start date(s), this Final Rule sets an effective start date for RFG (prohibition on the sale of a gasoline that is not RFG). The Agency will implement this prohibition for refiners and all other persons in the fuel distribution system other than retailers and wholesale purchaser-consumers on June 1, 2007. For retailers and wholesale purchaser-consumers, EPA's final rule implements the prohibition on July 1, 2007. As of July 1, 2007 this area will be treated as a covered area for all purposes of the federal RFG program.

Background

The federal RFG program typically results in reductions in ozone-forming emissions and air toxics. Reductions in ozone precursors are environmentally significant because they lead to reductions in ozone formation, with the associated improvements in human health and welfare. Exposure to ground-level ozone (or smog) can cause respiratory problems, chest pain, and coughing and may worsen bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma. Animal studies suggest that long-term exposure (months to years) to ozone can damage lung tissue and may lead to chronic respiratory illness. Reductions in emissions of toxic air pollutants are

environmentally important because they carry significant benefits for human health and welfare primarily by reducing the number of cancer cases each year.

Illinois EPA analyzed the emissions benefits which could be achieved by switching from conventional gasoline to RFG. Using the U.S. EPA's MOBILE6a model, Illinois projected that by 2010 motor vehicle emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) could be reduced by 5.4 percent and carbon monoxide by 2.2 percent. The use of RFG in the Metro-East area would also decrease benzene emissions by 75 tons per year, which equates to a 44 percent reduction from motor vehicles. On a total toxic emissions basis, the use of RFG would reduce emissions of the five primary motor vehicle related air toxics by 63 tons per year in 2010, a total percentage reduction of 23.5 percent.

Under section 211(k)(6) of the Clean Air Act, the Administrator of EPA shall require the sale of reformulated gasoline (RFG) in an ozone nonattainment area classified as marginal, moderate, serious or severe upon the application of the Governor of the state in which the nonattainment area is located. EPA received an application July 10, 2006, from the Honorable Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor of the State of Illinois, for the Illinois portion of the St. Louis, Illinois-Missouri ozone nonattainment area to be included in the reformulated gasoline program.

Although section 211(k)(6) provides EPA some discretion to establish the effective date for the application of RFG requirements in marginal, moderate, serious or severe ozone nonattainment areas subject to a Governor's petition, and allows EPA to consider whether there is sufficient domestic capacity to produce RFG in establishing the effective date for such requirements, EPA does not have discretion to deny a Governor's request.

EPA believes the implementation dates adopted in this rule achieve a reasonable balance between requiring the earliest possible start dates to achieve air quality benefits in the Illinois portion of the St. Louis, Illinois-Missouri ozone nonattainment area and providing adequate lead time for industry to prepare for program implementation. These dates will provide environmental benefits by allowing East St. Louis to achieve VOC reduction benefits for most of the 2007 VOC control season.

For More Information

You can access documents on this final rule on EPA's Office of Transportation and Air Quality Web site at:

www.epag.gov/otaq/rfg_regs.htm

For further information on this rulemaking, please contact Kurt Gustafson at:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Transportation & Air Quality
1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW (6406J)
Washington, DC 20460
(202) 343-9219
E-mail: gustafson.kurt@epa.gov