

San Joaquin Valley and South Coast PM_{2.5} Air Quality Plans Proposed Partial Approval and Partial Disapproval

U.S. EPA Fact Sheet

Summary

EPA is proposing to partially approve and partially disapprove the fine particulate (PM_{2.5}) air quality plans for the San Joaquin Valley and South Coast areas in California. These plans, known as the State Implementation Plans (SIPs), are the roadmaps to meeting by 2015 the 1997 PM_{2.5} National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) set by the U.S. EPA to protect public health.

EPA cannot fully approve the plans because they rely heavily on emissions reductions from several State rules that have not been finalized or submitted to EPA for review.

California is a national leader in air pollution controls that protect public health by improving air quality. The majority of the emission reductions needed to demonstrate attainment of the PM_{2.5} standards have already been adopted by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the San Joaquin Valley and South Coast Air Districts.

We expect that their continuing efforts over the next year will result in the adoption and submittal of the controls needed to meet the PM_{2.5} air quality standards. We are committed to working with the agencies to address today's proposed disapprovals.

These proposed actions will be published in the Federal Register and will include a 60-day public comment period from the date of publication. EPA's Federal Register notices and technical support documents contain detailed information on our proposed actions.

Background

The San Joaquin Valley and South Coast areas both violate the 1997 PM_{2.5} NAAQS. These areas have the highest annual PM_{2.5} levels in the country. PM_{2.5} can be emitted directly into the atmosphere or formed in the atmosphere as a result of various chemical reactions from emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, volatile organic compounds, and ammonia. These particles can reach the deepest regions of the lungs. Exposure to particle pollution is linked to a variety of significant health problems including damage to lung tissue, cancer and premature death.

Primary sources contributing to PM_{2.5} and its precursors are diesel trucks, other diesel engines, wood burning, agricultural burning, and in the South Coast, ship engines.

According to the San Joaquin Valley and South Coast plans, these areas need approximately a 45 percent reduction in emissions from 2005/2006 levels in order to meet the PM_{2.5} NAAQS.

The State submitted the South Coast Air Quality Management District's PM_{2.5} SIP to EPA as part of an integrated air quality management plan on November 28, 2007. The State

submitted the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's PM_{2.5} SIP on June 30, 2008.

Both plans rely on emission reductions from CARB's mobile source control measures, such as the Cleaner In-Use Truck and Bus rule and the Cleaner In-Use Off-Road Equipment Rule, which were included in CARB's 2007 State Strategy, submitted to EPA on November 16, 2007. These rules are currently being revised by CARB, and have not been submitted to EPA for review.

EPA is Proposing to Approve the Following Plan Elements:

Emissions inventories. An emissions inventory is an accounting, by source, of the amount of air pollutants discharged into the atmosphere during a given time period. Emission inventories are used to help determine significant sources of air pollutants, establish emission trends over time and target regulatory actions.

Emissions reductions from rules that have been adopted and submitted, and that EPA has approved. The South Coast and San Joaquin Valley Air Districts have adopted rules locally that help lower particulate levels, including San Joaquin Valley's residential wood-burning program, gas turbine and open burning rules, and South Coast's rules controlling emissions from solvents, coatings, and space heaters. CARB has adopted requirements for ships, consumer products, and on-road vehicle inspection and maintenance programs.

The aggregate commitment to emissions reductions in both plans that are tied to State and District rules.

EPA is Proposing to Disapprove the Following Plan Elements:

Attainment demonstrations: The plans rely heavily on emissions reductions from rules including CARB's In-Use Truck and Bus rule and Cleaner In-Use Off-Road Equipment rule that are currently being revised and have not been submitted to EPA.

- Without these rules, the plans' attainment demonstrations are missing about a fifth of the emissions reductions needed for the areas to achieve the PM_{2.5} air quality standards.
- Until these rules are submitted to EPA and we have the opportunity to review and act on them, the State's commitment for future emissions reductions is too high and is not approvable.

For areas requesting an attainment date after 2010, approval of parts of the plan depend on EPA first approving the attainment demonstration and the requested attainment date. These parts include the demonstrations of reasonably available control measures (RACM) and reasonable further progress (RFP), contingency measures, and motor vehicle emissions budgets.

EPA is proposing to find that controls on sources of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) can contribute significantly to attainment in the San Joaquin Valley. The current San Joaquin Valley plan does not address VOCs and their contribution to PM_{2.5} formation.

Next Steps

EPA is providing a 60-day public comment period on its proposed actions.

The State and Districts are continuing to adopt and submit rules to EPA. These rules will reduce the size of their future commitments and replace them with actual emissions reductions. EPA supports these actions.

In April 2011, the State is required to submit a midcourse review of its PM_{2.5} plans that will evaluate its progress towards meeting the PM_{2.5} standard. This is an opportunity for the State to address EPA's concerns with the current PM_{2.5} SIPs.

If EPA finalizes today's partial disapproval, two sanctions clocks start for those parts of the plan that are disapproved.

Offset sanctions: The first sanction, which would begin 18 months after the effective date of the disapproval, is an increase in emissions offsets required for new and modified stationary sources in the area.

Highway sanctions: The second sanction, which would begin 24 months after the effective date of the disapproval, limits approvals and funding of highway projects.

Sanctions will not be imposed if the State submits and EPA approves a SIP revision that corrects the problems we identified.

Final disapproval of the plan would also lead to a "conformity freeze," which would prohibit these areas from receiving additional transportation funds for projects that require a transportation plan conformity determination, until the State submits and EPA approves an adequate SIP revision addressing the deficiencies.

EPA is committed to working with the State to resolve today's proposed disapprovals, to advance our joint goals of improved air quality, and to avoid sanctions or transportation conformity consequences in the South Coast and San Joaquin Valley areas.

For More Information :

<http://www.epa.gov/region9/air/actions/ca.html>