Update on Reclassification of Moderate Ozone Nonattainment Areas for 2008 Ozone Standard

EPA continues to work on a final rule to reclassify the Houston area, the Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) area and 5 other Moderate ozone nonattainment areas that missed the 2008 ozone standard attainment deadline of July 20, 2018 and did not qualify for a 1-year extension of the deadline. The final rule is expected to:

- Reclassify the areas to Serious.
- Set a new attainment deadline of July 20, 2021.
- Set the deadline for new SIP submittals.

The final rule to reclassify the areas to Serious will affect future nonattainment new source review permits in the Houston and DFW areas by changing:

- The offset ratio for major source modifications and new sources from 1.15 to 1 (1.15:1) to 1.2 to 1 (1.2:1).
- Major source threshold from 100 tons/year to 50 tons/year.

Expected Proposal on the Houston Area Redesignation/Maintenance State Implementation Plan (SIP) Revision for the Revoked 1-hour and 1997 8-hour Ozone Standards

Previously EPA revoked the 1-hour ozone standard (124 parts per billion (ppb)) in favor of the 1997 8-hour ozone standard (84 ppb). Later EPA revoked the 1997 8-hour ozone standard in favor of the 2008 ozone standard (75 ppb). EPA stopped redesignations for the revoked ozone standards and promulgated a regulation that allowed for a “redesignation substitute” for the revoked standards.

The Houston area attained the 1-hour ozone standard at the end of 2013. The Houston area attained the 1997 8-hour ozone standard at the end of 2014. EPA approved “redesignation substitutes” for Houston area and these standards. Last year, the D.C. Circuit Court vacated EPA’s redesignation substitute provision.

This led Texas to develop and submit a full Houston area redesignation request and maintenance plan SIP revision for the revoked standards. In May EPA expects to propose action on the Houston redesignation/maintenance plan.

Publication of the proposal will start a 30-day comment period.