

News Release

For immediate release

April 21, 2008

>>City and assignment editors<<



San Joaquin Valley
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT

Central region

Jaime Holt

(559) 230-5850

Southern region

Brenda Turner

(661) 326-6981

Northern region

Anthony Preso

(209)557-6472

Spanish-language contact

Maricela Velasquez

(559) 230-5849

EPA proposes Valley PM10 attainment *Maintenance plan also gets thumbs up*

FRESNO – In significant action, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today informed the Valley Air District that it is proposing the air basin be declared in attainment of health standards for fine particle pollution 10 microns or less in size (PM10).

With this action, the Valley becomes the first region in the state to change its designation from serious nonattainment to meeting attainment of federal health standards for PM10.

EPA has also concurrently proposed that the Air District's PM10 maintenance plan be approved. The maintenance plan contains additional measures, including contingency, to assure continued compliance with newly met standards. The state Air Resources Board has endorsed both moves.

"This is an outstanding confirmation of the tremendous investment by all sectors of the Valley in cleaning up particle pollution," said Seyed Sadredin, the Air District's air pollution control officer and executive director. "A lot of hard work and costly investment among the Valley's businesses, industries – including agriculture -- and residents, has taken us this far."

But despite this progress, the Valley is committed to continuing improvement. The Air District is preparing to submit its maintenance plan for fine particulates (PM2.5) to its Governing Board on April 30.

"There will be no roll back of stringent PM10 rules and no backsliding of progress," Sadredin said. "While this is a great step forward, we still face difficult challenges in realizing clean air."

The maintenance plan retains all PM10 controls and monitoring, and includes contingency measures in the event the air basin falls out of attainment. Failure to meet attainment would mean painful economic sanctions in the Valley.

"Approval action on the 2007 Maintenance Plan is a critical step ... for transportation conformity budgets and for avoiding the loss of federal funds for transportation projects," Sadredin said in a letter to EPA Air Division Director Deborah Jordan.

The proposed finding will be published in the Federal Register within two weeks with a 30-day public comment period to follow, after which a final determination will be made.

The Valley Air District covers eight counties including San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and San Joaquin Valley air basin portions of Kern. For assistance, contact the nearest District office in Modesto at (209) 557-6440, Fresno (559) 230-6000 or Bakersfield (661) 326-6900.