U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

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EPA Proposes to Affirm October 2017 Texas Regional Haze Plan

We Also Seek Public Input on Additional Aspects of Our Plan

Media contacts: R6Press@epa.gov or 214 665-2200

DALLAS - (August XXX, 2018) Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing to affirm portions of our October 2017 Texas Regional Haze final action that addresses certain Clean Air Act regional haze requirements and to prevent interference with the visibility plans of downwind states. The portions include Clean Air Act requirements for particulate matter and sulfur dioxide as they relate to Best Available Retrofit Technology (BART) for Electric Generating Units. We believe certain specific aspects of the federal plan can benefit from further public comment.

The Clean Air Act establishes as a national goal the prevention of any future, and the remedying of any existing, man-made impairment of visibility in 156 national parks and wilderness areas designated as mandatory Class I Federal areas. The Regional Haze rule requires states to make progress toward achieving natural visibility conditions in some of the nation's most treasured wilderness areas. In Texas, this includes the Big Bend and Guadalupe Mountains Class I areas.

States must submit plans for achieving these goals by reducing harmful emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter. While EPA maintains that States are in the best position to provide flexibility and protect the environment while maintaining a strong economic engine, the EPA must continue to implement federal plans to address Regional Haze in the absence of a state clean-air plan that fully meets Clean Air Act requirements.

We believe certain specific aspects of the federal plan can benefit from further public comment. In today's proposal, EPA also invites comment on additional issues that could inform our decision making on SO2 BART requirements for Texas.

Following the publication of the proposed rule in the Federal Register, there will be a public comment period ending on October 26, 2018. On September 26, 2018, there will be a hearing to accept oral comments into the record. We are also holding an information session prior to the hearing, for providing additional information and informal discussion for our proposal.

Time: Information Session: 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Public hearing: 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. (including a short break)
Location: Joe C. Thompson Conference Center
(on the University of Texas (UT) Campus)
Room 3.102
2405 Robert Dedman Drive
Austin, Texas 78712

Once we have carefully reviewed comments, we will take final action. The EPA will continue to work with the state of Texas to ensure that the state meets all Regional Haze requirements of the Clean Air Act.

Haze forms when sunlight hits tiny particles of air pollution (both naturally occurring and man-made). The particles absorb some light while other light is scattered before it becomes visible. The greater number of pollutant particles, the more light is absorbed and scattered. The haze reduces clarity and color of what we can see. In addition, pollution that leads to haze can harm people's health and the environment. Exposure to these small particles in the air has been linked to increased respiratory illness, decreased lung function, and even premature death.

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