Message

From: Alpern, Michael [Alpern.Michael@epa.gov]
Sent: 12/7/2020 8:52:23 PM
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Subject: FW: Newsroom: EPA Finalizes NAAQS for Particulate Matter

FYI

From: Hackel, Angela <Hackel.Angela@epa.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 7, 2020 12:52 PM
To: Press <Press@epa.gov>; AO-OCIR Everyone <AOOCIR_Everyone@epa.gov>; AO OPA Internal Communications <AO_OPA_Internal_Communications@epa.gov>; AO OPA Immediate Office <AO_OPA_Immediate_Office@epa.gov>; AO OPA Web Communications <AO_OPA_Web_Communications@epa.gov>; Regional Public Affairs Directors <Regional_Public_Affairs_Directors@epa.gov>; HQ Communications Directors <HQCommunicationsDirectors@epa.gov>
Subject: Newsroom: EPA Finalizes NAAQS for Particulate Matter

In the newsroom: https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-finalizes-naaqs-particulate-matter.

From: EPA Press Office <press@epa.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 7, 2020 3:45 PM
To: Hackel, Angela <Hackel.Angela@epa.gov>
Subject: EPA Finalizes NAAQS for Particulate Matter

EPA Finalizes NAAQS for Particulate Matter

WASHINGTON (December 7, 2020) — Today, at a virtual press conference with Governor Jim Justice, U.S. Congressman Alex Mooney (WV-02), West Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Secretary Austin Caperton, and Senior Deputy Attorney General Douglas Buffington, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Andrew Wheeler announced the agency's final decision to retain the existing National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for particulate matter (PM) set by the Obama-Biden Administration without changes.

"The EPA under the Trump Administration has continued America's leadership in clear air, lowering our particulate matter levels to well below those of many of our global competitors," **said EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler.** "Maintaining these important

standards will ensure Americans can continue to breathe some of the cleanest air on the planet."

"I am very proud to join EPA Administrator Wheeler for this important announcement for our whole country. The fact that the U.S. has the most vibrant economy in the world, and yet our particulate matter is five times lower than the global average, is a testament to the leadership of President Trump, the U.S. EPA, and the entire Trump Administration," **said West Virginia Governor Jim Justice.** "In West Virginia, our air is the cleanest it's been in over 40 years and our economy is on the move. The outside world is learning that West Virginia is the diamond in the rough that they may have missed, and an excellent place to raise a family and grow a business in one of the most beautiful places on Earth. I couldn't be happier to celebrate this great accomplishment."

"This is an important announcement for West Virginia. We need to continue to support policies that keep our air clean, while protecting the job producers in our state. This regulation accomplishes those goals," **said West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey.**

"Today's announcement by the EPA of the finalization of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards rule is a big win for West Virginia. As crafted this rule well balances the need for a cleaner environment with the need for continued economic development. Under the leadership of President Trump, America has cleaner air and is energy independent, with West Virginia serving as the backbone for our nation's energy production," **said Congressman Alex X. Mooney (WV-02).**

The U.S. has some of the lowest fine particulate matter levels in the world - approximately five times below the global average, six times below Chinese levels, and 20 percent lower than France, Germany, and Great Britain. Between 2000 and 2019, average PM2.5 concentrations in the U.S. fell by 44 percent and average PM10 concentrations similarly fell by 46 percent.

The decision to retain existing standards set by the Obama-Biden Administration, which applies to the NAAQS for both fine and coarse particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10), comes after careful review and consideration of the most recent available scientific evidence and technical information, consultation with the agency's independent scientific advisors, and consideration of more than 60,000 public comments on the proposal.

Under President Trump, EPA has redesignated 57 nonattainment areas to attainment with standards for six key criteria air pollutants: carbon monoxide, ground-level ozone, lead, nitrogen oxides, PM, and sulfur oxides. This includes nine areas for PM2.5 and twelve areas for PM10. These redesignations mean cleaner air, improved health outcomes, and greater economic opportunities for cities and communities across the country.

In October, EPA Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Cosmo Servidio announced that the State of West Virginia meets all current air quality standards after the approval of the redesignation of Marshall County, West Virginia to attainment for the 2010 federal sulfur dioxide NAAQS. This redesignation marks the first time since 1978 that all the national air quality standards statewide for West Virginia have been attained. In addition, West Virginia is now the only state in the EPA Mid-Atlantic region where the entire state meets all the national standards for air pollutants under the Clean Air Act.

In May 2018, EPA issued a "Back-to-Basics" memo to improve EPA's process for reviewing the NAAQS. The memo laid out goals to get EPA back on track with Clean Air requirements, statutory deadlines, and the issuance of timely implementation rules, to ensure continued improvements in air quality across the country.

Today's action follows the principles established in the earliest days of this administration to streamline the NAAQS review process. By implementing these principles, EPA was able to issue the final PM standards earlier than initially anticipated. The agency expects to meet the five-year review deadline going forward.

For more information about the decision to retain the standards, visit https://www.epa.gov/naaqs/particulate-matter-pm-air-quality-standards.

Background

Particulate matter, also known as PM, includes fine particles, which are 2.5 micrometers in diameter and smaller. They can be emitted directly from a variety of sources, including vehicles, smokestacks, and fires. They also form when gases emitted by power plants, industrial processes, and gasoline and diesel engines react in the atmosphere. Coarse particles, which have diameters between 2.5 and 10 micrometers, include road dust that is kicked up by traffic, some agricultural operations, construction and demolition operations, industrial processes, and biomass burning.

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