

## Redesignated Nonattainment Areas

### Background

Areas with persistent air quality problems have been designated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as nonattainment areas. This means that the areas have violated federal health-based standards for outdoor air pollution. Each nonattainment area is declared for a specific pollutant. Nonattainment areas for different pollutants may overlap each other or share common boundaries.

Several of the nonattainment areas in Oregon now appear to be meeting national air quality standards. This apparent compliance with the federal standards does not automatically bring an area's nonattainment status to an end. The Clean Air Act requires the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to follow an extensive process to prove that the nonattainment designation should be removed. The basic federal requirements are:

- The national outdoor air quality standards must be attained.
- EPA must approve the State Implementation Plan (SIP) for bringing the area into attainment.
- DEQ must prove to EPA that the improved air quality is due to permanent and enforceable reductions in pollution levels.
- EPA must approve a state and local maintenance plan, including a contingency plan, that will keep the area's air quality healthful.
- Fully meeting these requirements getting redesignated can take up to two years for each area. DEQ and local governments are working to gain redesignation in all areas that are meeting the outdoor air quality standards.

### Meeting the Standards

To be considered for redesignation, a nonattainment area must not violate national air quality health standards:

\* Fine particulate matter (PM10) and ground level ozone: No more than an average of one violation of the standard per year for three consecutive years.

\* Carbon Monoxide: No more than one violation of the standard each year for two consecutive

years. (no averaging is allowed; there can't be two violations one year and none the next.)

This information must be the result of actual monitoring. DEQ must demonstrate the monitoring equipment was located in places likely to have the highest concentrations of the pollutant. EPA also requires a computer modelling analysis to show that monitoring occurred in high concentration areas and to support DEQ's case that the standard has been met.

### The Nonattainment Area Plan

DEQ must complete and obtain EPA approval of the State Implementation Plan for the nonattainment area. DEQ must complete the federal planning process before completing the other redesignation requirements.

### Real Pollution Reductions

DEQ must prove that the air quality improvements are permanent and enforceable. They must not be attributed to usually favorable weather conditions or such factors as economic downturns that resulted in less traffic and industrial activity.

### Maintenance Plan

DEQ must outline the pollution prevention measures that will be used to maintain air quality standards for 10 years after redesignation. Circumstance will dictate whether fewer, the same or additional pollution prevention strategies will be required. The plan must describe measures that will be taken to correct violations if they occur. DEQ may submit the maintenance plan at the same time it applies for redesignation.

### Other Requirements

#### Inventory

DEQ must prepare an inventory showing all sources of air pollution and much they generate. Sources are things such as vehicles, woodstoves and commercial or industrial facilities that generate air pollution. DEQ must identify the maximum amount of emissions that can be allowed without violating air quality standards.



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### **Maintenance Demonstration**

Using a computer model, DEQ must demonstrate to EPA's satisfaction that the maintenance plan will keep air quality within the federal standards for 10 years, even if the number of pollution sources increases. (For example, increased traffic or more industries in an area.)

### **Monitoring**

DEQ must submit a monitoring plan that will show whether the federal standards are being maintained. The plan must allow for special studies in case traffic patterns or other pollution producing patterns change. These studies could lead to new permanent monitoring sites if high pollution

For more information, contact DEQ Air Quality Division, (503) 229-5359 or toll free in Oregon (800) 452-4011. People with hearing impairments may call DEQ's TTY at (503) 229-6993.



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