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Maricopa County
Environmental Services Department

Albert F. Brown, Director
1001 North Central, Ste 595
Phoenix, Arizona 85004-1950
Phone: (602) 506-6623
Fax: (602) 506-5141
TDD: (602) 506-6704

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EPA AIR DOCKET

Air and Radiation Docket and Information Center
Docket Number A-2001-31
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
401 M Street; SW
Washington, DC 20460

RE: Implementation of National Ambient Air Quality Standard for 8-hour Ozone

The Maricopa County Environmental Services Department (MCESD) would like to thank the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) staff for holding a public meeting in Phoenix to discuss the issues associated with implementation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for 8-hour Ozone. MCESD appreciates the opportunity to participate in the process and provide our perspective.

The Phoenix metropolitan area attained the 1-hour ozone standard in 1999, and recorded 8-hour ozone maximum 3-year average values of 0.085 in 2001. Our air quality has steadily improved due to the efforts of all levels of government, businesses, industry and the public. Implementation of the 8-hour NAAQS should ensure that the residents of Maricopa County continue to benefit from breathing cleaner air. MCESD offers the following comments with this goal in mind:

Designation of Areas

In light of the continuing improvement in our region's ozone air quality, MCESD urges EPA to use the most recent 3 years of actual monitoring data at the time of designation, rather than a design value contained in an anachronistic state implementation or maintenance plan. This will help ensure that the considerable progress in reducing ozone levels in the Phoenix area will be reflected in the region's designation for the 8-hour ozone standard.

Classification of Areas and Transition from 1-hour to 8-hour Ozone NAAQS

For areas such as the Phoenix metropolitan area that currently attain the 1-hour ozone NAAQS, we suggest that the area be designated for the 8-hour standard under Subpart 1 rather than Subpart 2 to provide a smooth transition from the 1-hour to 8-hour ozone NAAQS. Using Subpart 1 in this manner will ensure there is no backsliding for the 1-hour NAAQS as all pertinent programs will need to remain in place. It will avoid the possibility of conflicting requirements due to different ozone classifications for the 1-hour and 8-hour NAAQS.

In line with the above recommendation, MCESD also suggests that EPA should revoke the 1-hour NAAQS at the time of an area's designation for 8-hour NAAQS. This step will provide a clear transition point for Subparts 1 and 2 and avoid questions regarding the applicability of Subpart 2

Maricopa County
Office of Management
and Budget
301 W. Jefferson St, Ste 1070
Phoenix, Arizona 85003-2143
Phone: (602) 506-7280
Fax: (602) 506-3063

in the event of a future 1-hour violation. For this approach to be workable, EPA needs to partner with state and local agencies to expedite action on pending ozone plans.

Maintain Section 105 and CMAQ Funding

Our region's ability to implement projects and programs to reduce air pollution is directly linked to the types and amounts of funding we receive. Two important federal funding mechanisms that our county uses to comply with federal air quality standards are Section 105 Grants and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding. As we have attained the 1-hour NAAQS for ozone and are close to the standard for the new 8-hour NAAQS, MCESD is concerned that we may lose future federal funding allocations. These allocations provided us the opportunity to make significant air quality improvements and to keep pace with the air pollution associated with growth. MCESD believes that Section 105 and CMAQ funding has been a key component to improving our air quality and provides an important resource for attaining both the 1-hour and new 8-hour NAAQS for ozone. We believe that these funding sources should not be reduced or eliminated for areas that have worked long and hard to improve air quality. In light of our growth rate, we face many challenges in our efforts to continue to attain and maintain the federal ozone standards. We need EPA and Federal Highway Administration to continue our Section 105 and CMAQ funding at current allocations, not reduced due to our successes at improving air quality.

Revised Guidance Necessary to Address 8-hour Ozone NAAQS

Considering the differences between the 1-hour and 8-hour ozone formation, EPA should not rely on 1-hour approaches unless they can be shown to be workable to address 8-hour nonattainment. For example 8-hour ozone violations may be measured in rural areas and Class I areas that are not contributing to the elevated concentrations and where control strategies would not be effective in reducing those concentrations. EPA needs to complete new guidance addressing factors, such as classifications, new source review, conformity and design value determinations, before asking states to re-evaluate recommendations for nonattainment area designations.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact Jo Crumbaker at (602)506-6705.

Sincerely,

Al Brown, M.P.A., R.S.
Director

cc: Nancy Wrona, ADEQ
Lindy Bauer, MAG