



6560-50-P

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

**[Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-ORD-2013-0620 and Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2014-0128;  
FRL-9959-72-ORD]**

### **First External Review Draft Integrated Science Assessment for Oxides of Nitrogen, Oxides of Sulfur, and Particulate Matter – Ecological Criteria**

**AGENCY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

**ACTION:** Notice of public comment period.

**SUMMARY:** Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing a public comment period for the draft document titled, “First External Review Draft Integrated Science Assessment for Oxides of Nitrogen, Oxides of Sulfur, and Particulate Matter – Ecological Criteria” (EPA/600/R-16/372). The draft document was prepared by the National Center for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) within EPA’s Office of Research and Development (ORD) as part of the review of the secondary (welfare-based) National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for oxides of nitrogen, oxides of sulfur, and particulate matter. The Integrated Science Assessment (ISA), in conjunction with additional technical and policy assessments, provides the scientific basis for

EPA's decisions on the adequacy of the current NAAQS and the appropriateness of possible alternative standards. On January 28, 2016, EPA released a separate ISA as part of an independent review for the primary (health-based) NAAQS for oxides of nitrogen (EPA/600/R-15/068). In addition, EPA is currently developing separate ISAs to support the primary NAAQS review for oxides of sulfur and the primary and non-ecological secondary (e.g., visibility, climate, materials damage) NAAQS review for particulate matter.

EPA is releasing this draft document to seek review by the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC) and the public (meeting date and location to be specified in a separate **Federal Register** notice). This draft document is not final, as described in EPA's information quality guidelines, and it does not represent, and should not be construed to represent, Agency policy or views. When revising the document, EPA will consider any public comments submitted during the public comment period specified in this notice.

**DATES:** The public comment period begins on [**INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER**], and ends on May 24, 2017. Comments must be received on or before May 24, 2017.

**ADDRESSES:** The "First External Review Draft Integrated Science Assessment for Oxides of Nitrogen, Oxides of Sulfur, and Particulate Matter – Ecological Criteria" will be available primarily via the internet on EPA's Integrated Science Assessment home page at <https://www.epa.gov/isa/integrated-science-assessment-isa-oxides-nitrogen-and-sulfur-ecological>

or the public docket at <http://www.regulations.gov>, Docket ID No. **EPA-HQ-ORD-2013-0620** and Docket ID No. **EPA-HQ-OAR-2014-0128**. A limited number of CD-ROM copies will be available. Contact Ms. Marieka Boyd by phone: 919-541-0031; fax: 919-541-5078; or email: [boyd.marieka@epa.gov](mailto:boyd.marieka@epa.gov) to request a CD-ROM, and please provide your name, your mailing address, and the document title, “First External Review Draft Integrated Science Assessment for Oxides of Nitrogen, Oxides of Sulfur, and Particulate Matter – Ecological Criteria” to facilitate processing of your request.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:** For information on the public comment period, contact the ORD Docket at the EPA Headquarters Docket Center; phone: 202-566-1752; fax: 202-566-9744; or email: [Docket\\_ORD@epa.gov](mailto:Docket_ORD@epa.gov).

For technical information, contact Dr. Tara Greaver, NCEA; phone: 919-541-2435; fax: 919-541-1818; or email: [greaver.tara@epa.gov](mailto:greaver.tara@epa.gov).

## **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### **I. Information About the Document**

Section 108(a) of the Clean Air Act directs the Administrator to identify certain pollutants which, among other things, “cause or contribute to air pollution which may reasonably be anticipated to endanger public health or welfare” and to issue air quality criteria for them. These air quality criteria are to “accurately reflect the latest scientific knowledge useful in indicating the kind and extent of all identifiable effects on public health or welfare which may be

expected from the presence of [a] pollutant in the ambient air...” Under section 109 of the Act, EPA is then to establish NAAQS for each pollutant for which EPA has issued criteria. Section 109(d) of the Act subsequently requires periodic review and, if appropriate, revision of existing air quality criteria to reflect advances in scientific knowledge on the effects of the pollutant on public health or welfare. EPA is also required to review and, if appropriate, revise the NAAQS (for more information on the NAAQS review process, see <https://www.epa.gov/naaqs>).

Oxides of nitrogen, oxides of sulfur, and particulate matter are three of six criteria pollutants for which EPA has established NAAQS. Periodically, EPA reviews the scientific basis for these standards by preparing an ISA (formerly called an Air Quality Criteria Document). The ISA, in conjunction with additional technical and policy assessments, provides the scientific basis for EPA’s decisions on the adequacy of the current NAAQS and the appropriateness of possible alternative standards. The CASAC, an independent science advisory committee whose review and advisory functions are mandated by Section 109(d)(2) of the Clean Air Act, is charged (among other things) with independent scientific review of the EPA’s air quality criteria.

On August 21, 2013 (78 FR 53452), EPA formally initiated its current review of the air quality criteria for the ecological effects of oxides of nitrogen and oxides of sulfur, and the associated secondary (welfare-based) NAAQS, requesting the submission of recent scientific information on specified topics. Similarly, on December 3, 2014 (79 FR 71764), EPA formally initiated its current review of the air quality criteria for the particulate matter NAAQS. EPA conducted two workshops—the first on March 4 to 6, 2014, for oxides of nitrogen and oxides of sulfur (79 FR 8644, February 13, 2014), and the second on February 11, 2015 (79 FR 71764,

December 3, 2014), for particulate matter—to gather input from invited scientific experts, both internal and external to EPA, as well as from the public, regarding key science and policy issues relevant to the review of the these secondary NAAQS. These science and policy issues were incorporated into EPA’s “Draft Integrated Review Plan for the Secondary National Ambient Air Quality Standard for Oxides of Nitrogen and Oxides of Sulfur” as well as the “Integrated Review Plan for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Particulate Matter.” The Draft Integrated Review Plan (IRP) for oxides of nitrogen and oxides of sulfur was available for public comment (80 FR 69220, November 9, 2015) and discussion by the CASAC via publicly accessible teleconference consultation (80 FR 65223, February 10, 2016). The Draft IRP for particulate matter was available for public comment (81 FR 2297, April 19, 2016) and discussion by the CASAC via publicly accessible teleconference consultation (81 FR 13362, March 14, 2016) prior to release of the final document (81 FR 87933, December 6, 2016). The final “Integrated Review Plan for the Secondary National Ambient Air Quality Standard for Oxides of Nitrogen, Oxides of Sulfur, and Particulate Matter” will be announced by a separate Federal Register notice.

Teleconference workshops with invited scientific experts, both internal and external to EPA, were held on August 25, 26, and 27, 2015 (80 FR 48316, August 12, 2015), and June 13, 2016 (81 FR 89262, May 11, 2016), to discuss initial draft materials prepared in the development of the draft ISA.

The “First External Review Draft Integrated Science Assessment for Oxides of Nitrogen, Oxides of Sulfur, and Particulate Matter – Ecological Criteria” will be discussed at a public

meeting for review by CASAC and the public. In addition to the public comment period announced in this notice, the public will have an opportunity to address the CASAC. A separate Federal Register notice will inform the public of the exact date and time of the CASAC meeting and of the procedures for public participation.

## II. How to Submit Technical Comments to the Docket at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov)

Submit your comments, identified by Docket ID No. **EPA-HQ-ORD-2013-0620** and Docket ID No. **EPA-HQ-OAR-2014-0128**, by one of the following methods:

- [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov): Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- Email: [Docket\\_ORD@epa.gov](mailto:Docket_ORD@epa.gov).
- Fax: 202-566-9744.
- Mail: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA Docket Center (ORD Docket), Mail Code: 28221T, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20460. The phone number is 202-566-1752.
- Hand Delivery: The ORD Docket is located in the EPA Headquarters Docket Center, EPA West Building, Room 3334, 1301 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20004.

The EPA Docket Center Public Reading Room is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. The phone number for the Public Reading Room is 202-566-1744. Deliveries are only accepted during the docket's normal hours of operation, and special arrangements should be made for deliveries of boxed information. If you

provide comments by mail or hand delivery, please submit three copies of the comments. For attachments, provide an index, number pages consecutively with the comments, and submit an unbound original and three copies.

*Instructions:* Direct your comments to Docket ID No. **EPA-HQ-ORD-2013-0620** and Docket ID No. **EPA-HQ-OAR-2014-0128**. Please ensure that your comments are submitted within the specified comment period. Comments received after the closing date will be marked “late,” and may only be considered if time permits. It is EPA’s policy to include all comments it receives in the public docket without change and to make the comments available online at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), including any personal information provided, unless a comment includes information claimed to be Confidential Business Information (CBI) or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Do not submit information through [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) or email that you consider to be CBI or otherwise protected. The [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) website is an “anonymous access” system, which means EPA will not know your identity or contact information unless you provide it in the body of your comment. If you send an email comment directly to EPA without going through [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), your email address will be automatically captured and included as part of the comment that is placed in the public docket and made available on the internet. If you submit an electronic comment, EPA recommends that you include your name and other contact information in the body of your comment and with any disk or CD-ROM you submit. If EPA cannot read your comment due to technical difficulties and cannot contact you for clarification, EPA may not be able to consider your comment. Electronic

files should avoid the use of special characters, any form of encryption, and be free of any defects or viruses. For additional information about EPA's public docket visit the EPA Docket Center homepage at <https://www.epa.gov/dockets>.

*Docket:* Documents in the docket are listed in the [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) index. Although listed in the index, some information is not publicly available, e.g., CBI or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Certain other materials, such as copyrighted material, are publicly available only in hard copy. Publicly available docket materials are available either electronically on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) or in hard copy at the ORD Docket in the EPA Headquarters Docket Center.

Dated: February 14, 2017.

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[FR Doc. 2017-06317 Filed: 3/29/2017 8:45 am; Publication Date: 3/30/2017]