



6560-50-P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

40 CFR Part 52

[EPA-R03-OAR-2017-0382; FRL- 9966-31-Region 3]

Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Virginia; Revisions to Implement the Revocation of the 1997 Ozone NAAQS

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Direct final rule.

SUMMARY: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is taking direct final action to approve revisions to the Commonwealth of Virginia state implementation plan (SIP). The revisions pertain to amendments made to the Virginia Administrative Code. These amendments updated the State Air Pollution Control Board's Regulations for the Control and Abatement of Air Pollution to be consistent with EPA's final rule implementing the 2008 ozone national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) and revoking the 1997 ozone NAAQS. *See* 80 FR 12264 (March 6, 2015). The amendments revised a regulation listing nonattainment areas under the 1997 ozone NAAQS and a regulation regarding the 1997 ozone standard to reflect the revocation of the 1997 ozone NAAQS, which was effective April 6, 2015. The amendments also added clarifying text to two transportation and general conformity regulations in order to reflect the revocation of the 1997 ozone NAAQS. EPA is approving these revisions updating the Virginia Administrative Code to reflect the revocation of the 1997 ozone NAAQS in accordance with the requirements of the Clean Air Act (CAA).

DATES: This rule is effective on [insert date 60 days after date of publication in the Federal

Register] without further notice, unless EPA receives adverse written comment by **[insert date 30 days after date of publication in the Federal Register]**. If EPA receives such comments, it will publish a timely withdrawal of the direct final rule in the **Federal Register** and inform the public that the rule will not take effect.

ADDRESSES: Submit your comments, identified by Docket ID No. EPA-R03-OAR-2017-0382 at <https://www.regulations.gov>, or via email to stahl.cynthia@epa.gov. For comments submitted at [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov), follow the online instructions for submitting comments. Once submitted, comments cannot be edited or removed from [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov). For either manner of submission, EPA may publish any comment received to its public docket. Do not submit electronically any information you consider to be confidential business information (CBI) or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Multimedia submissions (audio, video, etc.) must be accompanied by a written comment. The written comment is considered the official comment and should include discussion of all points you wish to make. EPA will generally not consider comments or comment contents located outside of the primary submission (i.e. on the web, cloud, or other file sharing system). For additional submission methods, please contact the person identified in the “For Further Information Contact” section. For the full EPA public comment policy, information about CBI or multimedia submissions, and general guidance on making effective comments, please visit <http://www2.epa.gov/dockets/commenting-epa-dockets>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sara Calcinore, (215) 814-2043, or by e-mail at calcinore.sara@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

Ground level ozone is formed when nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOC) react in the presence of sunlight. NO_x and VOC are referred to as ozone precursors and are emitted by many types of pollution sources, including motor vehicles, power plants, industrial facilities, and area wide sources, such as consumer products and lawn and garden equipment. Scientific evidence indicates that adverse public health effects occur following exposure to ozone. These effects are more pronounced in children and adults with lung disease. Breathing air containing ozone can reduce lung function and inflame airways, which can increase respiratory symptoms and aggravate asthma or other lung diseases. In response to this scientific evidence, EPA promulgated in 1979 the first ozone NAAQS, the 0.12 part per million (ppm) 1-hour ozone NAAQS. *See* 44 FR 8202 (February 8, 1979).

EPA is required to review and reevaluate the ozone NAAQS every 5 years in order to consider updated information regarding the effects of ozone on human health and the environment. Since February 8, 1979, the date of the first ozone NAAQS promulgation, EPA has reviewed and revised the ozone standard to protect the public health and welfare. On July 18, 1997, EPA promulgated a revised ozone NAAQS, referred to as the 1997 ozone NAAQS, of 0.08 ppm averaged over eight hours. 62 FR 38855. This 8-hour ozone NAAQS was determined to be more protective of public health than the previous 1979 1-hour ozone NAAQS. In 2008, EPA revised the 8-hour ozone NAAQS from 0.08 to 0.075 ppm. The 0.075 ppm standard is referred to as the 2008 ozone NAAQS. *See* 73 FR 16436 (March 27, 2008).¹

¹ On October 1, 2015, EPA strengthened the ground-level ozone NAAQS to 0.070 ppm. *See* 80 FR 65292 (October 26, 2015). This rulemaking addresses the 2008 ozone NAAQS and does not address the 2015 ozone NAAQS.

On March 6, 2015, EPA established a final rule addressing a range of nonattainment area SIP requirements for the 2008 ozone NAAQS. 80 FR 12264. This final rule also revoked the 1997 ozone NAAQS as of April 6, 2015 and established anti-backsliding requirements that became effective once the 1997 ozone NAAQS was revoked. The anti-backsliding provisions in 40 CFR 51.1105 require States to retain all applicable control requirements for the 1997 ozone NAAQS, while enabling areas, where possible, to focus planning efforts on meeting the more protective 2008 ozone NAAQS.

On February 10, 2017, the Commonwealth of Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) submitted a formal SIP revision (Revision G16). The SIP revision consists of amendments made to the Virginia Administrative Code to reflect the revocation of the 1997 ozone NAAQS according to the final rule established by EPA on March 6, 2015 implementing the 2008 ozone NAAQS.

II. Summary of SIP Revision and EPA Analysis

The February 10, 2017 SIP revision submittal includes amended versions of provisions in the State Air Pollution Control Board's Regulation for the Control and Abatement of Air Pollution including 9VAC5-20-204, 9VAC5-30-55, 9VAC5-151-20, and 9VAC5-160-30, which were adopted by the State Air Pollution Control Board on September 9, 2016 and effective November 16, 2016. Virginia requests that EPA approve this submittal so that these amended regulations become part of the Virginia SIP.

The amendment to 9VAC5-20-204 added text to the section stating that the list of Northern Virginia moderate nonattainment areas under the 1997 ozone NAAQS is no longer effective after April 6, 2015, the effective date of the revocation of the 1997 ozone NAAQS. *See* 80 FR 12264

(March 6, 2015). The amendment to 9VAC5-30-55 added text to the section stating that the primary and secondary ambient air quality standard of 0.08 ppm shall no longer apply after April 6, 2015. Virginia also amended the Regulation for Transportation Conformity and the Regulation for General Conformity by adding clarifying text to 9VAC5-151-20 and 9VAC5-160-30 stating that “The provisions of this chapter shall not apply in nonattainment and maintenance areas that were designated nonattainment or maintenance under a federal standard that has been revoked.” These revisions to the Virginia Administrative Code reflect EPA’s revocation of the 1997 ozone NAAQS.

EPA’s review of this material indicates the February 10, 2017 submittal is approvable as it revises regulations to be consistent with EPA’s final rule implementing the 2008 ozone NAAQS. *See* 80 FR 12264 (March 6, 2015). The revisions update regulations to reflect the revocation of the 1997 NAAQS, which was effective April 6, 2015. Therefore, the revisions do not affect emissions of air pollutants or interfere with any applicable requirement concerning attainment of reasonable further progress or any other applicable requirements in the CAA. Thus, EPA finds the revision approvable in accordance with section 110, including section 110(l), of the CAA.

III. Final Action

EPA is approving the Virginia SIP revision submitted on February 10, 2017, which includes revisions to several sections of the Virginia Administrative Code, including 9VAC5-20-204, 9VAC5-30-55, 9VAC5-151-20, and 9VAC5-160-30 which will be incorporated by reference into the Virginia SIP. EPA is publishing this rule without prior proposal because EPA views this as a noncontroversial amendment and anticipates no adverse comment. However, in the “Proposed Rules” section of today’s **Federal Register**, EPA is publishing a separate document

that will serve as the proposal to approve the SIP revision if adverse comments are filed. This rule will be effective on **[insert date 60 days after date of publication in the Federal Register]** without further notice unless EPA receives adverse comment by **[insert date 30 days after date of publication in the Federal Register]**. If EPA receives adverse comment, EPA will publish a timely withdrawal in the **Federal Register** informing the public that the rule will not take effect. EPA will address all public comments in a subsequent final rule based on the proposed rule. EPA will not institute a second comment period on this action. Any parties interested in commenting must do so at this time. Please note that if EPA receives adverse comment on an amendment, paragraph, or section of this rule and if that provision may be severed from the remainder of the rule, EPA may adopt as final those provisions of the rule that are not the subject of an adverse comment.

IV. General Information Pertaining to SIP Submittals from the Commonwealth of Virginia

In 1995, Virginia adopted legislation that provides, subject to certain conditions, for an environmental assessment (audit) “privilege” for voluntary compliance evaluations performed by a regulated entity. The legislation further addresses the relative burden of proof for parties either asserting the privilege or seeking disclosure of documents for which the privilege is claimed. Virginia’s legislation also provides, subject to certain conditions, for a penalty waiver for violations of environmental laws when a regulated entity discovers such violations pursuant to a voluntary compliance evaluation and voluntarily discloses such violations to the Commonwealth and takes prompt and appropriate measures to remedy the violations. Virginia’s Voluntary Environmental Assessment Privilege Law, Va. Code Sec. 10.1-1198, provides a privilege that protects from disclosure documents and information about the content of those documents that are the product of a voluntary environmental assessment. The Privilege Law does not extend to

documents or information that: (1) Are generated or developed before the commencement of a voluntary environmental assessment; (2) are prepared independently of the assessment process; (3) demonstrate a clear, imminent and substantial danger to the public health or environment; or (4) are required by law.

On January 12, 1998, the Commonwealth of Virginia Office of the Attorney General provided a legal opinion that states that the Privilege Law, Va. Code § 10.1-1198, precludes granting a privilege to documents and information “required by law,” including documents and information “required by federal law to maintain program delegation, authorization or approval,” since Virginia must “enforce federally authorized environmental programs in a manner that is no less stringent than their federal counterparts. . . .” The opinion concludes that “[r]egarding § 10.1-1198, therefore, documents or other information needed for civil or criminal enforcement under one of these programs could not be privileged because such documents and information are essential to pursuing enforcement in a manner required by federal law to maintain program delegation, authorization or approval.” Virginia’s Immunity law, Va. Code Sec. 10.1-1199, provides that “[t]o the extent consistent with requirements imposed by federal law,” any person making a voluntary disclosure of information to a state agency regarding a violation of an environmental statute, regulation, permit, or administrative order is granted immunity from administrative or civil penalty. The Attorney General's January 12, 1998 opinion states that the quoted language renders this statute inapplicable to enforcement of any federally authorized programs, since “no immunity could be afforded from administrative, civil, or criminal penalties because granting such immunity would not be consistent with federal law, which is one of the criteria for immunity.”

Therefore, EPA has determined that Virginia's Privilege and Immunity statutes will not preclude the Commonwealth from enforcing its program consistent with the federal requirements. In any event, because EPA has also determined that a state audit privilege and immunity law can affect only state enforcement and cannot have any impact on federal enforcement authorities, EPA may at any time invoke its authority under the CAA, including, for example, sections 113, 167, 205, 211 or 213, to enforce the requirements or prohibitions of the state plan, independently of any state enforcement effort. In addition, citizen enforcement under section 304 of the CAA is likewise unaffected by this, or any, state audit privilege or immunity law.

V. Incorporation by Reference

In this rule, EPA is finalizing regulatory text that includes incorporation by reference. In accordance with requirements of 1 CFR 51.5, EPA is finalizing the incorporation by reference of the revisions to 9VAC5-20-204, 9VAC5-30-55, 9VAC5-151-20, and 9VAC5-160-30 of the State Air Pollution Control Board's Regulation for the Control and Abatement of Air Pollution discussed in Section II of this preamble. Therefore, these materials have been approved by EPA for inclusion in the SIP, have been incorporated by reference by EPA into that plan, are fully federally enforceable under sections 110 and 113 of the CAA as of the effective date of the final rulemaking of EPA's approval, and will be incorporated by reference by the Director of the Federal Register in the next update of the SIP compilation.² EPA has made, and will continue to make, these materials generally available through www.regulations.gov and/or at the EPA Region III Office (please contact the person identified in the "For Further Information Contact" section of this preamble for more information).

² 62 FR 27968 (May 22, 1997).

VI. Statutory and Executive Order Reviews

A. General Requirements

Under the CAA, the Administrator is required to approve a SIP submission that complies with the provisions of the CAA and applicable federal regulations. 42 U.S.C. 7410(k); 40 CFR 52.02(a). Thus, in reviewing SIP submissions, EPA's role is to approve state choices, provided that they meet the criteria of the CAA. Accordingly, this action merely approves state law as meeting federal requirements and does not impose additional requirements beyond those imposed by state law. For that reason, this action:

- is not a “significant regulatory action” subject to review by the Office of Management and Budget under Executive Orders 12866 (58 FR 51735, October 4, 1993) and 13563 (76 FR 3821, January 21, 2011);
- does not impose an information collection burden under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.);
- is certified as not having a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.);
- does not contain any unfunded mandate or significantly or uniquely affect small governments, as described in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-4);
- does not have federalism implications as specified in Executive Order 13132 (64 FR 43255, August 10, 1999);
- is not an economically significant regulatory action based on health or safety risks subject to Executive Order 13045 (62 FR 19885, April 23, 1997);

- is not a significant regulatory action subject to Executive Order 13211 (66 FR 28355, May 22, 2001);
- is not subject to requirements of Section 12(d) of the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995 (15 U.S.C. 272 note) because application of those requirements would be inconsistent with the CAA; and
- does not provide EPA with the discretionary authority to address, as appropriate, disproportionate human health or environmental effects, using practicable and legally permissible methods, under Executive Order 12898 (59 FR 7629, February 16, 1994).

The SIP is not approved to apply on any Indian reservation land as defined in 18 U.S.C. 1151 or in any other area where EPA or an Indian tribe has demonstrated that a tribe has jurisdiction. In those areas of Indian country, the rule does not have tribal implications and will not impose substantial direct costs on tribal governments or preempt tribal law as specified by Executive Order 13175 (65 FR 67249, November 9, 2000).

B. Submission to Congress and the Comptroller General

The Congressional Review Act, 5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.*, as added by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996, generally provides that before a rule may take effect, the agency promulgating the rule must submit a rule report, which includes a copy of the rule, to each House of the Congress and to the Comptroller General of the United States. EPA will submit a report containing this action and other required information to the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives, and the Comptroller General of the United States prior to publication of the rule in the **Federal Register**. A major rule cannot take effect until 60 days after it is published in the **Federal Register**. This action is not a “major rule” as defined by 5 U.S.C.

804(2).

C. Petitions for Judicial Review

Under section 307(b)(1) of the CAA, petitions for judicial review of this action must be filed in the United States Court of Appeals for the appropriate circuit by **[Insert date 60 days after date of publication in the Federal Register]**. Filing a petition for reconsideration by the Administrator of this final rule does not affect the finality of this action for the purposes of judicial review nor does it extend the time within which a petition for judicial review may be filed, and shall not postpone the effectiveness of such rule or action. Parties with objections to this direct final rule are encouraged to file a comment in response to the parallel notice of proposed rulemaking for this action published in the proposed rules section of today's **Federal Register**, rather than file an immediate petition for judicial review of this direct final rule, so that EPA can withdraw this direct final rule and address the comment in the proposed rulemaking action.

This action to approve revised provisions of the Virginia Administrative Code including 9VAC5-20-204, 9VAC5-30-55, 9VAC5-151-20, and 9VAC5-160-30 for inclusion in the Virginia SIP may not be challenged later in proceedings to enforce its requirements. (See section 307(b)(2).)

List of Subjects in 40 CFR Part 52

Environmental protection, Air pollution control, Incorporation by reference, Nitrogen dioxide, Ozone, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Volatile organic compounds.

Dated: August 3, 2017.

Cecil Rodrigues,
Acting Regional Administrator,
Region III.

40 CFR part 52 is amended as follows:

PART 52 – APPROVAL AND PROMULGATION OF IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

1. The authority citation for part 52 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.

Subpart VV—Virginia

2. In § 52.2420, the table in paragraph (c) is amended by revising the entries for Sections 5-20-204, 5-30-55, 5-151-20, and 5-160-30. The revised text reads as follows:

§ 52.2420 Identification of plan.

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(c) * * *

EPA-APPROVED VIRGINIA REGULATIONS AND STATUTES

State citation	Title/subject	State effective date	EPA approval date	Explanation [former SIP citation]
* * * * *				
9 VAC 5, Chapter 20 General Provisions				
* * * * *				
Part II Air Quality Programs				
* * * * *				
5-20-204	Nonattainment Areas	11/16/16	[Insert date of publication in the Federal Register], [Insert Federal Register Citation]	Addition of Subdivision C. Previous approval 8/14/15
* * * * *				
9 VAC 5, Chapter 30 Ambient Air Quality Standards [Part III]				
* * * * *				
5-30-55	Ozone (8-hour, 0.08 ppm)	11/16/16	[Insert date of publication in the Federal Register], [Insert Federal Register Citation]	Subdivision D. is revised to read that the 1997 8-hour ozone NAAQS no longer apply after April 6, 2015.

State citation	Title/subject	State effective date	EPA approval date	Explanation [former SIP citation]
				Previous approval 6/11/13
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9 VAC 5, Chapter 151 Transportation Conformity				
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Part II General Provisions				
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5-151-20	Applicability	11/16/16	<u>[Insert date of publication in the Federal Register], [Insert Federal Register Citation]</u>	Subdivision B. is amended to address revoked federal standards. Previous approval 11/20/09
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9 VAC 5, Chapter 160 General Conformity				
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Part II General Provisions				
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5-160-30	Applicability	11/16/16	<u>[Insert date of publication in the Federal Register], [Insert Federal Register Citation]</u>	Subdivision A. is amended to address revoked federal standards. Previous approval 12/12/11
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[FR Doc. 2017-17235 Filed: 8/16/2017 8:45 am; Publication Date: 8/17/2017]