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From: EPA Press Office
Sent: Wed 8/2/2017 10:58:39 PM
Subject: EPA CONTINUES TO WORK WITH STATES ON 2015 OZONE DESIGNATIONS

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EPA CONTINUES TO WORK WITH STATES ON 2015 OZONE DESIGNATIONS

EPA continues to work with states on technical issues, disputed designations and insufficient information

(WASHINGTON) – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is moving forward with 2015 ozone designations, working with states to help areas with underlying technical issues, disputed designations, and/or insufficient information. This will help ensure that more Americans are living and working in areas that meet national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS).

“We believe in dialogue with, and being responsive to, our state partners. Today’s action reinforces our commitment to working with the states through the complex designation process,” said **EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt**.

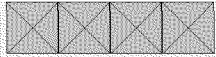
The Clean Air Act gives EPA the flexibility to allow one additional year for sufficient information to support ozone designations. EPA may take future action to use its delay authority and all other authority legally available to the Agency to ensure that its designations are founded on sound policy and the best available information.

Earlier this summer, it was evident that the Agency would not meet the October 1 deadline to designate all areas, due to underlying complexities, methodological, and informational questions with regard to this new ozone NAAQS standard. For example, the question of whether or not this ozone NAAQS was set so low as to implicate natural “background” ozone levels in some parts of the country has repeatedly been raised.

In June, EPA issued a Federal Register notice announcing that it was delaying its deadline for designations by one year, from October 1, 2017 to October 1, 2018. Previous EPA administrations had repeatedly invoked this statutory power to delay designations for part or all of the country. Today’s announcement replaces our earlier action that delayed the Agency’s designation deadline on a nationwide basis and clarifies our path forward, so that the Agency can be more responsive to local needs.

“Under previous Administrations, EPA would often fail to meet designation deadlines, and then wait to be sued by activist groups and others, agreeing in a settlement to set schedules for designation,” said **EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt**. “We do not believe in regulation through litigation, and we take deadlines seriously. We also take the statute and the authority it gives us seriously.”

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