

# Extension of the Deadline for Area Designations for the 2010 Primary Sulfur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) Air Quality Standard

## Fact Sheet

### ACTION

- On July 27, 2012, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a notice that the deadline for area designations for the 2010 primary sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) national ambient air quality standard is being extended for up to one year.
- The Clean Air Act requires EPA to complete the designation process within two years of the promulgation date of a revised standard unless there is insufficient information to make these decisions. In such a case, EPA may take up to an additional year to make the designations.
- EPA currently has insufficient information to make area designations by June 2012.
- With this extension, EPA intends to make area designations for the 2010 primary SO<sub>2</sub> standard by June 3, 2013, instead of June 2012.

### BACKGROUND

- On June 3, 2010, EPA revised the health-based standard for SO<sub>2</sub> by setting a new 1-hour standard of 75 parts per billion (ppb).
- In March 2011, EPA issued guidance on designations for the 2010 primary SO<sub>2</sub> standard. This guidance included recommendations on how to conduct modeling for designations.
- In addition, in October 2011, EPA published draft guidance on state implementation plan submissions for the 2010 primary SO<sub>2</sub> standard and invited public comment on the draft guidance from October 3, 2011, to December 2, 2011.
- Comments received on the approach for informing initial designations, and remaining uncertainties about the analytic approach that states, tribes, and EPA will use for designation determinations and for general implementation, show that EPA currently has insufficient information to make area designations by June 2012.
- EPA convened meetings with stakeholders in May 2012 to refine the agency's approach for implementing the SO<sub>2</sub> standard and to ensure that states, tribes and EPA will have the information needed to implement the standard and protect public health from unhealthy levels of SO<sub>2</sub> in the outdoor air.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- For more information about this announcement or the designation process, visit EPA's Sulfur Dioxide Designations website at: <http://www.epa.gov/so2designations>.