**Fact Sheet**
**Final Data Requirements Rule for the 2010 1-Hour Sulfur Dioxide ($SO_2$)**
**Primary National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS)**

## ACTION

- On August 10, 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finalized requirements for air agencies to monitor or model ambient sulfur dioxide ($SO_2$) levels in areas with large sources of $SO_2$ emissions to help implement the 1-hour $SO_2$ National Air Ambient Quality Standard (NAAQS).

- This final rule establishes that, at a minimum, air agencies must characterize air quality around sources that emit 2,000 tons per year (tpy) or more of $SO_2$. An air agency may avoid the requirement for air quality characterization near a source by adopting enforceable emission limits that ensure that the source will not emit more than 2,000 tpy of $SO_2$.

- This final rule gives air agencies the flexibility to characterize air quality using either modeling of actual source emissions or using appropriately sited ambient air quality monitors. Modeling and monitoring are both appropriate ways to assess local $SO_2$ concentrations, and this flexibility allows an air agency to select a cost-effective approach that adequately characterizes each required area.

- This final rule establishes a schedule for air agencies to characterize air quality and to provide that air quality data to the EPA. EPA expects to use this data to designate areas across the country as meeting or not meeting the $SO_2$ standard set in 2010. The EPA has designed the implementation milestones in this data requirements rule to allow air agencies to take into account compliance dates for achieving $SO_2$ emission reductions under other major national rules, such as the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards for power plants and emission standards for boilers.

- The final rule for the 2010 1-hour $SO_2$ standard lays out a common sense, orderly approach for characterizing current air quality in areas with large $SO_2$ sources. In developing the rule, the EPA carefully considered stakeholder feedback obtained during an extensive outreach process.

## FINAL RULE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

- By January 15, 2016, each air agency is required to submit to the relevant EPA Regional Administrator a final list identifying the sources in the state around which $SO_2$ air quality is to be characterized. The list must include sources with emissions above 2,000 tpy of $SO_2$. The EPA Regional Offices or air agencies may include additional sources on this list if they deem it necessary.

- By July 1, 2016, each air agency is required to identify, for each source area on the list, the approach (ambient monitoring or air quality modeling) it will use to characterize air

quality. In lieu of characterizing areas around listed 2,000 tpy or larger sources, air agencies may indicate by July 1, 2016 that they will adopt enforceable emissions limitations that will limit those sources' emissions to below 2,000 tpy.

- For source areas that an air agency decides to evaluate through air quality modeling, the air agency must provide a modeling protocol to the EPA Regional Administrator by July 1, 2016. The modeling analysis must be submitted to the EPA by January 13, 2017.

- For source areas that an air agency decides to evaluate through ambient monitoring, the air agency must submit relevant information concerning monitoring sites to the EPA Regional Administrator by July 1, 2016, as part of its annual monitoring network plan and in accordance with the EPA's monitoring requirements specified in 40 CFR part 58.

- The air agency must ensure that ambient monitors are operational by January 1, 2017. Before then air agencies will need to identify appropriate sites to characterize peak 1-hour $SO_2$ concentrations, and may need to relocate existing monitors or install new monitors.

- Air agencies will quality assure data from these monitors and submit them to the EPA Air Quality System in the same manner as is currently done for existing $SO_2$ monitors. The first 3 years of data will be collected for calendar years 2017 through 2019.

- If an air agency adopts emission limits keeping sources' emissions below 2,000 tpy in lieu of characterizing the areas surrounding sources, these limits must be adopted and effective by January 13, 2017.

**BACKGROUND**

- On June 2, 2010, the EPA established a primary 1-hour $SO_2$ air quality standard at a level of 75 parts per billion ($99^{th}$ percentile value, averaged over 3 consecutive years). The revised standard will improve public health protection, especially for people with asthma, children and the elderly.

- In May-June 2012, the EPA held a series of stakeholder discussions with states, tribes and other interested parties to refine the agency's approach for implementing the $SO_2$ standard. The EPA also developed a White Paper which identified important monitoring, modeling and implementation issues. The White Paper can be found on the EPA's website at: http://www.epa.gov/airquality/sulfurdioxide/implement.html. Based on the input on the White Paper, the EPA also developed an implementation strategy for the 2010 $SO_2$ standard in February 2013. The strategy paper can be found at: http://www.epa.gov/airquality/sulfurdioxide/implement.html.

- In July 2013, the EPA identified or "designated" as nonattainment 29 areas in 16 states where monitored air quality showed violations of the 2010 1-hour $SO_2$ standard. The EPA based these nonattainment designations on certified air quality monitoring data provided by the states, as well as an assessment of nearby emission sources, and weather

patterns that contribute to the monitored levels. These areas are now taking steps to reduce $SO_2$ emissions and improve air quality, and this rule does not require further characterization of sources in these areas, unless air agencies or the EPA Regional Offices decide that further characterization is warranted.

- A March 2015 court order requires the EPA to complete designations for the 2010 $SO_2$ standard for all remaining areas in the country in up to three additional rounds:
    1. By July 2, 2016 --
        - areas that have monitored violations of the 2010 $SO_2$ standard based on 2013 – 2015 air quality data; and
        - areas that contain any stationary source not announced for retirement that according to EPA's Air Markets Database emitted in 2012 either (a) more than 16,000 tons of $SO_2$ or (b) more than 2,600 tons of $SO_2$ and had an average emission rate of at least 0.45 lbs $SO_2$/mmbtu.
    2. By December 31, 2017 – areas where states have not installed and begun operating a new $SO_2$ monitoring network.
    3. By December 31, 2020 – all remaining areas.

  For most areas, the data required by this final rule will be available in time to inform the designations made under the Court ordered schedule.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- To download a copy of this final rule, go to the EPA's website at: http://www.epa.gov/airquality/sulfurdioxide/implement.html. The official version of this rule will be published in the Federal Register.

- Today's Final Rule and other associated information are available either electronically at *http://www.regulations.gov*, the EPA's electronic public docket and comment system, or in hardcopy at the EPA Docket Center's Public Reading Room. (Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2013-0711)

- The Public Reading Room is located in the EPA Headquarters, Room Number 3334 in the William Jefferson Clinton West Building, located at 1301 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. Hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. eastern standard time, Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays.

- Visitors are required to show photographic identification, pass through a metal detector, and sign the EPA visitor log. All visitor materials will be processed through an X-ray machine as well. Visitors will be provided a badge that must be visible at all times.