

FACT SHEET

EXTENSION OF START DATE FOR PHOTOCHEMICAL ASSESSMENT MONITORING STATIONS

ACTION

- On December 20, 2019, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized a revision to the start date for the updated Photochemical Assessment Monitoring Stations (PAMS). The PAMS network measures ozone, the pollutants that form it, and meteorology to better understand ozone formation and to evaluate national and local ozone-reduction options.
- On October 1, 2015, in conjunction with establishing the 2015 National Ambient Air Quality standards for ground-level ozone, EPA took final action to streamline and modernize the PAMS network.
- The current regulations require the new PAMS network to be operating by June 1, 2019. This final revision extends the start date to June 1, 2021. This action gives states two additional years to acquire the necessary equipment and expertise needed to successfully make the required measurements at the required PAMS sites.

BACKGROUND

- EPA established requirements for the PAMS program in the early 1990s. As part of the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) review, the Agency made significant revisions to the PAMS requirements.
- The revised PAMS requirements call for ozone precursor measurements to be made at existing multi pollutant monitoring sites (known as NCore sites) in areas with a population of one million or more. These sites are referred to as “required PAMS sites.” The main objectives of the updated PAMS sites is to develop a database of pollutants that form ozone (precursors) and meteorological measurements to support ozone model development and track the trends of important ozone precursor concentrations.
- The updated PAMS requirements also call for each state with nonattainment areas classified as moderate or above for any ozone NAAQS and states in the Ozone Transport Region to develop and implement an Enhanced Monitoring Plan (EMP). The objective of EMPs is to better understand ozone formation in specific areas through enhanced ozone and ozone precursor monitoring activities.
- The updated PAMS requirements significantly reduced the number of required PAMS sites (from 75 to 43) while improving spatial distribution. Of the 43 required PAMS sites, 16 were existing PAMS sites and 27 are new PAMS sites. Many states still need to install new equipment. EPA recognized that some states would have difficulties in purchasing the

higher cost items needed to make PAMS measurements. To assist the states in acquiring the necessary equipment, the EPA is working on a national contract to provide much of the needed equipment for making PAMS measurements.

- Many of the states relying on EPA's assistance in acquiring equipment for the required PAMS sites will not be able to comply with the current compliance deadline as they will not have much of the necessary equipment. Because many states also will be new to making PAMS measurements, and staff will need time to become proficient with the equipment after the equipment has been delivered.
- EPA believed it was appropriate to extend the compliance date until the start of the PAMS season following the delivery of the remaining PAMS equipment. Based on current expectations, the last equipment will be delivered in the summer of 2020. As such, the EPA is proposing to extend the compliance date until the beginning of the PAMS season in 2021.
- On May 31, 2019, EPA proposed to extend the start date to June 1, 2021. Seven comments were received and all supported the extension.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Interested parties can download the rule from EPA's web site on the Internet under Recent Actions at the following address: <http://www.wepa.gov/ttn/oarpg>.
- For further information about the rulemaking, contact Kevin Cavender at EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards at (919) 541-2364 or cavender.kevin@epa.gov.