

Fact Sheet

Proposed Redesignation of Certain Unclassifiable Areas for the 2010 1-Hour Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂) Primary National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS)

Action:

- On August 6, 2020, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed to redesignate as “attainment/unclassifiable” certain areas initially designated “unclassifiable” for the 2010 1-hour sulfur dioxide (SO₂) standard. In 2016, as part of EPA’s Round 2 air quality designations for the 2010 1-Hour SO₂ standard, EPA did not have sufficient information to determine if these areas attained the standard.
- Based on newly available air quality monitoring data for 2017 – 2019 that demonstrates attainment of the standard, EPA is proposing to redesignate to “attainment/unclassifiable” the:
 - unclassifiable portions of Franklin and St. Charles Counties in Missouri;
 - entirety of Lancaster County in Nebraska;
 - entirety of Gallia County and the unclassifiable portion of Meigs County in Ohio; and
 - entirety of Milam County in Texas.
- In response to EPA’s SO₂ Data Requirements Rule (DRR) (80 FR 5102, August 21, 2015), for each area, the state selected the monitoring pathway to evaluate SO₂ air quality. Each state either identified existing SO₂ monitors and/or installed and began operating new monitors in accordance with the DRR. Each area now has at least one monitor with a complete, valid 3-year design value, for the 2017-2019 period, that is attaining the 2010 1-hour SO₂ NAAQS.
- Nebraska, Ohio, and Texas have each submitted redesignation requests for their respective areas, which EPA proposes to approve.
- EPA has not received a formal request to redesignate the Missouri area, so the Agency is concurrently notifying the Governor of its recommendation that the area be redesignated to “attainment/unclassifiable” consistent with the Clean Air Act (section 107(d)(3)(A)) based on the currently available information that demonstrates attainment of the 2010 1-hour SO₂ NAAQS. EPA is aware that Missouri has posted a redesignation request for the Franklin County area for public comment and that the state expects to submit this request to EPA in the coming months.
- EPA will accept public comment on this proposed action for 30-days after it publishes in the *Federal Register*.

Background:

- After EPA sets a new National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) or revises an existing standard, the Clean Air Act requires the agency to designate areas in the United States as "attainment" (meeting), "nonattainment" (not meeting) or "unclassifiable" (insufficient data).
- In June 2010, EPA set a 1-hour average, health-based national air quality standard for SO₂ at 75 parts per billion. The revised standard improves public health protection, especially for children, the elderly and people with asthma. These groups are susceptible to health problems, including narrowing of the airways which can cause difficulty breathing and increased asthma symptoms, associated with breathing SO₂.
- Clean Air Act (CAA) Section 107(d)(3)(A) provides that the Administrator may notify the Governor of any state that the designation of an area should be revised "on the basis of air quality data, planning and control considerations, or any other air quality-related considerations the Administrator deems appropriate."
- The Act further provides (section 107(d)(3)(D)) that even if the Administrator has not notified a Governor that a designation should be revised, the Governor may submit a request to revise the designation of any area, and the Administrator must approve or deny the request.
- Areas that are redesignated to "attainment/unclassifiable" must meet the relevant NAAQS and must not contribute to ambient air quality in a nearby area that does not meet the NAAQS.

How to Comment:

- EPA will accept comment on the proposal for 30 days after publication in the *Federal Register*.
- Comments, identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2020-0292, may be submitted by one of the following methods:
 - Go to <https://www.regulations.gov/> and follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
 - Send comments by email to a-and-r-docket@epa.gov, Attention Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2020-0292.
- Out of an abundance of caution for members of the public and our staff, the EPA Docket Center and Reading Room are closed to the public, with limited exceptions, to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19. Our Docket Center staff will continue to provide remote customer service via email, phone, and webform. We encourage the public to submit comments via <https://www.regulations.gov/> or email, as there may be a delay in processing mail and faxes. Hand deliveries and couriers may be received by scheduled appointment only. For further information on EPA Docket Center services and the current status, please visit us online at <https://www.epa.gov/dockets>.

For More Information:

- Interested parties can download a copy of the proposed rule notice from EPA's Web site at the following address: <https://www.epa.gov/sulfur-dioxide-designations/sulfur-dioxide-designations-regulatory-actions>.
- This proposed action and other background information are also available electronically at <https://www.regulations.gov/>, EPA's electronic public docket and comment system. It can be accessed using Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2020-0292.
- For further technical information about the proposed rule, contact Gobeail McKinley, with EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, at mckinley.gobeail@epa.gov.