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AQMD

SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT ANNOUNCEMENTS

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South Coast AQMD Statement on U.S. EPA's Proposed Disapproval of Plan to Meet Federal Ozone Standard

DIAMOND BAR--Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) released a proposed decision that will ultimately harm the health of the communities they pledge to protect. The action proposes to disapprove part of South Coast AQMD's plan to meet the 1997 federal ozone standard. That plan called for U.S. EPA to use its unique authority to reduce emissions from federal sources. If finalized, today's proposed decision will instead result in harsh penalties including the imposition of steep hurdles for businesses to obtain permits, and the loss of billions of dollars of federal highway funding. However, none of these actions will result in cleaner air unless U.S. EPA finally reduces the emissions that are under their sole control.

More than 80% of the smog-forming emissions in the South Coast region are from mobile sources – the trucks, ships, trains, planes, and equipment that make up the thriving goods movement industry. Meeting national air quality standards is impossible unless these emissions are substantially reduced. South Coast AQMD has the strictest regulations in the nation on stationary sources such as power plants and factories. California and South Coast AQMD have jointly put in place the most innovative regulations in the nation to address mobile source emissions. U.S. EPA has failed to rein in emissions under their control and even worse, has no plans in place to address them. Over 30 years ago U.S. EPA recognized that “massive further reductions are needed for attainment in the South Coast...from national and international sources.” Those reductions have not materialized, and U.S. EPA has let the residents in the South Coast region continue to suffer.

U.S. EPA's action today, while disappointing, is not surprising given its decades of inertia. The decision came after South Coast AQMD sued the agency for waiting two years past the deadline. While the hope was that U.S. EPA would step forward and follow the roadmap provided in South Coast AQMD's plan to reduce emissions from federal sources, they instead

hid behind technicalities in the Clean Air Act and point the finger at California and South Coast AQMD. As U.S. EPA states in its disapproval, “NOX emissions in the South Coast have decreased by 70 percent since 1997, [but] NOX emissions from federal sources have only decreased by 15 percent over that same time period.” And yet, they offer no solution or approach other than to ask South Coast AQMD to do more to reduce emissions from sources that they know are beyond our control.

U.S. EPA’s draft decision is disheartening. South Coast AQMD intends to comment on this new proposal and take all appropriate actions in hopes that this decision does not become final. More importantly, U.S. EPA will need to answer the millions of residents, especially children, who have asthma, lung disease and other illnesses associated with air pollution that continue to suffer. We need to all come together and ask EPA why they will not fulfill their mandate to protect human health and the environment.

South Coast AQMD is the regulatory agency responsible for improving air quality for large areas of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties, including the Coachella Valley. For news, air quality alerts, event updates and more, please visit us at, download our award-winning app, or follow us on [Facebook](#), [X](#) (formerly known as Twitter) and [Instagram](#).

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