

EPA Finalizes Transportation Conformity Rule Restructuring Amendments

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is finalizing changes to the transportation conformity rule to make the rule apply to any future new or revised national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS).

The final rule restructures two sections of the transportation conformity rule so that existing requirements will apply for any new or revised NAAQS. Restructuring these sections will reduce the need to amend the rule in the future merely to reference a specific NAAQS and will provide more certainty to transportation planners without compromising environmental benefits.

This final rule ensures that air quality is protected and clarifies requirements for implementers.

EPA has worked closely with the U.S. Department of Transportation to develop this final rule.

Background

Transportation conformity is a Clean Air Act requirement that ensures that federally supported highway and transit projects are consistent with state air quality implementation plans. Conformity helps protect public health through early consideration of the air quality impacts of transportation decisions in places where air quality does not currently meet federal standards or has not met them in the past.

Key Elements of the Final Rule

- The final rule primarily restructures two sections of the conformity rule, 40 CFR 93.109 and 93.119, so that the existing rule requirements clearly apply to areas designated for future new or revised NAAQS, thus reducing the need to amend the transportation conformity rule merely to reference specific new NAAQS.
- As a result of these changes, the conformity rule will apply to any new NAAQS that EPA establishes in the future.
- This rule also allows PM_{2.5} areas with clean air quality data to take advantage of conformity flexibilities that are currently available only to ozone areas.

Health and Environmental Benefits

The final rule ensures that transportation activities are consistent with air quality goals of the transportation conformity program. The final rule ensures that all nonattainment and maintenance areas use conformity tests that ensure air quality progress continues in areas that need to attain or maintain the NAAQS.

For More Information

You can access documents on transportation conformity on EPA's Office of Transportation and Air Quality Web site at:

www.epa.gov/otaq/stateresources/transconf/index.htm

For further information on this final rule, please contact

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