

## EPA Approves Request from Tennessee to Relax the Federal Summer Gasoline Volatility Standard in Shelby County (Memphis), Tennessee

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing a final rule to relax the federal Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) standard applicable to gasoline sold in Shelby County, Tennessee (the Memphis Area). This action amends EPA's regulation to relax the RVP standard from 7.8 pounds per square inch (psi) to 9.0 psi for gasoline sold during the summer ozone season.

EPA is acting on a request made by the State of Tennessee to relax the RVP standard applicable to gasoline introduced into commerce during the summer fuel season, as described further below. On August 17, 2017, EPA published a notice of proposed rulemaking for today's final rule, and no comments were received. EPA is finalizing the RVP relaxation rulemaking as proposed.

### Key Elements of the Final Rule

- This rulemaking relaxes the volatility requirements for gasoline sold in Shelby County, during the summer ozone season which runs from June 1 to September 15 of each year. Specifically, this final rule amends the federal RVP gasoline standard for Shelby County from 7.8 psi to 9.0 psi provided at 40 CFR 80.27(a)(2).
- In order to relax the applicable federal RVP standard in an area where the more stringent federal RVP of 7.8 psi is required, an area must be designated as (or redesignated to) attainment. In cases like Shelby County, the area must also submit a maintenance plan demonstrating continued attainment of the ozone national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS) with the less stringent RVP standard in place.

- Tennessee previously requested that Shelby County be redesignated to attainment for the 2008 ozone NAAQS. In that request, Tennessee took a conservative approach for the maintenance plan demonstration by modeling 9.0 psi for the RVP requirements as opposed to 7.8 psi. EPA Region 4 previously approved the redesignation request and maintenance plan for the portion of Tennessee that is within the Memphis, Tennessee-Mississippi-Arkansas (Memphis, TN-MS-AR) 2008 ozone nonattainment area on June 23, 2016 (81 FR 40816). Tennessee did not, at that time, request the relaxation of the federal RVP requirements for Shelby County.
- In April 2017, Tennessee requested a relaxation of the federal RVP requirements. This necessitated a demonstration that relaxing the federal RVP requirement would not interfere with maintenance of any NAAQS, including the 2008 and 2015 ozone NAAQS, or any other applicable Clean Air Act (CAA) requirement. Therefore, in a July 7, 2017 rulemaking, EPA Region 4 approved Tennessee's non-interference demonstration for its already approved maintenance plan for the 2008 ozone NAAQS (82 FR 31462).
- Relaxing the volatility requirements for gasoline sold in the Memphis Area could be beneficial because this action could improve the fungibility of gasoline in the area. Once this rule becomes effective, the summertime gasoline sold in the Memphis Area can be identical to the fuel sold in the rest of Tennessee. For motorists, the change in summertime gasoline volatility specifications should be virtually unnoticed.

## Background

In 1987, EPA determined that gasoline nationwide had become increasingly volatile, causing an increase in evaporative emissions from gasoline-powered vehicles and equipment. Evaporative emissions from gasoline, referred to as volatile organic compounds (VOCs), are precursors to the formation of tropospheric ozone and contribute to the nation's ground-level ozone problem. Ground-level ozone causes health problems, including damaged lung tissue, reduced lung function, and lung sensitization to other pollutants.

The most common measure of fuel volatility is RVP. To provide for cleaner air and greater public health protection, EPA enforces maximum limits on the RVP of gasoline sold during the summer ozone season. Specifically, EPA's regulations at 40 CFR 80.27(a)(2) establish maximum RVP standards of 9.0 psi or 7.8 psi depending on the state, the month, and the area's initial designation with respect to the ozone NAAQS.

## For More Information

You can access the rule and related documents on the EPA's Office of Transportation and Air Quality Web site at:

[www.epa.gov/gasoline-standards/relaxation-summer-gasoline-volatility-standard-shelby-county-memphis-tennessee](http://www.epa.gov/gasoline-standards/relaxation-summer-gasoline-volatility-standard-shelby-county-memphis-tennessee)

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