

## Proposed Relaxation of the Federal Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) Gasoline Volatility Standard for the Atlanta RVP Area

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to relax the federal Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) standard applicable to gasoline sold in the 13 Georgia counties of Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Forsyth, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding, and Rockdale (the Atlanta RVP Area). This action proposes to amend EPA's regulations 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.

As part of the request to relax the RVP standard in the Atlanta RVP Area, Georgia requested a revision of the area's maintenance plan for the 2008 ozone NAAQS that included a demonstration that the RVP relaxation would not interfere with maintenance of the applicable national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) in the area or with any other applicable requirement of the Clean Air Act (CAA). EPA Region 4 recently finalized a rulemaking on the state's maintenance plan revision and approved Georgia's noninterference demonstration on April 23, 2019 (84 FR 16786).

### Key Elements of the NPRM

- This rulemaking proposes to relax the volatility requirements for gasoline sold in the Atlanta RVP Area, during the summer ozone season which runs from June 1 to September 15 of each year. Specifically, this NPRM proposes

to amend the federal RVP gasoline standard for the 13 counties in the Atlanta RVP Area from 7.8 psi to 9.0 psi provided at 40 CFR 80.27(a)(2).

- To relax the applicable federal RVP standard in an area where the more stringent federal RVP of 7.8 psi is required, an area should generally be designated as (or redesignated to) attainment for the relevant ozone NAAQS. If the area is covered by a maintenance plan, the area must also submit a section 175A maintenance plan revision demonstrating continued attainment of the relevant ozone NAAQS with the less stringent RVP standard in place. Part of the Atlanta RVP area is designated as a Marginal nonattainment for the 2015 ozone NAAQS. We are proposing to approve the relaxation because Georgia's CAA section 110(l) demonstration has been approved by EPA and it documented that the area would timely attain the 2015 ozone NAAQS by August 2021, the attainment date for Marginal nonattainment areas for the 2015 ozone NAAQS.
- Before EPA could propose approval of Georgia's request to relax the summertime RVP requirement from 7.8 psi to 9.0 psi in the Atlanta RVP Area, the State needed to submit (and EPA needed to approve) a revision to the approved section 175A maintenance plan that included a Clean Air Act (CAA) section 110(l) non-interference demonstration for the area showing that the higher RVP fuel would not interfere with the area's ability to maintain attainment of the 2008 ozone NAAQS, timely attain the 2015 ozone NAAQS or any other applicable CAA requirements.
- On August 15, 2018, Georgia submitted a section 175A maintenance plan revision and CAA section 110(l) non-interference demonstration to EPA. EPA proposed to approve the maintenance plan revision and demonstration on February 12, 2019 (84 FR 3358) and finalized that approval on April 23, 2019 (84 FR 16786) based upon its determination that the proposed change to the federal gasoline RVP regulations for the Atlanta Area is consistent with the applicable provisions of the CAA.
- EPA is proposing to approve an RVP relaxation in an area that is nonattainment for an ozone NAAQS. Georgia's CAA section 110(l) demonstration addressed the 2015 ozone NAAQS. The State showed that the area would attain the 2015 ozone NAAQS by August 2021 and provided new measures to control emissions to offset the change in VOC emissions. These aspects of Georgia SIP submission were addressed in Region 4's approval.
- Relaxing the volatility requirements for gasoline sold in the Atlanta RVP Area is anticipated to be beneficial because this action would improve the fungibility of gasoline in Georgia. If this proposed rulemaking becomes final and effective, the gasoline sold in the Atlanta RVP Area can be identical to the fuel now sold in the rest of Georgia. For motorists, the change in summertime gasoline volatility specifications would 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 which runs from June 1 to September 15 of each year. 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 ozone designation with respect to the ozone NAAQS.

To relax the applicable federal RVP standard in an area where the more stringent federal RVP of 7.8 psi is required, an area should be designated as (or redesignated to) attainment. If the redesignated area is still covered by a Clean Air Act (CAA) section 175A maintenance plan, then it must also submit a revised maintenance plan demonstrating continued attainment of the ozone NAAQS with the less stringent RVP standard in place. EPA also believes it appropriate to approve an RVP relaxation in an area that is nonattainment for an ozone NAAQS if the state demonstrates that the area would timely attain the ozone NAAQS and provides any new necessary measures to control emissions to offset the change in VOC emissions.

The 13 counties covered by the proposed rule (the Atlanta RVP Area) were part of a 15-county area that was redesignated to attainment for the 2008 ozone NAAQS on June 2, 2017 (82 FR 25523). Seven counties of the Atlanta RVP Area have been designated nonattainment for the more stringent 2015 ozone NAAQS on June 4, 2018 (83 FR 25776). When the ozone nonattainment area was redesignated to attainment for the 2008 ozone NAAQS, the State assumed 7.8 RVP summertime fuel as part of its maintenance plan. For EPA to act on Georgia's subsequent request to relax the summertime RVP requirement from 7.8 psi to 9.0 psi, the State needed to revise the approved CAA section 175A maintenance plan and submit a section 110(l) noninterference demonstration for the 2008 ozone maintenance area showing that the higher RVP fuel would not interfere with the area's ability to maintain attainment of the standard or any other applicable CAA requirements. Georgia was also required to address the 2015 ozone NAAQS in the section 110(l) noninterference demonstration to demonstrate that the higher RVP fuel would not interfere with the area's ability to timely attain the standard or any other applicable CAA requirements.

## For More Information

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

[www.epa.gov/gasoline-standards/gasoline-reid-vapor-pressure](http://www.epa.gov/gasoline-standards/gasoline-reid-vapor-pressure)

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