

Implementation of the New Source Review (NSR) Program for Particulate Matter Less Than 2.5 Micrometers (PM_{2.5}): Amendment to the Definition “Regulated NSR Pollutant” Concerning Condensable Particulate Matter

Fact Sheet

Action

- On March 12, 2012, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed to amend its rules for the Clean Air Act New Source Review (NSR) permitting program regarding the definition of “regulated NSR pollutant.” This proposal would clarify when condensable particulate matter should be measured for purposes of NSR permitting.
- Condensable particulate matter is not directly measured as a solid or liquid at the stack. Instead gaseous emissions such as sulfuric acid mist, ammonium sulfate, and certain metal vapors condense upon cooling and dilution in the ambient air to form solid or liquid particles following discharge from the stack.
- This proposed rule would continue to require condensable particulate matter to be included as part of the emissions measurements for regulation of PM_{2.5} and particulate matter less than 10 micrometers in diameter (PM₁₀).
- When an industrial facility applies for a New Source Review permit to construct or modify an emissions source, it must show that it does not interfere with an area’s ability to meet or maintain the national air quality standards. EPA has established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀. Condensable particulate matter emissions contribute to monitored levels of PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀. The impact of those emissions on monitored air quality levels of PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ must be considered as part of a source’s permit.
- This proposed action would remove the inadvertent requirement in the 2008 PM_{2.5} NSR Implementation Rule, that measurements of condensable particulate matter emissions be included as part of the measurement and regulation of “particulate matter emissions.”
- The terminology “particulate matter emissions” includes particles that are significantly larger than either PM_{2.5} or PM₁₀, and is used primarily to measure compliance with the EPA’s existing New Source Performance Standards for particulate matter. The amount of “particulate matter emissions” that a source has the potential to emit is not intended to be used for determining whether an area can attain or maintain either of the existing standards for particle pollution.

Background

- Congress established the NSR program as part of the 1977 Clean Air Act (CAA) Amendments and modified it in the 1990 CAA Amendments. NSR is a preconstruction permitting program that serves two important purposes:
 1. First, it ensures the maintenance of air quality standards when major sources of emissions such as factories, industrial boilers, and power plants are modified or begin operation. In areas that do not meet the national air quality standards, NSR assures that new emissions do not slow progress toward cleaner air. In areas that meet the standards, especially pristine areas like national parks, NSR assures that new emissions fall within air quality standards.
 2. Second, it limits the amount that air quality can degrade in areas that meet the EPA's national air quality standards ("attainment areas"). In these areas, the NSR programs PSD provisions protect clean air through a system of "increments." An increment is the maximum amount air concentrations of certain pollutants may increase above the baseline concentration in an area. In no case can the allowable increase result in a violation of the NAAQS.

How to Comment:

- EPA will accept comment on this proposal for 60 days following publication in the Federal Register.
- Comments should be identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2003-0062 and submitted by one of the following methods:
 - o Federal eRulemaking Portal (<http://www.regulations.gov>), email (a-and-r-docket@epa.gov),
 - o Mail (EPA Docket Center, Environmental Protection Agency, Mail code 6102T, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20460), or
 - o Hand delivery (EPA Docket Center, Environmental Protection Agency, Room 3334,
 - o 1301 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C.).

Additional Information

- Interested parties can download this proposed rule from the EPA's NSR web site at: www.epa.gov/nsr.
- The support documents are also available electronically through the EPA's Air and Radiation Docket and Information Center (Docket Number Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2003-0062, at www.regulations.gov. Alternatively, you can request material from our Air and Radiation Docket and Information Center by calling (202) 566-

1742, or by fax request to (202) 566-1742 (a reasonable fee may be charged for copying).

- For more information, call Mr. Dan deRoeck at 919-541-5593 or email at deroeck.dan@epa.gov.