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Office of Mobile Sources

Regulatory Announcement

St. Louis, Missouri, Added to the Federal Reformulated Gasoline Program

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to include the St. Louis, Missouri, ozone nonattainment area in the federal reformulated gasoline (RFG) program. This rulemaking will require retail stations to sell federal RFG in the St. Louis area by June 1, 1999.

Background

The Clean Air Act requires EPA to establish standards for RFG to be used in specified ozone nonattainment areas. The Act also provides that ozone nonattainment areas classified as marginal, moderate, serious, or severe may be included in the RFG program upon application of the governor of the state in which the area is located. EPA is required to establish an implementation date for the area to be included in the program within a year of the governor's request.

St. Louis, Missouri, is currently classified as a moderate ozone nonattainment area. The St. Louis area continues to exceed the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone, and faces the possibility of being "bumped up" to a serious classification. In order to address these concerns and identify the best possible options for addressing the area's air quality problems, the state consulted both industry and environmental representatives. The state identified several options and ultimately decided to support the use of federal RFG. On July 13, 1998, EPA received a letter from Governor Carnahan of Missouri officially requesting that the St. Louis area be included in the federal reformulated gasoline program.

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Health and Environmental Benefits

RFG protects health and the environment by reducing harmful vehicle emissions of ozone-forming compounds and air toxics. RFG produces 15 to 17 percent less pollution than conventional gasoline. Therefore, there will be less smog-forming ground-level ozone to damage sensitive lung tissue and make it harder for the lungs to function. Ozone exposure is especially dangerous to children, the elderly, and people with lung diseases like asthma, bronchitis, and emphysema.

Air toxics from tailpipe emissions or gasoline vapors also can be harmful. Some of the toxic compounds in gasoline (e.g., benzene) and compounds created when gasoline is burned in the engine are known or believed to cause cancer. RFG is produced with smaller amounts of benzene than in previous gasolines, so there is less to get into the air around us.

This proposed rule would expand the federal program to include the St. Louis ozone nonattainment area and thereby provide these benefits to the citizens of St. Louis. These benefits are an important part of the area's air quality plan and provide needed additional emission reductions to help the area reach attainment of the ozone NAAQS.

Effect on Industry

Refiners, importers, and oxygenate blenders who produce or import RFG for use in the St. Louis ozone nonattainment area as a result of this rule would be subject to the RFG requirements. The RFG regulations impose requirements such as sampling and testing, registration, record keeping, reporting, product transfer documentation, and compliance surveys.

For More Information

Additional documents on the RFG program are available electronically from the EPA Internet server at:

http://www.epa.gov/oms/rfg.htm

For further information on this rulemaking, please contact Karen Smith at:

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