

## EPA Proposes to Approve Request from Louisiana to Relax the Federal Summer Gasoline Volatility Standard in Baton Rouge

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 five Louisiana parishes of East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Livingston, Ascension, and Iberville (the Baton Rouge 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 Baton Rouge area, Louisiana 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 Baton Rouge area or with any other applicable requirement of the Clean Air Act (CAA). EPA Region 6 recently finalized a concurrent rulemaking on the state's maintenance plan revision. EPA may finalize the RVP relaxation rulemaking after considering any comments received during the public comment period for the current proposal.

### Key Elements of the NPRM

- This rulemaking proposes to relax the volatility requirements for gasoline sold in the Baton Rouge 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 five parishes in the Baton Rouge area from 7.8 psi to 9.0 psi provided at 40 CFR 80.27(a)(2).

- This proposed rulemaking is in response to an April 10, 2017 request from Louisiana to relax the federal summertime gasoline volatility requirements for 16 parishes, including the five parishes covered by this proposed action. EPA approved Louisiana's request to relax summertime gasoline volatility requirements for the other 11 parishes in a separate rulemaking on December 26, 2017 (82 FR 60886).
- Louisiana submitted a CAA section 175A maintenance plan revision with a section 110(1) non-interference demonstration to EPA on January 30, 2018. EPA proposed the approval of the State's submission on April 13, 2018 (83 FR 16017) and finalized that approval on May 25, 2018 (83 FR 24226). The maintenance plan revision rulemaking concluded that the relaxation of the federal RVP gasoline requirement would not interfere with continued maintenance of the 2008 ozone NAAQS or any other applicable NAAQS, including the 2015 ozone NAAQS. Now that the maintenance plan revision and non-interference demonstration have been approved EPA is proceeding with proposing approval of relaxing the RVP standard in the Baton Rouge area.
- Relaxing the volatility requirements for gasoline sold in the five Louisiana parishes could be beneficial because this action would improve the fungibility of gasoline in the Baton Rouge area meaning that if this proposed rulemaking becomes final and effective, the gasoline sold in the five parishes can be identical to the fuel now sold in the parishes surrounding Baton Rouge as well as in the rest of Louisiana. 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 National Ambient Air Quality Standard (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 must be designated as (or redesignated to) attainment. If the redesignated area is still covered by a Clean Air Act (CAA) section 175A maintenance plan requirement, then it must also submit a revised maintenance plan demonstrating continued attainment of the ozone NAAQS with the less stringent RVP standard in place.

The five parishes covered by the proposed rule were redesignated to attainment for the 2008 ozone NAAQS on December 27, 2016 (81 FR 95051) and have been designated attainment/unclassifiable for the 2015 ozone NAAQS. When the Baton Rouge 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 Louisiana'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) non-interference demonstration for the Baton Rouge 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.

## For More Information

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

[www.epa.gov/otaq/fuels/gasolinefuels/volatility/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/otaq/fuels/gasolinefuels/volatility/index.htm)

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