

WASHINGTON DC OZONE PLANNING PROCESS (2021-2023)

The Washington DC metropolitan area is currently designated as a marginal nonattainment area for the 2015 ozone NAAQS. As of the end of the 2020 ozone season the area remains out of compliance with the standard and cannot come into attainment by the statutory deadline for marginal areas of August 3, 2021. As a result, the Air Directors of the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia collectively developed and upon consultation with the respective transportation departments have agreed to the following ozone planning process to proactively support the continued improvement of air quality in the Washington region. The main elements of the agreement and plan are as follows:

1. On or about May 1 the three jurisdictions will submit a letter for a voluntary nonattainment area classification bump-up request to EPA. The letter will request that EPA only approve the voluntary bump-up if the data shows the area remains in nonattainment at the end of the 2021 ozone season based on preliminary data. The individual states and/or MWAQC may also issue press releases once this determination is made that the area remains in nonattainment.
2. This will begin the process to develop an attainment SIP for the DC area to be submitted to EPA by early 2023. The schedule for the process is currently being developed by MWAQC TAC.
3. In the September/October timeframe, the states and MWAQC will review the 2021 ozone season air quality data to determine if the area has attained the standard. At that point the states and MWAQC will move forward with the attainment plan if we do not attain, or transition to a redesignation/maintenance plan path if the data supports this.
4. During the same planning timeframe, the Virginia DEQ with the support of the District, Maryland, and MWAQC staff will develop a redesignation request and maintenance plan for the DC area for the 1-hour ozone standard that is needed to move forward with Virginia's NNSR certification requirements for the 2015 ozone standard.
5. The addition of buffers to the mobile source budgets under the attainment or maintenance plan scenarios will be provided, as available and as allowed, for each scenario.
6. The pending MWAQC work plan and budget will be used to formalize this agreement which will be approved by all the parties involved through the MWAQC process.