



**MEMORANDUM**

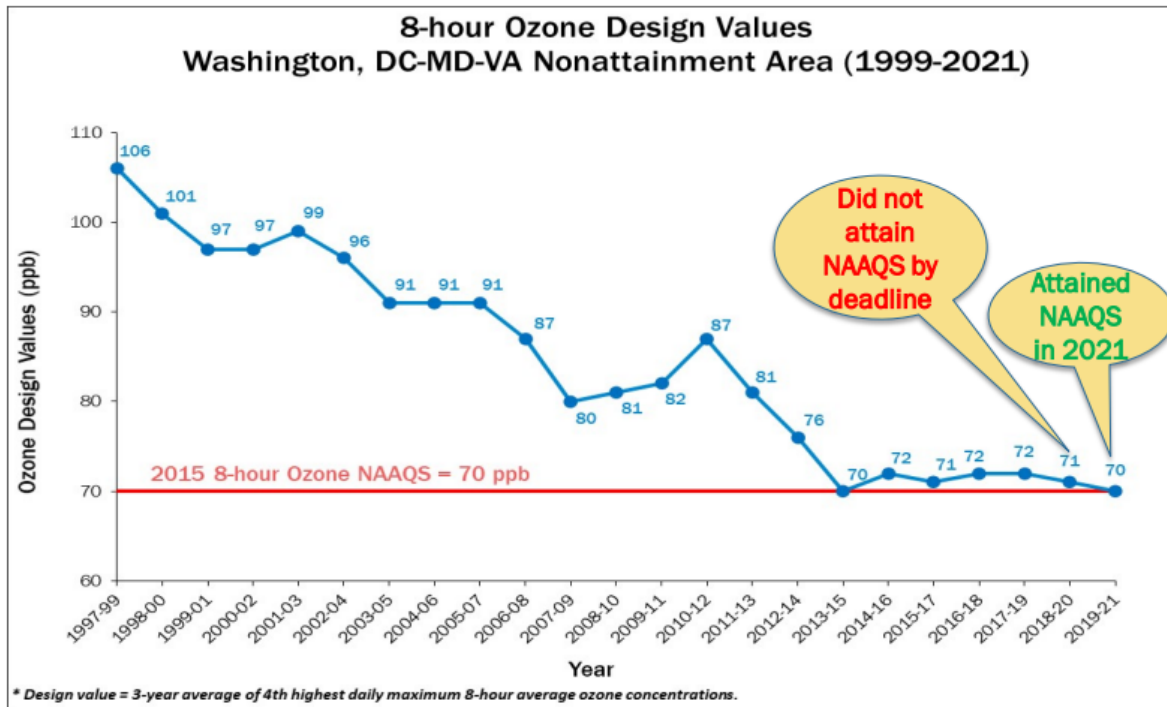
**TO:** National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board  
**FROM:** Jane Posey, TPB Transportation Engineer  
**SUBJECT:** 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards Clean Data Determination  
**DATE:** February 9, 2023

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has just certified that the region’s air quality meets the current 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS or Standard) for ozone.

**BACKGROUND**

On October 1, 2015, the EPA strengthened the NAAQS for ground-level ozone to 70 parts per billion (ppb). Effective August 3, 2018, the EPA designated the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., (DC-MD-VA) region as being in “marginal” non-attainment for the 2015 Ozone Standard. Marginal non-attainment areas had three years from the date of designation to achieve the 2015 Ozone Standard. Accordingly, the DC-MD-VA area had an attainment year of 2021 (i.e., three years following the August 3, 2018 designation). Because the August 2021 attainment date falls in the middle of the region’s ozone season (March 1<sup>st</sup> - October 31<sup>st</sup>), the region had to achieve the standard by the end of the 2020 ozone season. The region did not achieve the 2015 Ozone Standard by the deadline, but it did achieve the 2015 Ozone Standard by the end of the 2021 ozone season, as noted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Observed/Monitored Ozone Levels in the Washington, DC-MD-VA Nonattainment Area



## CLEAN DATA DETERMINATION

For a nonattainment area to be officially redesignated as being in attainment of a federal air quality standard, there are several steps that must be followed. The first of these is to have the EPA certify that the area's observed/monitored data shows that the pollutant levels meet the standard. The state air agencies for the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia submitted the ozone monitor data and on February 1, 2023, the EPA published a proposed clean data determination,<sup>1</sup> certifying that the region has achieved the 2015 Ozone NAAQS. This means that the region will proceed with a "redesignation request," which is the next step, requesting that the region be officially designated as being in attainment of the 2015 Ozone NAAQS, and will develop a maintenance state implementation plan (SIP), showing how the region will continue to be in attainment of the standard into the future. TPB staff will work with the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee's Technical Advisory Committee (MWAQC-TAC) to develop the redesignation request and maintenance plan over the next couple of years.

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<sup>1</sup> "Clean Data Determination; District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia; Washington, DC-MD-VA Nonattainment Area for the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard Clean Data Determination," 88 Fed. Reg., pp. 6688-6691 (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, February 1, 2023), <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2023-02-01/pdf/2023-01973.pdf>.