

applicable CAA provisions, either by request of each state, by operation of law, or by EPA initiative. For the State of California, the current area designations and classifications are codified at 40 CFR 81.305. For historical reference, this regulatory section also includes designations for TSP, a NAAQS which was replaced in 1987 when we promulgated the PM-10 NAAQS.

#### *B. California's Request for Area Changes*

Under CAA section 107(d)(3)(D), the Governor of any state, on the Governor's own motion, is authorized to submit to the Administrator a revised designation of any nonattainment area or portions thereof within the State.<sup>1</sup> On November 18, 2002, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) submitted to EPA a request under CAA section 107(d)(3)(D) to revise the boundaries of the Los-Angeles-South Coast Air Basin Area ("South Coast Air Basin") and the Southeast Desert Air Basin.<sup>2</sup> The purposes of CARB's request are to:

(1) Enlarge the South Coast Air Basin to include the Banning Pass area, thereby excluding the area from the Southeast Desert;

(2) harmonize the PM-10 and ozone boundaries of the Coachella Valley area<sup>3</sup> by changing the ozone area boundaries to match the PM-10 area boundaries; and

(3) correct the eastern boundary of the South Coast Air Basin with respect to CO.

## **II. EPA Review of the State's Request**

### *A. Applicable Criteria*

In determining whether to approve or deny a state's request for a revision to the designation of an area under section 107(d)(3)(D), we use the same factors Congress directed us to consider when we initiate a revision to a designation of an area on our own motion under section 107(d)(3)(A). These factors

include "air quality data, planning and control considerations, or any other air quality-related considerations the Administrator deems appropriate."

#### *B. Expansion of the South Coast Air Basin to Include the Banning Pass*

The Banning Pass area in Riverside County is also known as the San Geronio Pass area. The area is a mountain saddle about 15 miles long by 5 miles wide in northwestern Riverside County. There are only 4 communities in this area: Banning, Beaumont, Cabazon, and Cherry Valley. This area is currently part of the Southeast Desert severe-17 ozone nonattainment area and the Coachella Valley serious PM-10 nonattainment area, and the area has been designated as attainment or unclassifiable with respect to CO, NO<sub>2</sub>, SO<sub>2</sub>, and TSP.<sup>4</sup> The populated portion of the Southeast Desert-Coachella Valley area is primarily low desert. Palm Springs is the largest community, and tourism and agriculture are the major industries in the Coachella Valley.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) has local jurisdiction over the South Coast Air Basin, the Banning Pass area, and the Coachella Valley portion of the Southeast Desert. Both CARB and SCAQMD conclude that the Banning Pass area is more similar to the South Coast Air Basin in climate and topography and measured air quality, and that air pollution levels within the Banning Pass area are far more heavily influenced by emissions originating in the South Coast Air Basin than in the Southeast Desert-Coachella Valley.

The climate of the Banning Pass area closely resembles the "steppe" (semi-arid) climate of the South Coast Air Basin in terms of rainfall and temperature. Precipitation levels recorded in the Banning Pass are much higher than those of the Coachella

Valley, which has a "desert" (arid) climate classification. For example, the annual average rainfall is 17 inches in Beaumont, and only 5.2 inches in Palm Springs. On average, summer temperatures in the Coachella Valley are 10–15 degrees F warmer than those recorded at the Banning Pass and in the central South Coast Air Basin. The mean temperature in Palm Springs for July is 92 degrees F, compared to 77 degrees F in Beaumont.

Pollution from western and central portions of the South Coast Air Basin is typically transported eastward by prevailing ocean breezes. This results in high ozone concentrations measured in mountain sites at the eastern boundary of the basin, including Banning (elevation 2300 feet), which recorded a total of 25 exceedances with a design value of 0.143 parts per million (ppm) during the period 1999 to 2001. During this same period, Palm Springs (elevation 200 feet) recorded only 7 exceedances, with a design value of 0.128 ppm. Similarly, the Banning Pass is much more closely linked to the South Coast Air Basin than to the Southeast Desert with respect to emissions and ambient concentrations for the other pollutants, such as NO<sub>2</sub> and SO<sub>2</sub>.

In terms of ozone generation, the South Coast Air Basin has far greater emissions than the Southeast Desert generally and the Coachella Valley specifically, and the easterly direction of the prevailing winds also ensures that elevated pollution levels in Banning Pass are a consequence of the air mass shared with the western and central portions of the South Coast Air Basin, and are not associated with the Coachella Valley or other portions of the Southeast Desert.

For these reasons, the Banning Pass area was moved to the South Coast Air Basin under State law in 1996. CARB and SCAQMD therefore request that the Federal boundaries be adjusted to match the boundaries used for State air quality purposes, by moving the Banning Pass area from the Southeast Desert-Coachella Valley area to the South Coast Air Basin.

The table below labeled "Banning Pass Area" shows the current federal designations and classifications of this area, and the changes that would result from approval of the State's proposed revision.

<sup>1</sup> Boundary changes are an inherent part of a designation or redesignation of an area under the CAA. See CAA section 107(d)(1)(B)(ii).

<sup>2</sup> The Los Angeles-South Coast Air Basin Area includes all of Orange County and the more populated portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties. The Southeast Desert Air Basin includes portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties. For a description of the current boundaries of the basins and subareas, see 40 CFR 81.305.

<sup>3</sup> The Coachella Valley area is part of the Southeast Desert nonattainment area for ozone and is its own PM-10 nonattainment area.

<sup>4</sup> CAA sections 181(a)(1) and (2) establish an ozone classification scheme based on 1-hour ozone design values, and set attainment deadlines for each classification. CAA section 182 then provides progressively more stringent requirements for the State Implementation Plans (SIPs) depending upon an area's classification. The 1-hour ozone classifications are marginal, moderate, serious, severe, and extreme, and the severe classification is divided into those areas with attainment deadlines 15 years after enactment of the 1990 CAA Amendments and those areas with deadlines 17 years after enactment. Similarly, the CAA sets moderate and serious classifications for CO (in section 186(a)(1)) and for PM-10 (in sections 188(a) and (b)).