

wilderness areas. The national visibility goal is to remedy existing impairment and prevent future impairment in these Class I areas, consistent with the requirements of sections 169A and 169B of the CAA.

Regional haze is a type of visibility impairment caused by air pollutants emitted by numerous sources across a broad region. The EPA uses the term regional haze to distinguish this type of visibility problem from those which are more local in nature. In 1999, EPA issued a regional haze rule requiring States to develop implementation plans that will make "reasonable progress" toward the national visibility goal (64 FR 35714, July 1, 1999). The first State plans for regional haze are due between 2003 and 2008. The regional haze rule provisions appear at 40 CFR 51.308 and 40 CFR 51.309.

B. What Are the Special Provisions for Western States and Eligible Indian Tribes in 40 CFR 51.309 of the Regional Haze Rule?

The regional haze rule at 40 CFR 51.308 sets forth the requirements for State implementation plans (SIPs) under the regional haze program. The rule requires State plans to include visibility progress goals for each Class I area, as well as emissions reductions strategies and other measures needed to meet these goals. The rule also provides an optional approach, described in 40 CFR 51.309, that may be followed by the nine western States (Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming) that comprise the transport region analyzed by the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission (GCVTC) during the 1990's. This optional approach is also available to eligible Indian Tribes within this geographic region. The regulatory provisions at 40 CFR 51.309 are based on the final report issued by the GCVTC in 1996,¹ which included a number of recommended emissions reductions strategies designed to improve visibility in the 16 Class I areas on the Colorado Plateau.

In developing the regional haze rule, EPA received a number of comments on the proposed rule encouraging the Agency to recognize explicitly the work of the GCVTC. In addition, in June 1998, Governor Leavitt of Utah provided comments to EPA on behalf of the Western Governors Association (WGA), further emphasizing the commitment of western States to implementing the GCVTC recommendations. The WGA's comments also suggested the translation

of the GCVTC's recommendations into specific regulatory language. The EPA issued a Notice of Availability during the fall of 1998 requesting further comment on the WGA's proposal and a draft set of regulatory language based upon the WGA's recommendations. Based on the comments received on this **Federal Register** action, EPA developed the provisions set forth in 40 CFR 51.309 that allow the nine Transport Region States and eligible tribes within that geographic area to implement many of the GCVTC recommendations within the framework of the national regional haze rule.

The provisions in 40 CFR 51.309 comprise a comprehensive long-term strategy for addressing sources that contribute to visibility impairment within this geographic region. The strategy addresses the time period between the year 2003, when the implementation plans are due,² and the year 2018. The provisions address emissions from stationary sources, mobile sources, and area sources such as emissions from fires and windblown dust.

II. Changes to the Mobile Source Provisions of Section 309

A. Why Are We Changing the Mobile Source Provisions of 40 CFR 51.309?

1. What Is the Basis for the Old Provisions?

The GCVTC determined that mobile source emissions need to be an essential part of a strategy to reduce haze on the Colorado Plateau. Therefore, one element of the GCVTC's strategy, as reflected in 40 CFR 51.309(d)(5), was to address mobile sources emissions. Section 309 also requires States to establish a mobile source emissions budget for each area that significantly contributes to visibility impairment in any of the 16 Class I areas covered by this section of the regulations. At the time the GCVTC made its recommendations (in 1996), mobile source emissions were projected to be lowest in 2005, and to subsequently rise over the course of the first regional haze planning period (*i.e.*, until 2018). Accordingly, section 309 required mobile source emissions budgets to be set using the lowest projected level as a planning objective and performance indicator for each area.

2. What Is the Basis for the New Provisions?

Since the GCVTC made its recommendations, new developments have caused mobile source emissions projections to change significantly. Over the past few years, we have promulgated a series of new emissions standards for several different engine types, as well as new standards for diesel fuel content.³ As a result of these new standards, the WRAP, using EPA's latest models,⁴ now projects a significant decline in mobile source emissions throughout the region during the 2003–2018 time period covered by the section 309 plans, particularly from on-road mobile sources. Rather than emissions being lowest in 2005, and subsequently rising, mobile source emissions for all pollutants except sulfur dioxide (SO₂) are expected to decline continuously over the course of the first regional haze planning period.

The projected trends for mobile source emissions of SO₂ differ from those of other pollutants. Emissions reductions from pollutants such as nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and particulate matter (PM) are dependent on technological changes to the onroad fleet and to nonroad engines which are implemented gradually. In contrast, SO₂ emissions reductions are immediately realized when the sulfur content of the fuel changes, because emissions from both new and existing engines immediately drop sharply. We have already published stringent fuel sulfur limits for onroad engines and have proposed stringent fuel sulfur limits for nonroad engines.⁵ These Federal fuel sulfur regulations, fully implemented, would together result in a substantial reduction in SO₂ emissions over the 2003–2018 planning period.

B. What Are the Specific Changes to the Mobile Source Provisions of 40 CFR 51.309?

These revisions would change 40 CFR 51.309(d)(5)(i) to eliminate the requirement for setting mobile source emissions budgets using the lowest projected level as a planning objective and performance indicator for each area. Instead, the new 40 CFR 51.309(d)(5)(i) would substitute, as the new planning objective and performance indicator, a

³ See 62 FR 25355, (May 8, 1997); 63 FR 18978, (April 16, 1998); 63 FR 56968, (October 23, 1998); 64 FR 73300, (December 29, 1999); 65 FR 59895, (October 6, 2000); 66 FR 5001, (January 18, 2001); 67 FR 68241, (November 8, 2002); and 68 FR 9745, (February 28, 2003).

⁴ MOBILE6 and MOBILE6.2 for on-highway vehicles and the NON-ROAD model for nonroad vehicles.

⁵ See 68 FR 28327, (May 23, 2003).

¹ *Recommendations for Improving Western Vistas*. GCVTC, June 10, 1996.

² Indian tribes are given the flexibility under EPA regulations to submit implementation plans and opt into the program after the 2003 deadline.