

Memorandum

To: Council Members

cc: Dan Huff, Patrick Hanlon

From: Jenni Lansing - Environmental Health

Date: October 28, 2015

Subject: Health Department Response to EPA National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ground-Level Ozone

On October 1, 2015, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) strengthened the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ground-level ozone from 75 part per billion (ppb) to 70 ppb. This revision was based on extensive scientific evidence about ozone's effects on public health and welfare. In short, the standard does not change The City of Minneapolis' approach to air quality. It does mean that regulation will play a less significant role in obtaining further emission reductions.

Based on data from 2012-2014, the Twin Cities' ozone levels monitored by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for attainment have remained below 70 ppb. Prior to the final determination, the EPA's Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC) proposed a revised range of 65 - 70 ppb, although they took comments on levels as low as 60 ppb based on health effects. Human clinical studies have shown negative effects in healthy adults at 60 ppb and the Minneapolis Health Department remains concerned about ground-level ozone levels at this 60 ppb, well below the new standard.

The updated standards will improve public health protection nationally, particularly for at-risk groups including children, older adults, people of all ages who have lung diseases such as asthma, and people who are active outdoors, especially outdoor workers. They also will improve the health of trees, plants, and ecosystems.

While we are not at risk for nonattainment under the new standard (assuming conditions remain the same), the Minneapolis Health Department continues to work to reduce ground-level ozone. Our goal is to protect human health at lower levels based on the CASAC recommendations and regardless of the NAAQS requirements. Through our nationally leading clean fleet, the Clean Energy Partnership, the Climate Action Plan, Clean Air Minnesota, the Green Business Cost Sharing Program, and research projects such as the Air Quality Study: A Neighborhood Approach, the City as a whole is working to reduce ground-level ozone and improve air quality for residents and visitors to Minneapolis.

Please feel free to contact me with additional questions.

Sincerely,

Jenni Lansing