

**Environmental Protection Agency**

**§ 51.853**

*Regionally significant action* means a Federal action for which the direct and indirect emissions of any pollutant represent 10 percent or more of a nonattainment or maintenance area's emissions inventory for that pollutant.

*Total of direct and indirect emissions* means the sum of direct and indirect emissions increases and decreases caused by the Federal action; i.e., the "net" emissions considering all direct and indirect emissions. The portion of emissions which are exempt or presumed to conform under § 51.853, (c), (d), (e), or (f) are not included in the "total of direct and indirect emissions." The "total of direct and indirect emissions" includes emissions of criteria pollutants and emissions of precursors of criteria pollutants.

(3) For PM<sub>2.5</sub>:

(i) Sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) in all PM<sub>2.5</sub> nonattainment and maintenance areas,

(ii) Nitrogen oxides in all PM<sub>2.5</sub> nonattainment and maintenance areas unless both the State and EPA determine that it is not a significant precursor, and

(iii) Volatile organic compounds (VOC) and ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) only in PM<sub>2.5</sub> nonattainment or maintenance areas where either the State or EPA determines that they are significant precursors.

[58 FR 63247, Nov. 30, 1993, as amended at 71 FR 17008, Apr. 5, 2006; 71 FR 40426, July 17, 2006]

EDITORIAL NOTE: At 71 FR 40426, July 17, 2006, § 51.852 was amended by removing the "and" at the end of paragraph (1) and adding a period in its place. However, because of inaccurate amendatory language, the amendment could not be incorporated.

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 75 FR 17272, Apr. 5, 2010, § 51.852 was removed and reserved, effective July 6, 2010.

**§ 51.853 Applicability.**

(a) Conformity determinations for Federal actions related to transportation plans, programs, and projects developed, funded, or approved under title 23 U.S.C. or the Federal Transit Act (49 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*) must meet the procedures and criteria of 40 CFR part 51, subpart T, in lieu of the procedures set forth in this subpart.

(b) For Federal actions not covered by paragraph (a) of this section, a con-

formity determination is required for each criteria pollutant or precursor where the total of direct and indirect emissions of the criteria pollutant or precursor in a nonattainment or maintenance area caused by a Federal action would equal or exceed any of the rates in paragraphs (b)(1) or (2) of this section.

(1) For purposes of paragraph (b) of this section, the following rates apply in nonattainment areas (NAA's):

	Tons/year
Ozone (VOC's or NO <sub>x</sub> ):	
Serious NAA's .....	50
Severe NAA's .....	25
Extreme NAA's .....	10
Other ozone NAA's outside an ozone transport region .....	100
Other ozone NAA's inside an ozone transport region:	
VOC .....	50
NO <sub>x</sub> .....	100
Carbon monoxide: All NAA's .....	100
SO <sub>2</sub> or NO <sub>2</sub> : All NAA's .....	100
PM-10:	
Moderate NAA's .....	100
Serious NAA's .....	70
PM <sub>2.5</sub> :	
Direct emissions .....	100
SO <sub>2</sub> .....	100
NO <sub>x</sub> (unless determined not to be a significant precursor) .....	100
VOC or ammonia (if determined to be significant precursors) .....	100
Pb: All NAA's .....	25

(2) For purposes of paragraph (b) of this section, the following rates apply in maintenance areas:

	Tons/year
Ozone (NO <sub>x</sub> , SO <sub>2</sub> or NO <sub>2</sub> ):	
All Maintenance Areas .....	100
Ozone (VOC's):	
Maintenance areas inside an ozone transport region .....	50
Maintenance areas outside an ozone transport region .....	100
Carbon monoxide: All Maintenance Areas .....	100
PM-10: All Maintenance Areas .....	100
PM <sub>2.5</sub> :	
Direct emissions .....	100
SO <sub>2</sub> .....	100
NO <sub>x</sub> (unless determined not to be a significant precursor) .....	100
VOC or ammonia (if determined to be significant precursors) .....	100
Pb: All Maintenance Areas .....	25

(c) The requirements of this subpart shall not apply to:

(1) Actions where the total of direct and indirect emissions are below the emissions levels specified in paragraph (b) of this section.

(2) The following actions which would result in no emissions increase or an increase in emissions that is clearly de minimis:

(i) Judicial and legislative proceedings.

(ii) Continuing and recurring activities such as permit renewals where activities conducted will be similar in scope and operation to activities currently being conducted.

(iii) Rulemaking and policy development and issuance.

(iv) Routine maintenance and repair activities, including repair and maintenance of administrative sites, roads, trails, and facilities.

(v) Civil and criminal enforcement activities, such as investigations, audits, inspections, examinations, prosecutions, and the training of law enforcement personnel.

(vi) Administrative actions such as personnel actions, organizational changes, debt management or collection, cash management, internal agency audits, program budget proposals, and matters relating to the administration and collection of taxes, duties and fees.

(vii) The routine, recurring transportation of materiel and personnel.

(viii) Routine movement of mobile assets, such as ships and aircraft, in home port reassignments and stations (when no new support facilities or personnel are required) to perform as operational groups and/or for repair or overhaul.

(ix) Maintenance dredging and debris disposal where no new depths are required, applicable permits are secured, and disposal will be at an approved disposal site.

(x) Actions, such as the following, with respect to existing structures, properties, facilities and lands where future activities conducted will be similar in scope and operation to activities currently being conducted at the existing structures, properties, facilities, and lands; for example, relocation of personnel, disposition of federally-owned existing structures, properties, facilities, and lands, rent subsidies, operation and maintenance cost subsidies, the exercise of receivership or conservatorship authority, assist-

ance in purchasing structures, and the production of coins and currency.

(xi) The granting of leases, licenses such as for exports and trade, permits, and easements where activities conducted will be similar in scope and operation to activities currently being conducted.

(xii) Planning, studies, and provision of technical assistance.

(xiii) Routine operation of facilities, mobile assets and equipment.

(xiv) Transfers of ownership, interests, and titles in land, facilities, and real and personal properties, regardless of the form or method of the transfer.

(xv) The designation of empowerment zones, enterprise communities, or viticultural areas.

(xvi) Actions by any of the Federal banking agencies or the Federal Reserve Banks, including actions regarding charters, applications, notices, licenses, the supervision or examination of depository institutions or depository institution holding companies, access to the discount window, or the provision of financial services to banking organizations or to any department, agency or instrumentality of the United States.

(xvii) Actions by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System or any Federal Reserve Bank to effect monetary or exchange rate policy.

(xviii) Actions that implement a foreign affairs function of the United States.

(xix) Actions (or portions thereof) associated with transfers of land, facilities, title, and real properties through an enforceable contract or lease agreement where the delivery of the deed is required to occur promptly after a specific, reasonable condition is met, such as promptly after the land is certified as meeting the requirements of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), and where the Federal agency does not retain continuing authority to control emissions associated with the lands, facilities, title, or real properties.

(xx) Transfers of real property, including land, facilities, and related personal property from a Federal entity to another Federal entity and assignments of real property, including land,

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facilities, and related personal property from a Federal entity to another Federal entity for subsequent deeding to eligible applicants.

(xxi) Actions by the Department of the Treasury to effect fiscal policy and to exercise the borrowing authority of the United States.

(3) The following actions where the emissions are not reasonably foreseeable:

(i) Initial Outer Continental Shelf lease sales which are made on a broad scale and are followed by exploration and development plans on a project level.

(ii) Electric power marketing activities that involve the acquisition, sale and transmission of electric energy.

(4) Actions which implement a decision to conduct or carry out a conforming program such as prescribed burning actions which are consistent with a conforming land management plan.

(d) Notwithstanding the other requirements of this subpart, a conformity determination is not required for the following Federal actions (or portion thereof):

(1) The portion of an action that includes major new or modified stationary sources that require a permit under the new source review (NSR) program (section 173 of the Act) or the prevention of significant deterioration (PSD) program (title I, part C of the Act).

(2) Actions in response to emergencies or natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, etc., which are commenced on the order of hours or days after the emergency or disaster and, if applicable, which meet the requirements of paragraph (e) of this section.

(3) Research, investigations, studies, demonstrations, or training (other than those exempted under paragraph (c)(2) of this section), where no environmental detriment is incurred and/or, the particular action furthers air quality research, as determined by the State agency primarily responsible for the applicable SIP.

(4) Alteration and additions of existing structures as specifically required by new or existing applicable environmental legislation or environmental

regulations (e.g., hush houses for aircraft engines and scrubbers for air emissions).

(5) Direct emissions from remedial and removal actions carried out under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) and associated regulations to the extent such emissions either comply with the substantive requirements of the PSD/NSR permitting program or are exempted from other environmental regulation under the provisions of CERCLA and applicable regulations issued under CERCLA.

(e) Federal actions which are part of a continuing response to an emergency or disaster under paragraph (d)(2) of this section and which are to be taken more than 6 months after the commencement of the response to the emergency or disaster under paragraph (d)(2) of this section are exempt from the requirements of this subpart only if:

(1) The Federal agency taking the actions makes a written determination that, for a specified period not to exceed an additional 6 months, it is impractical to prepare the conformity analyses which would otherwise be required and the actions cannot be delayed due to overriding concerns for public health and welfare, national security interests and foreign policy commitments; or

(2) For actions which are to be taken after those actions covered by paragraph (e)(1) of this section, the Federal agency makes a new determination as provided in paragraph (e)(1) of this section.

(f) Notwithstanding other requirements of this subpart, actions specified by individual Federal agencies that have met the criteria set forth in either paragraph (g)(1) or (g)(2) of this section and the procedures set forth in paragraph (h) of this section are presumed to conform, except as provided in paragraph (j) of this section.

(g) The Federal agency must meet the criteria for establishing activities that are presumed to conform by fulfilling the requirements set forth in either paragraph (g)(1) or (g)(2) of this section:

(1) The Federal agency must clearly demonstrate using methods consistent

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with this subpart that the total of direct and indirect emissions from the type of activities which would be presumed to conform would not:

- (i) Cause or contribute to any new violation of any standard in any area;
- (ii) Interfere with provisions in the applicable SIP for maintenance of any standard;
- (iii) Increase the frequency or severity of any existing violation of any standard in any area; or
- (iv) Delay timely attainment of any standard or any required interim emission reductions or other milestones in any area including, where applicable, emission levels specified in the applicable SIP for purposes of:

(A) A demonstration of reasonable further progress;

(B) A demonstration of attainment; or

(C) A maintenance plan; or

(2) The Federal agency must provide documentation that the total of direct and indirect emissions from such future actions would be below the emission rates for a conformity determination that are established in paragraph (b) of this section, based, for example, on similar actions taken over recent years.

(h) In addition to meeting the criteria for establishing exemptions set forth in paragraphs (g)(1) or (g)(2) of this section, the following procedures must also be complied with to presume that activities will conform:

(1) The Federal agency must identify through publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER its list of proposed activities that are presumed to conform and the basis for the presumptions;

(2) The Federal agency must notify the appropriate EPA Regional Office(s), State and local air quality agencies and, where applicable, the agency designated under section 174 of the Act and the MPO and provide at least 30 days for the public to comment on the list of proposed activities presumed to conform;

(3) The Federal agency must document its response to all the comments received and make the comments, response, and final list of activities available to the public upon request; and

(4) The Federal agency must publish the final list of such activities in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(i) Notwithstanding the other requirements of this subpart, when the total of direct and indirect emissions of any pollutant from a Federal action does not equal or exceed the rates specified in paragraph (b) of this section, but represents 10 percent or more of a nonattainment or maintenance area's total emissions of that pollutant, the action is defined as a regionally significant action and the requirements of § 51.850 and §§ 51.855 through 51.860 shall apply for the Federal action.

(j) Where an action otherwise presumed to conform under paragraph (f) of this section is a regionally significant action or does not in fact meet one of the criteria in paragraph (g)(1) of this section, that action shall not be presumed to conform and the requirements of § 51.850 and §§ 51.855 through 51.860 shall apply for the Federal action.

(k) The provisions of this subpart shall apply in all nonattainment and maintenance areas.

[58 FR 63247, Nov. 30, 1993, as amended at 71 FR 17008, Apr. 5, 2006; 71 FR 40426, July 17, 2006]

EFFECTIVE DATE NOTE: At 75 FR 17272, Apr. 5, 2010, § 51.853 was removed and reserved, effective July 6, 2010.

**§ 51.854 Conformity analysis.**

Any Federal department, agency, or instrumentality of the Federal Government taking an action subject to this subpart must make its own conformity determination consistent with the requirements of this subpart. In making its conformity determination, a Federal agency must consider comments from any interested parties. Where multiple Federal agencies have jurisdiction for various aspects of a project, a Federal agency may choose to adopt the analysis of another Federal agency or develop its own analysis in order to make its conformity determination.

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