

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation



18 AAC 50 AIR QUALITY CONTROL

Response to Comments on October 15, 2015 Proposed
Regulations Changes and State Air Quality Plan Amendments

December 17, 2015

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B. Introduction

This document provides the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) response to public comments received regarding its October 15, 2015 draft 18 AAC 50 regulation changes and State Air Quality Plan (SIP) amendments. The details describing the proposed regulation changes and SIP amendments are presented in DEC's public notice dated October 15, 2015.

DEC received one comment via email. The comment was submitted by EPA and did not include any references to fiscal impacts on private persons.

For each section of the proposed regulations changes and SIP amendments, this document summarizes the comments received and provides DEC's response and decisions.

C. Opportunities for Public Comment

The public notice dated October 15, 2015 provided information on the opportunities for the public to submit comments. The deadline to submit comments was December 3, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. This provided a 50 day period for the public to review the proposal and submit comments.

Opportunities to submit written comments included:

- Submitting electronic comments using the Air Quality Division's online comment form,
- Submitting electronic comments via email,
- Submitting written comments via facsimile, and
- Submitting written comments via mail.

Opportunities to submit oral comments included:

Two simultaneous public hearings in Anchorage and Fairbanks were tentatively scheduled for November 17, 2015 from 12:00 to 1:30 p.m. The hearings would have provided the opportunity for the public to submit oral comments. The public notice included details for how to request the public hearings be held. The deadline to request a hearing was November 12, 2015. No requests were received by the deadline and the hearings were cancelled. DEC distributed notice of the cancellation online and via email to interested persons.

D. Comments and Responses by Section

DEC did not receive comments related to the following sections of the proposal:

1. 18 AAC 50.010 – Ambient Air Quality Standards

Update the annual PM_{2.5} National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS).

2. 18 AAC 50.030 – State Air Quality Control Plan

Adopt revisions to the State Air Quality Control Plan in:

Volume II Section III: Areawide Pollutant Control Program:

Adopt new Section III.L: Interstate Transport of Pollution;

Volume II Section III.K: Areawide Pollutant Control Program for Regional Haze:

Amend Section III.K.8: Long-Term Strategy, and

Amend Section III.K.10: 308 Future Plan Revisions;

Volume III Appendix to Vol. II Section III.K: Areawide Pollutant Control Program for Regional Haze:

Amend Appendix III.K.8: Alaska Enhanced Smoke Management Plan; and

Volume III Appendix to Vol. II Section II: State Air Quality Control Program:

Amend Clean Air Act Section 110 Infrastructure Certification Documentation.

Note: Comments were received related to the 2015 Regional Haze Progress Report, (Volume III Appendix to Vol. II Section III.K: Areawide Pollutant Control Program Regional Haze: Appendix III.K.10: 2015 Regional Haze Progress Report), see 9

3. 18 AAC 50.065(e) – Open Burning

Add a reference to an existing regulation.

4. 18 AAC 50.076 - Registration of Commercial Wood Sellers

Account for wood sellers that use mechanical or kiln drying methods and exempt portions of registered wood seller sales from moisture content measurement and disclosure requirements.

5. 18 AAC 50.715 - Interagency Consultation Procedures

Add a federal reference.

6. 18 AAC 50.720 - Public Involvement

Clarify charges imposed for inspection and copying of information related to a transportation conformity determination.

7. 18 AAC 50.735 - Frequency of Transportation Conformity Determinations

Repeal.

8. 18 AAC 50.990 - Definitions

Modify the definition of “woodstove.”

DEC did receive comments related to the 2015 Regional Haze Progress Report. EPA submitted comments via email. A summary and DEC's responses to individual comments follow. There were no comments related to fiscal impacts.

9. Regional Haze Progress Report

18 AAC 50.030 – State Air Quality Control Plan

Vol. III Appendix to Vol. II Section III.K: Areawide Pollutant Control Program for Regional Haze:
Amend Appendix III.K.10: 2015 Regional Haze Progress Report

a. Section A - Introduction

EPA Comment: The publication date of EPA's final approval of Regional Haze SIP in the Federal Register should be changed from January 7, 2013 to February 14, 2013.

DEC Response: The date reflecting the final approval from the EPA has been changed from January 7 to February 14th.

EPA Comment: The Federal Register reference of final EPA approval of Regional Haze SIP should be changed from 79 FR 11707 to 78 FR 10546.

DEC Response: The citation for the final approval from the EPA has been changed to reflect the correct document.

b. Section A.1 – State Implementation Plan Requirements for the 5-year Progress Report

EPA Comment: EPA's April 12, 2013 "General Principles for the 5-Year Regional Haze Progress Reports" has an eighth criteria. ADEC's submittal contains this, but it is not included in the list of items here.

DEC Response: The final requirement for a SIP progress report, Determination of Adequacy, has been added to this list.

c. Section A.2 – Alaska Class I Areas

EPA Comment: Although discussed later, it would be helpful here to add a footnote explaining that there is no Improve Monitor for the Bering Sea Class I area because of its remote location and that Trapper Creek is an additional monitor for the Denali Class I area.

DEC Response: This information has been included in new footnotes to Exhibit 1.

d. Section B – Progress Towards Reasonable Progress Goals

EPA Comment: This section could be more clear. We suggest revising this section so that it includes a brief description of which Class I areas improved in visibility and which area deteriorated over each period of time relative to the baseline. This discussion should refer to data shown in Exhibit 2.

DEC Response: Clarification was added to this section and a reference to Exhibit 2 was added to show changes in visibility over the various reporting periods.

EPA Comment: We recommend that these sentences be revised to reflect that 2009 was only a poor visibility year for Denali and Trapper Creek. Denali was dominated by wildfire smoke that year, and TC by smoke and ammonium sulfate. Neither of the other two areas had unusually high visibility impairment for 2009.

DEC Response: Edits were added to clarify the impacts of wildfire smoke on the 2009 monitoring data.

e. Section C.1 – Progress Report Requirements

EPA Comment: As stated above, EPA's April 12, 2013 "General Principles for the 5-Year Regional Haze Progress Reports" has an eighth criteria here--Determination of Adequacy. ADEC's submittal contains this, but it is not included in the list of items here. It may avoid questions of missing elements by adding the additional element here.

DEC Response: A description of the requirements for Determination of Adequacy was added as to reflect its addition to the list of requirements in section A.1.a.

f. Section C.2.d – Regional Haze BART Control

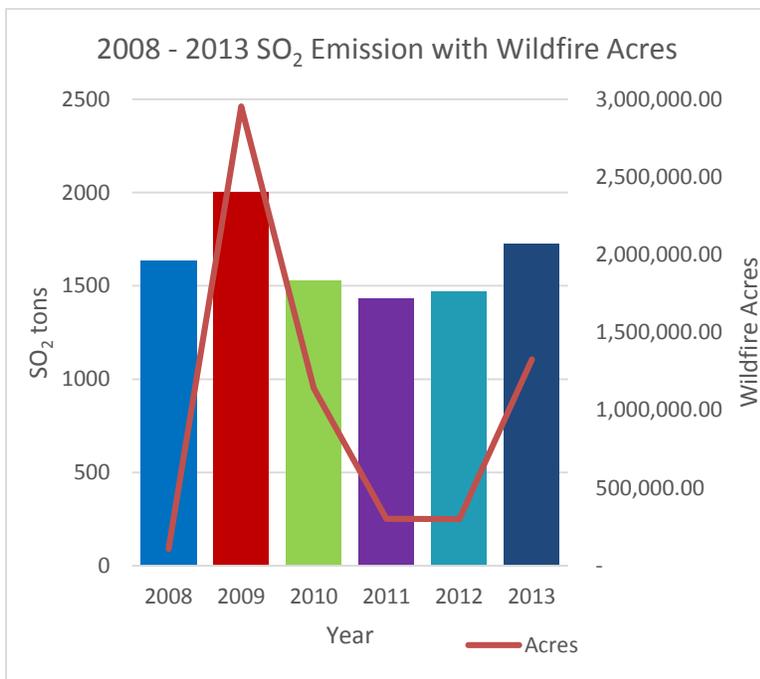
EPA Comment: This should be revised to reflect that it has already occurred and also that it occurred outside of the most recent 5-year period considered in this review.

DEC Response: Unit 2 was brought online on May 28, 2015. It first ran on coal on August 4, 2015. GVEA anticipates commercial operation by 2016.

g. Section C.2.k – Anticipated Net Effect on Visibility over the Long-Term Strategy Period

EPA Comment: This statement should be revised to be more consistent with Exhibit 3, showing NO_x emissions decreasing but PM₁₀ increasing and SO₂ increasing or holding steady. Also, explain how this statement is consistent with Exhibit 16 which shows increased contributions of ammonium sulfate to all Class I areas for 2005-2009.

DEC Response: Exhibit 3 shows that between the 2008 and 2013 time period the NO_x emission have fluctuated downwards, PM₁₀ levels fluctuated in response to wildfire activity and SO₂ levels have slightly decreased. As shown in the accompanying graph, SO₂ levels can fluctuate in response to wildfire which may have caused some of the 2009 spike seen in the monitoring data in Exhibit 16. On average, between 2008 and 2013 SO₂ levels are decreasing by 35.5 tons per year and NO_x by 846.69 tons per year.



As calculated from Exhibit 24 and 25, anthropogenic emissions had decreased by almost 50% in 2008 (197,204 tons) compared to the 2002 emissions (389,891 tons).

Exhibit 16 shows a decrease of deciviews at every Class I area with the exception of Denali. It is expected that additional years of monitoring will show a continued decrease of deciviews from the high 2005-2009 monitoring period.

h. Section C.3.a – Anthropogenic Emissions

EPA Comment: Exhibit 3 – Type A Source Emissions for SO₂, NO₂, and PM₁₀ from 2008-2013 doesn't explain what a "Type A Source" is.

DEC Response: Type A source means large point sources with a potential to emit greater than or equal to any of the thresholds listed in Table 1 of Appendix A under 40 CFR 51.30 subpart A.

i. Section C.4.a – Current Visibility Conditions for the Most and Least Impaired Days

EPA Comment: Exhibit 9 shows a high amount of SO₂ in 2009, is there an explanation for this?

DEC Response: As shown, 2009 was a large wildfire season which may have influenced the monitored value.

EPA Comment: Exhibit 15 is labeled "First Progress Period (2005-2009)" but the text below refer to the current progress period. Is Exhibit 15 mislabeled?

DEC Response: Exhibit 15 was labeled correctly as confirmed by Exhibit 2. The section has been corrected to show the correct period.

j. Section C.7 – Assessment of Current SIP Strategy

EPA Comment: Explain that 2009 would be removed because of the high amount of smoke from wildfires, which are natural events.

DEC Response: Clarification was added.

EPA Comment: It would be better to qualify this statement by saying "probable impacts", since no analysis of international emissions is provided in this report.

DEC Response: Clarification was added.

k. Section D – Determination of Adequacy

EPA Comment This statement should be qualified to explain that a trend in improvement is shown on the 20% worst days at Tuxedni, Trapper Creek, and Simeonof areas only, but that Denali does not show an improvement over baseline conditions.

DEC Response: While the visibility impairment remains above the baseline calculation, the periods represented in the progress period show the trend is still towards improved visibility. The fluctuation at DENA1 is described in B.1.a and is addressed in the above comment related to that section.