

# NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

## REQUEST TO RECLASSIFY COACHELLA VALLEY FOR THE 2008 8-HOUR OZONE STANDARD AND THE UPDATED MOTOR VEHICLE EMISSIONS BUDGETS

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that a public hearing on the matter of the Request to Reclassify Coachella Valley for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard and the Updated Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets will be held on **Friday, November 4, 2022** in the Dr. William A. Burke Auditorium at South Coast AQMD Headquarters, 21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765, at 9:00 a.m., at which time evidence will be taken and all interested persons will be heard by the South Coast AQMD Board. The meeting will be conducted through a hybrid format of in-person and/or virtual attendance via videoconferencing and by telephone with opportunities for public comment. Given the health and safety concerns regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19), auditorium seating availability may be limited and the meeting format may be changed to full remote via webcast. Please refer to South Coast AQMD's website for information regarding the format of the Public Hearing, updates if the meeting is changed to a full remote via webcast format, and details on how to participate: <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/news-events/meeting-agendas-minutes>.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that the South Coast AQMD will consider the approval of Request to Reclassify Coachella Valley for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard and the Updated Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets (MVEB) and submitting it to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for their approval and inclusion into the State Implementation Plan (SIP).

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that the Coachella Valley, defined as the desert portion of the Riverside County in the Salton Sea Air Basin and under the jurisdiction of the South Coast AQMD, is currently classified as a severe-15 nonattainment area for the 2008 ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) with an attainment by July 20, 2027.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that transportation conformity is required by the federal Clean Air Act (CAA) to ensure that regional transportation plans, programs, and projects are consistent with or conform to a SIP for meeting the NAAQS.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that under the transportation conformity regulation, Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) transportation plans such as Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP) are required to demonstrate that the emissions from the proposed plan/program do not exceed the MVEB, which is the portion of the total allowable emissions allocated to highway and transit vehicles and is defined in the SIP.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that the MVEB for the 2008 8-hour ozone standard was established in the 2016 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP or Plan) and revised in the 2018 SIP Update, which were approved by USEPA with an effective date of October 16, 2020.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that when conducting conformity determinations for transportation plan amendments or new projects, SCAG is required to calculate emissions using the latest USPEA approved motor vehicle emissions model, which was EMFAC2014 at the time of the Plan development.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that EMFAC2017, the latest USEPA approved motor vehicle emissions model, generates emissions higher than the approved MVEBs for the same vehicle activities due to updated emission factors reflecting new and improved laboratory and in-use testing data. Consequently, the new modeled vehicular emissions exceed those in the approved MVEBs in the Coachella Valley and are no longer consistent with the SIP, leading to a situation called ‘conformity lockdown.’

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that under a conformity lockdown, no new transportation projects can move forward, except those in the currently conforming RTP/FTIP and exempt projects. According to SCAG, \$26 billion worth of projects are impacted by the conformity lockdown.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that South Coast AQMD seeks a voluntary reclassification from severe-15 to extreme nonattainment for the 2008 ozone standard, which provides an opportunity to update the MVEB, thereby resolving the conformity lockdown.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that the reclassification would also extend the attainment date for Coachella Valley from July 20, 2027 to as expeditiously as practicable, but no later than July 20, 2032.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that Coachella Valley is already in extreme nonattainment for the 1997 8-hour ozone standard and extreme area planning requirements are already in place. Therefore, no additional adverse impact is expected from this reclassification.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that South Coast AQMD developed SIP elements required to update the MVEB which are a baseline emissions inventory, Reasonable Further Progress (RFP) demonstration and the revised MVEB. South Coast AQMD seeks to submit the SIP elements to USEPA via CARB concurrently with the reclassification request. The remaining SIP elements will be developed by late 2023 or early 2024.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that the Request to Reclassify Coachella Valley for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard and the Updated MVEB includes:

- Ozone air quality trends in Coachella Valley;
- A request to reclassify Coachella Valley from severe-15 to extreme nonattainment for the 2008 8-hour ozone standard;
- Baseline emissions inventories for the RFP base year (2011), interim milestone years (2017, 2020, 2023, 2026 and 2029) and the attainment year (2031);
- An RFP demonstration; and
- An updated MVEB.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that upon the South Coast AQMD’s Governing Board approval, the voluntary request to reclassify Coachella Valley from severe-15 to extreme nonattainment for the 2008 8-hour ozone standard and the SIP elements will be submitted to USEPA via CARB for USEPA’s approval and for the inclusion in the SIP. The SIP elements under consideration are the baseline emissions inventory, RFP demonstration and updated MVEB for the extreme nonattainment area.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Sections 15002(k) and 15061, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15308. Further, there is no substantial evidence indicating that any of the exceptions in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply to the proposed project. A Notice of Exemption will be prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15062 and if the proposed project is approved, the Notice of Exemption will be filed for posting with the State Clearinghouse of the Governor’s Office of

Planning and Research and with the county clerks of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that at the conclusion of the public hearing, the South Coast AQMD Board may make other modifications to the Request to Reclassify Coachella Valley for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard and the Updated MVEB, which are justified by the evidence presented, or may decline to adopt some or all of the proposed item.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that the South Coast AQMD staff has prepared the documents, for consideration by the South Coast AQMD Board, including:

- Board Letter;
- Draft Staff Report for Request to Reclassify Coachella Valley for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard and the Updated MVEB; and

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that the above documents, when available, may be obtained from the 2022 AQMP website at: [http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/clean-air-plans/air-quality-mgt-plan/other-state-implementation-plan-\(sip\)-revisions](http://www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/clean-air-plans/air-quality-mgt-plan/other-state-implementation-plan-(sip)-revisions), by calling the Public Information Center at (909) 396-2001, or from Derrick Alatorre - Deputy Executive Officer / Public Advisor, South Coast AQMD, 21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765, (909) 396-2432, [PublicAdvisor@aqmd.gov](mailto:PublicAdvisor@aqmd.gov).

Questions, comments, or requests for the Request to Reclassify Coachella Valley for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard and the Updated Motor Vehicle Emissions Budgets can be directed to: Sang-Mi Lee, Ph.D., Planning and Rules Manager, via email [AQMPteam@aqmd.gov](mailto:AQMPteam@aqmd.gov), (909) 396-3169. CEQA inquiries can be directed to: Farzaneh Khalaj, [fkhalaj@aqmd.gov](mailto:fkhalaj@aqmd.gov), (909) 396-3022. Comments and inquiries can also be submitted to the attention of the above person(s) to Planning, Rule Development, and Implementation, South Coast AQMD, 21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765.

Interested persons may provide oral or written statements at the Public Hearing. Ten (10) copies of all written materials must be submitted to the Clerk of the Boards. Individuals who wish to submit written or electronic comments must submit such comments to the Clerk of the Boards, 21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA, 91765-4178, (909) 396-2500, or to [cob@aqmd.gov](mailto:cob@aqmd.gov), on or before 5:00 p.m. Tuesday, November 1, 2022.

#### **Americans with Disabilities Act and Language Accessibility**

Disability and language-related accommodations can be requested to allow participation in the Public Hearing. The meeting materials will be made available, upon request, in appropriate alternative formats to assist persons with a disability (Gov. Code Section 54954.2(a)). In addition, other documents may be requested in alternative formats and languages. Any disability or language-related accommodation must be requested as soon as practicable. Requests will be accommodated unless providing the accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration or undue burden to the South Coast AQMD. Requests can be sent to the Clerk of the Boards, South Coast AQMD, 21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA, 91765-4178, at (909) 396-2432 (for TTY, 909-396-3560) or send the request to [cob@aqmd.gov](mailto:cob@aqmd.gov).

DATED: September 28, 2022

FAYE THOMAS  
Clerk of the Boards