

Proposed Air Quality Plan for Tacoma-Pierce County Area

Ecology proposes a revision to an air quality plan called a State Implementation Plan (SIP). The part of the plan being revised is for the Tacoma-Pierce County area to be reclassified to attainment (meeting federal air quality standards) for fine particles. The proposed revision also includes a 10-year plan to keep air quality healthy.

In 2006, EPA strengthened the daily fine particle standard to protect public health and the environment. The greater Tacoma area and surrounding Pierce County communities violated the standard and were designated nonattainment (not meeting air quality standards) in 2009. Since then, Ecology and Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) have been working to reduce fine particle pollution, focusing mainly on wood smoke. The area now has fewer days with unhealthy air quality and has met the fine particle standard since 2011.

What is in the plan revision?

This SIP revision includes:

- air monitoring to make sure that the area continues to meet the air quality standard, and implement an alternate plan if an air quality violation occurs;
- data proving that the area meets federal clean air requirements to be reclassified to maintenance for the 2006 daily fine particle standard;
- 10-year plan to maintain the fine particle air quality standard;
- inventory of air emissions in 2011, 2017, and 2026 for fine particles and pollution that leads to fine particles;
- limits on motor vehicle emissions (cars and trucks) to make sure that the area continues to meet the air quality standard;
- summary of strategies to reduce fine particles as well as existing permanent and enforceable rules that provide Ecology and PSCAA authority to control fine particle pollution;
- work showing how everyone (regardless of race, color, national origin, or income) was included in the environmental decision-making process.

Where do fine particles come from?

Fine particle pollution in the Tacoma-Pierce County area comes mainly from smoke due to burning in wood stoves and fireplaces. It is worse during the winter months when more households are burning wood for heat. In addition, stagnant air traps the smoke from these fires close to the ground and cause air pollution to build up rapidly.

Public Comment Period

August 27 – October 3, 2014

Public Hearing

September 30, 2014 at 6 p.m.
Tacoma Public Library
Main Branch—Olympic Room
1102 Tacoma Avenue South

Documents available at:

http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/sips/designations/pm_tacoma.htm

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For special accommodations or documents in an alternate format, call (360) 407-6800, 711 (relay service), or 877-833-6341 (TTY).

Other, smaller sources of fine particle pollution include:

- exhaust from cars and trucks,
- dust,
- large industries, and
- other non-road engines, equipment, and vehicles, such as construction equipment, buses, ships, and trains.

What are the health effects of fine particle pollution?

Fine particles are microscopic bits of soot, dust, or ash that are a fraction of the size of a single human hair. Fine particles are easily inhaled into our lungs. Their tiny size allows them to travel deep into the lungs and circulatory system. As a result, fine particles have both short- and long-term health effects. Exposure to fine particle pollution is linked to decreased heart and lung function, respiratory disease, asthma attacks, heart attacks, strokes, and premature death. Fine particle pollution affects everyone, but is the most harmful to children, older adults, and people with respiratory and cardiac diseases.

Ecology wants your comments!

You may review and comments on the proposed SIP revision and related documents through **October 3, 2014**. The public comment period is an opportunity to have your ideas and comments heard by Ecology. A public hearing is being held on **September 30, 2014**. This will be a chance to learn about the proposed plan revision, and to offer your comments or concerns. The box on page one provides details about where the documents can be found and details about the public hearing.

To comment on the plan:

- email AQComments@ecy.wa.gov
- mail: Joanna Ekrem
Ecology Air Quality Program
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600
- testify or submit written comments at the public hearing

How will Ecology respond to comments?

Ecology will prepare a document which responds to the questions and comments submitted. This will be sent to everyone who commented. It will also be available at the locations listed in the box on page one. Based on public comment, Ecology may modify the proposed plan.

