

for payment, the representative of the State or Tribal Organization must submit to VA an invoice reporting the cost for purchase and delivery of outer burial receptacles.

(h) *Audits.* A State or Tribal Organization that seeks reimbursement for the cost of outer burial receptacles under this section will be subject to inspections, audits and reports in accordance with § 39.122.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 2306(e))

PART 39—AID FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT, EXPANSION, AND IMPROVEMENT, OR OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE, OF VETERANS CEMETERIES

■ 3. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 38 U.S.C. 101, 501, 2408, 2411, 3765.

■ 4. Amend § 39.50 as follows:

- a. Remove “preplaced liners or crypts,” from paragraph (b)(2); and
- b. Add paragraph (e);

The addition reads as follows:

§ 39.50 Amount of grant.

* * * * *

(e) VA will reimburse the cost of preplaced outer burial receptacles separately in accordance with § 38.629.

* * * * *

■ 5. Amend § 39.122 by revising paragraph (a) to read as follows:

§ 39.122 Inspections, audits, and reports.

(a) A State or Tribal Organization will allow VA inspectors and auditors to conduct inspections as necessary to ensure compliance with the provisions of this part and with provisions of § 38.629 regarding outer burial receptacles. The State or Tribal Organization will provide to VA evidence that it has met its responsibilities under the Single Audit Act of 1984.

* * * * *

[FR Doc. 2024–02183 Filed 2–5–24; 8:45 am]

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

40 CFR Part 52

[EPA–R03–OAR–2023–0629; FRL–11261–01–R3]

Air Plan Approval; Virginia; 1997 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard Second Maintenance Plan for the Fredericksburg Area

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing to approve a state implementation plan (SIP) revision submitted by the Commonwealth of Virginia. This revision pertains to the Commonwealth’s plan, submitted by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VADEQ), for maintaining the 1997 8-hour ozone national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) (referred to as the “1997 ozone NAAQS”) in the Fredericksburg, Virginia Area (Fredericksburg Area). This action is being taken under the Clean Air Act (CAA).

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before March 7, 2024.

ADDRESSES: Submit your comments, identified by Docket ID No. EPA–R03–OAR–2023–0629 at www.regulations.gov, or via email to Gordon.Mike@epa.gov. For comments submitted at Regulations.gov, follow the online instructions for submitting comments. Once submitted, comments cannot be edited or removed from Regulations.gov. For either manner of submission, EPA may publish any comment received to its public docket. Do not submit electronically any information you consider to be confidential business information (CBI) or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Multimedia submissions (audio, video, etc.) must be accompanied by a written comment. The written comment is considered the official comment and should include discussion of all points you wish to make. EPA will generally not consider comments or comment contents located outside of the primary submission (*i.e.*, on the web, cloud, or other file sharing system). For additional submission methods, please contact the person identified in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section. For the full EPA public comment policy, information about CBI or multimedia submissions, and general guidance on making effective comments, please visit www.epa.gov/dockets/commenting-epa-dockets.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Serena Nichols, Planning & Implementation Branch (3AD30), Air & Radiation Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III, 1600 John F Kennedy Boulevard, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103. The telephone number is (215) 814–2053. Ms. Nichols can also be reached via electronic mail at Nichols.Serena@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On May 25, 2023, the VADEQ submitted a revision to the Virginia SIP to

incorporate a plan for maintaining the 1997 ozone NAAQS in the Fredericksburg Area through January 23, 2026,¹ in accordance with CAA section 175A.

I. Background

In 1979, under section 109 of the CAA, EPA established primary and secondary NAAQS for ozone at 0.12 parts per million (ppm), averaged over a 1-hour period. 44 FR 8202 (February 8, 1979). On July 18, 1997 (62 FR 38856),² EPA revised the primary and secondary NAAQS for ozone to set the acceptable level of ozone in the ambient air at 0.08 ppm, averaged over an 8-hour period. EPA set the 1997 ozone NAAQS based on scientific evidence demonstrating that ozone causes adverse health effects at lower concentrations and over longer periods of time than was understood when the pre-existing 1-hour ozone NAAQS was set.

Following promulgation of a new or revised NAAQS, EPA is required by the CAA to designate areas throughout the nation as attaining or not attaining the NAAQS. On April 30, 2004 (69 FR 23858), EPA designated the Fredericksburg Area as nonattainment for the 1997 ozone NAAQS. The Fredericksburg Area consists of the city of Fredericksburg, and the counties of Spotsylvania and Stafford.

Once a nonattainment area has three years of complete and certified air quality data that has been determined to attain the NAAQS, and the area has met the other criteria outlined in CAA section 107(d)(3)(E),³ the state can submit a request to EPA to redesignate the area to attainment. Areas that have

¹ The state submission indicates that the twenty-year maintenance period expires on December 31, 2025. This discrepancy is likely due to EPA’s December 23, 2005 redesignation and initial approval of the maintenance plan, in which it mistakenly listed the publication date as the effective date. 70 FR 76165. EPA subsequently corrected the effective date, found in 40 CFR part 81, to January 23, 2006. 72 FR 68515 (December 5, 2007). Thus, the expiration date of the twenty-year maintenance period is January 23, 2026.

² In March 2008, EPA completed another review of the primary and secondary ozone standards and tightened them further by lowering the level for both to 0.075 ppm. 73 FR 16436 (March 27, 2008). Additionally, in October 2015, EPA completed a review of the primary and secondary ozone standards and tightened them by lowering the level for both to 0.70 ppm. 80 FR 65292 (October 26, 2015).

³ The requirements of CAA section 107(d)(3)(E) include attainment of the NAAQS, full approval under section 110(k) of the applicable SIP, determination that improvement in air quality is a result of permanent and enforceable reductions in emissions, demonstration that the state has met all applicable section 110 and part D requirements, and a fully approved maintenance plan under CAA section 175A.

been redesignated by EPA from nonattainment to attainment are referred to as “maintenance areas.” One of the criteria for redesignation is to have an approved maintenance plan under CAA section 175A. The maintenance plan must demonstrate that the area will continue to maintain the standard for the period extending 10 years after redesignation, and it must contain such additional measures as necessary to ensure maintenance as well as contingency measures as necessary to assure that violations of the standard will be promptly corrected.

On December 23rd, 2005 (70 FR 76165),⁴ EPA approved a redesignation request (and maintenance plan) from VADEQ for the Fredericksburg Area for the 1997 ozone NAAQS. In accordance with section 175A(b), at the end of the eighth year after the effective date of the redesignation, the state must also submit a second maintenance plan to ensure ongoing maintenance of the standard for an additional 10 years.

EPA’s final implementation rule for the 2008 ozone NAAQS revoked the 1997 ozone NAAQS and provided that one consequence of revocation was that areas that had been redesignated to attainment (*i.e.*, maintenance areas) for the 1997 ozone NAAQS no longer needed to submit second 10-year maintenance plans under CAA section 175A(b). See 80 FR 12315 (March 6, 2015). However, in *South Coast Air Quality Management District v. EPA*⁵ (South Coast II), the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia (D.C. Circuit) vacated EPA’s interpretation that, because of the revocation of the 1997 ozone standard, second maintenance plans were not required for “orphan maintenance areas,” (*i.e.*, areas like the Fredericksburg Area) that had been redesignated to attainment for the 1997 ozone NAAQS and were designated attainment for the 2008 ozone NAAQS. Thus, states with these “orphan maintenance areas” under the 1997 ozone NAAQS must submit maintenance plans for the second maintenance period.

As previously discussed, CAA section 175A sets forth the criteria for adequate maintenance plans. In addition, EPA

has published longstanding guidance⁶ that provides further insight on the content of an approvable maintenance plan, explaining that a maintenance plan should address five elements: (1) an attainment emissions inventory; (2) a maintenance demonstration; (3) a commitment for continued air quality monitoring; (4) a process for verification of continued attainment; and (5) a contingency plan. The 1992 Calcagni Memo⁷ provides that states may generally demonstrate maintenance by either performing air quality modeling to show that the future mix of sources and emission rates will not cause a violation of the NAAQS or by showing that future emissions of a pollutant and its precursors will not exceed the level of emissions during a year when the area was attaining the NAAQS (*i.e.*, attainment year inventory). See 1992 Calcagni Memo at p. 9. EPA further clarified in three subsequent guidance memos describing “limited maintenance plans” (LMPs)⁸ that the requirements of CAA section 175A could be met by demonstrating that the area’s design value⁹ was well below the NAAQS and that the historical stability of the area’s air quality levels showed that the area was unlikely to violate the NAAQS in the future. Specifically, EPA believes that if the most recent air quality design value for the area is at a level that is below 85% of the standard, or in this case below 0.071 ppm, then EPA considers the state to have met the section 175A requirement for a demonstration that the area will

maintain the NAAQS for the requisite period. Accordingly, on May 25, 2023, VADEQ submitted an LMP for the Fredericksburg Area, following EPA’s LMP guidance and demonstrating that the area will maintain the 1997 ozone NAAQS through January 23, 2026, *i.e.*, through the entire 20-year maintenance period.

II. Summary of SIP Revision and EPA Analysis

VADEQ’s May 25, 2023 submittal outlines a plan for continued maintenance of the 1997 ozone NAAQS which addresses the criteria set forth in EPA guidance, including the 1992 Calcagni Memo as follows.

A. Attainment Emissions Inventory

For maintenance plans, a state should develop a comprehensive and accurate inventory of actual emissions for an attainment year which identifies the level of emissions in the area which is sufficient to maintain the NAAQS. The inventory should be developed consistent with EPA’s most recent guidance. For ozone, the inventory should be based on a typical summer day’s emissions of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and volatile organic compounds (VOC), the precursors to ozone formation. In the first maintenance plan for the Fredericksburg Area, VADEQ used 2004 for the attainment year inventory, because 2004 was one of the years in the 2002–2004 three-year period when the area first attained the 1997 ozone NAAQS.¹⁰ The Fredericksburg Area continued to monitor attainment of the 1997 ozone NAAQS in 2014. Therefore, the emissions inventory from 2014 represents emissions levels conducive to continued attainment (*i.e.*, maintenance) of the NAAQS. Thus, VADEQ is using 2014 as representing attainment level emissions for its second maintenance plan. Virginia used 2014 summer day emissions from EPA’s 2014 version 7.0 modeling platform as the basis for the 2014 inventory presented in Table 1 in this document.¹¹

¹⁰ For more information, see EPA’s September 12, 2005 document proposing to redesignate the Fredericksburg Area to attainment for the 1997 ozone NAAQS (70 FR 53746).

¹¹ For more information, visit www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-11/ozone_1997_naaqs_emiss_inv_data_nov_19_2018_0.xlsx.

⁴ The effective date was January 23, 2006. See footnote 1.

⁵ 882 F.3d 1138 (D.C. Cir. 2018).

⁶ See “Limited Maintenance Plan Option for Nonclassifiable Ozone Nonattainment Areas” from Sally L. Shaver, Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards (OAQPS), dated November 16, 1994.

⁷ “Procedures for Processing Requests to Redesignate Areas to Attainment,” Memorandum from John Calcagni, Director, Air Quality Management Division, September 4, 1992 (1992 Calcagni Memo).

⁸ See “Limited Maintenance Plan Option for Nonclassifiable Ozone Nonattainment Areas” from Sally L. Shaver, Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards (OAQPS), dated November 16, 1994; “Limited Maintenance Plan Option for Nonclassifiable CO Nonattainment Areas” from Joseph Paisie, OAQPS, dated October 6, 1995; and “Limited Maintenance Plan Option for Moderate PM₁₀ Nonattainment Areas” from Lydia Wegman, OAQPS, dated August 9, 2001.

⁹ The ozone design value for a monitoring site is the 3-year average of the annual fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hour average ozone concentrations. The design value for an ozone nonattainment area is the highest design value of any monitoring site in the area.

TABLE 1—2014 TYPICAL SUMMER DAY NO_x AND VOC EMISSIONS FOR THE FREDERICKSBURG AREA IN TONS/DAY

| Area | Source category | NO _x emissions | VOC emissions |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| City of Fredericksburg | Nonpoint | 0.21 | 1.06 |
| | Nonroad | 0.08 | 0.13 |
| | Onroad | 1.54 | 0.85 |
| Spotsylvania County | Fire | 0.00 | 0.01 |
| | Nonpoint | 0.70 | 3.48 |
| | Nonroad | 1.41 | 1.38 |
| | Onroad | 6.15 | 3.15 |
| Stafford County | Point | 0.01 | 0.01 |
| | Nonpoint | 1.00 | 3.09 |
| | Nonroad | 1.44 | 1.10 |
| | Onroad | 5.79 | 2.24 |
| | Point | 0.16 | 0.06 |

The data shown in Table 1 in this document is based on the 2014 National Emissions Inventory (NEI) version 2.¹² The inventory addresses four anthropogenic emission source categories: Stationary (point) sources, stationary nonpoint (area) sources, nonroad mobile, and onroad mobile sources. Point sources are stationary sources that have the potential to emit more than 100 tons per year (tpy) of VOC, or more than 50 tpy of NO_x, and which are required to obtain an operating permit. The point source sector includes large industrial operations that are relatively few in number but have large emissions, such as kraft mills, electrical generating units, and pharmaceutical factories. Nonpoint sources include emissions from equipment, operations, and activities that are numerous and in total have significant emissions. Examples include emissions from commercial and consumer products, portable fuel containers, home heating, repair and refinishing operations, and crematories. The nonroad emissions sector includes emissions from engines that are not primarily used to propel transportation equipment, such as generators, forklifts, and marine pleasure craft. The onroad emissions sector includes emissions from engines used primarily to propel equipment on highways and other roads, including passenger vehicles,

motorcycles, and heavy-duty diesel trucks. The fire emissions sector includes emissions from agricultural burning, prescribed fires, wildfires, and other types of fires. Data are collected for each source at a facility and reported to VADEQ. EPA reviewed the emissions inventory submitted by VADEQ and proposes to conclude that the plan's inventory is acceptable for the purposes of a subsequent maintenance plan under CAA section 175A(b).

B. Maintenance Demonstration

In order to attain the 1997 ozone NAAQS, the three-year average of the fourth-highest daily average ozone concentration (design value, or "DV") at each monitor within an area must not exceed 0.08 ppm. Based on the rounding convention described in 40 CFR part 50, appendix I, the standard is attained if the DV is 0.084 ppm or below. CAA section 175A requires a demonstration that the area will continue to maintain the NAAQS throughout the duration of the requisite maintenance period. Consistent with the guidance documents discussed previously in this document as well as EPA's November 20, 2018 "Resource Document for 1997 Ozone NAAQS Areas: Supporting Information for States Developing Maintenance Plans" (2018 Resource Document),¹³ EPA believes that if the most recent DV for the area is well below the NAAQS (e.g., below

85%, or in this case below 0.071 ppm), the section 175A demonstration requirement has been met, provided that prevention of significant deterioration requirements, any control measures already in the SIP, and any Federal measures remain in place through the end of the second 10-year maintenance period (absent a showing consistent with section 110(l) that such measures are not necessary to assure maintenance).

For the purposes of demonstrating continued maintenance with the 1997 ozone NAAQS, VADEQ provided 3-year DVs at the Stafford County monitor located in the Fredericksburg Area from 2001 to 2021. This includes DVs at the monitor for 2001–2003, 2002–2004, 2003–2005, 2004–2006, 2005–2007, 2006–2008, 2007–2009, 2008–2010, 2009–2011, 2010–2012, 2011–2013, 2012–2014, 2013–2015, 2014–2016, 2015–2017, 2016–2018, 2017–2019, 2018–2020, and 2019–2021 which are shown in Table 2 in this document.¹⁴ In addition, EPA has reviewed the most recent ambient air quality monitoring data for ozone in the Fredericksburg Area, as submitted by Virginia and recorded in EPA's Air Quality System. The most recent DV (*i.e.*, 2020–2022) at the monitor located in the Fredericksburg Area is 0.058 ppm.¹⁵

¹⁴ See also Figure 2 of VADEQ's May 25, 2023 submittal, included in the docket for this rulemaking available online at www.regulations.gov, Docket ID: EPA–R03–OAR–2023–0629.

¹⁵ This data is also included in the docket for this rulemaking available online at www.regulations.gov, Docket ID: EPA–R03–OAR–2023–0629 and is also available at www.epa.gov/air-trends/air-quality-design-values#report.

¹² The NEI is a comprehensive and detailed estimate of air emissions of criteria pollutants, criteria precursors, and hazardous air pollutants from air emissions sources. The NEI is released every three years based primarily upon data provided by State, Local, and Tribal air agencies for sources in their jurisdictions and supplemented by data developed by EPA.

¹³ This resource document is included in the docket for this rulemaking available online at www.regulations.gov, Docket ID: EPA–R03–OAR–2023–0629 and is also available at www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-11/documents/ozone_1997_naaqs_lmp_resource_document_nov_20_2018.pdf.

TABLE 2—1997 OZONE NAAQS DESIGN VALUES IN PARTS PER MILLION FOR THE FREDERICKSBURG AREA

| County | AQS site ID | 2001 – 2003 | 2002 – 2004 | 2003 – 2005 | 2004 – 2006 | 2005 – 2007 | 2006 – 2008 | 2007 – 2009 | 2008 – 2010 | 2009 – 2011 | 2010 – 2012 |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Stafford | 511790001 | .088 | .084 | .079 | .081 | .085 | .081 | .072 | .070 | .072 | .076 |
| County | AQS site ID | 2011 – 2013 | 2012 – 2014 | 2013 – 2015 | 2014 – 2016 | 2015 – 2017 | 2016 – 2018 | 2017 – 2019 | 2018 – 2020 | 2019 – 2021 | 2020 – 2022 |
| Stafford | 511790001 | .071 | .067 | .063 | .063 | .062 | .062 | .060 | .059 | .059 | .058 |

Additionally, states can support the demonstration of continued maintenance by showing stable or improving air quality trends. According to EPA's 2018 Resource Document, several kinds of analyses can be performed by states wishing to make such a showing. One approach is to take the most recent DV at a monitor located in the area and add the maximum design value increase (over one or more consecutive years) that has been observed in the area over the past several years. For an area with multiple monitors, the highest of the most recent DVs should be used. A sum that does not exceed the level of the 1997 ozone NAAQS may be a good indicator of expected continued attainment. The largest increase in DVs at the Stafford monitor located in the Fredericksburg Area was 0.004 ppm, which first occurred between the 2004–2006 (0.081 ppm) and 2005–2007 (0.085 ppm) DVs, and occurred again between the 2009–2011 (0.072 ppm) and 2010–2012 (0.076 ppm) DVs. Adding 0.004 ppm to the highest DV for the 2020–2022 period (0.058 ppm) results in 0.062 ppm, a sum that is still below the 1997 ozone NAAQS.

DVs at the monitor located in the Fredericksburg Area have been below 85% of the 1997 ozone NAAQS (*i.e.*, 0.071 ppm or 71 ppb) since the 2012–2014 period. Additional supporting information that the area is expected to continue to maintain the standard can be found in projections of future year DVs that EPA recently completed to assist states with the development of interstate transport SIPs for the 2015 8-hour ozone NAAQS. Those projections, made for the year 2023, show that the highest DV at the monitor located in the Fredericksburg Area is expected to be 0.057 ppm.¹⁶ Therefore, EPA proposes

to determine that future violations of the 1997 ozone NAAQS in the Fredericksburg Area are unlikely.

C. Continued Air Quality Monitoring and Verification of Continued Attainment

Once an area has been redesignated to attainment, the state remains obligated to maintain an air quality network in accordance with 40 CFR part 58, in order to verify the area's attainment status. In the May 25, 2023 submittal, VADEQ commits to continue to operate their air monitoring network in accordance with 40 CFR part 58. VADEQ also commits to track the attainment status of the Fredericksburg Area for the 1997 ozone NAAQS through the review of air quality and emissions data during the second maintenance period. EPA has analyzed the commitments in VADEQ's submittal and is proposing to determine that they meet the requirements for continued air quality monitoring and verification of continued attainment.

D. Contingency Plan

The contingency plan provisions are designed to promptly correct or prevent a violation of the NAAQS that might occur after redesignation of an area to attainment. Section 175A of the CAA requires that a maintenance plan include such contingency measures as EPA deems necessary to assure that the state will promptly correct a violation of the NAAQS that occurs after redesignation. The maintenance plan should identify the contingency measures to be adopted, a schedule and procedure for adoption and implementation of the contingency measures, and a time limit for action by

the state. The state should also identify specific indicators to be used to determine when the contingency measures need to be adopted and implemented. The maintenance plan must require that the state will implement all pollution control measures that were contained in the SIP before redesignation of the area to attainment. See section 175(A)(d) of the CAA.

VADEQ's May 25, 2023 submittal includes the following contingency plan for the Fredericksburg Area:

Virginia commits to implement all measures with respect to the control of NO_x and VOC contained in the SIP for the area before redesignation to attainment/maintenance. General conformity requirements and transportation conformity requirements will no longer apply once this maintenance plan expires at the end of the twenty-year maintenance period.

If the ozone monitor in the area registers a fourth-highest, eight-hour average of 0.085 ppm or greater it is considered to have recorded an exceedance of the 1997 ozone NAAQS. One control measure listed in Table 3 in this document will be implemented in the unlikely event that a monitor registers an exceedance.

If the ozone monitor in the area registers a three-year average of the fourth-highest, eight-hour ozone values of 0.085 ppm or greater it is considered to have recorded a violation of the 1997 ozone NAAQS. One additional control measure listed in Table 3 in this document will be implemented in the unlikely event that a monitor registers a violation.

One additional control measure listed in Table 3 in this document will be implemented in the unlikely event that the ozone monitor registers a second violation following the implementation of the first contingency measures.

Ozone Design Values", Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards, dated June 2018, available at www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2018-06/documents/oa_modelingtsd_updated_2023_modeling_o3_dvs.pdf.

¹⁶ See U.S. EPA, "Air Quality Modeling Technical Support Document for the Updated 2023 Projected

TABLE 3—CONTINGENCY MEASURES FOR THE FREDERICKSBURG MAINTENANCE AREA

| Program | Description |
|---|---|
| Ozone Transport Commission (OTC) Architectural and Industrial (AIM) Coating Model Rule dated October 13, 2014 ¹⁷ . | Rule provides additional requirements reducing emissions from the AIM source category. |
| OTC Model Rule for Consumer Products dated May 21, 2013 ¹⁸ | Rule provides additional requirements reducing emissions from the Consumer Product source category. |
| OTC Model Rule for Solvent Degreasing dated 2012 ¹⁹ | Rule provides additional requirements reducing emissions from the solvent degreasing category. |

The following schedule applies to contingency measures should they need to be implemented due to exceedances or violations of the 1997 ozone NAAQS:

- Notification received from EPA that a contingency measure must be implemented or three months after a recorded exceedance or violation is certified.

- Applicable regulation to be adopted 6 months after this date.

- Applicable regulation to be implemented 6 months after adoption.

- Compliance with regulation to be achieved within 12 months of adoption.

EPA proposes to find that the contingency plan included in VADEQ's May 25, 2023 submittal satisfies the pertinent requirements of CAA section 175A(d). EPA also finds that the submittal acknowledges Virginia's continuing requirement to implement all pollution control measures that were contained in the SIP before redesignation of the Fredericksburg Area to attainment.

E. Transportation Conformity

Transportation conformity is required by section 176(c) of the CAA. Conformity to a SIP means that transportation activities will not produce new air quality violations, worsen existing violations, or delay timely attainment of the NAAQS (CAA 176(c)(1)(B)). EPA's conformity rule at 40 CFR part 93 requires that transportation plans, programs and projects conform to SIPs and establish the criteria and procedures for determining whether or not they conform. The conformity rule generally requires a demonstration that emissions from the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) are consistent with the motor vehicle emissions budget (MVEB) contained in the control strategy SIP revision or maintenance plan (40 CFR 93.101, 93.118, and 93.124). An MVEB

is defined as "that portion of the total allowable emissions defined in the submitted or approved control strategy implementation plan revision or maintenance plan for a certain date for the purpose of meeting reasonable further progress milestones or demonstrating attainment or maintenance of the NAAQS, for any criteria pollutant or its precursors, allocated to highway and transit vehicle use and emissions (40 CFR 93.101)." Under the conformity rule, LMP areas may demonstrate conformity without a regional emission analysis (40 CFR 93.109(e)). EPA made findings that the MVEBs in the first 10-years of the 1997 8-hour ozone maintenance plan for the Fredericksburg Area were adequate for transportation conformity purposes. In a **Federal Register** notice published on December 23, 2005 (70 FR 76165), EPA notified the public of the adequacy finding for the Fredericksburg Area through a final rule; the adequacy determination for the Fredericksburg Area became effective on January 23, 2006. After approval of an adequacy finding for the Fredericksburg Area LMP, there is no requirement to meet the budget test pursuant to the transportation conformity rule for the respective maintenance area. All actions that would require a transportation conformity determination for the Fredericksburg Area under EPA's transportation conformity rule provisions are considered to have already satisfied the regional emissions analysis and "budget test" requirements in 40 CFR 93.118 as a result of EPA's adequacy finding for the LMP. See 69 FR 40004 (July 1, 2004).

However, because LMP areas are still maintenance areas, certain aspects of transportation conformity determinations still will be required for transportation plans, programs, and projects. Specifically, for such determination, RTPs, TIPs, and transportation projects still will have to demonstrate that they are fiscally constrained (40 CFR 93.108), meet the criteria for consultation (40 CFR 93.105 and 93.112) and satisfy transportation control measure implementation in the conformity rule provisions (40 CFR

93.113). Additionally, conformity determinations for RTPs and TIPs must be determined no less frequently than every four years, and conformity of transportation plan and TIP amendments and transportation projects is demonstrated in accordance with the timing requirements specified in 40 CFR 93.104. In addition, for projects to be approved, they must come from a currently conforming RTP and TIP (40 CFR 93.114 and 93.115). The Fredericksburg Area remains under the obligation to meet the applicable conformity requirements for the 1997 ozone NAAQS.

III. Proposed Action

EPA's review of VADEQ's May 25, 2023 submittal indicates that it meets all applicable CAA requirements, specifically the requirements of CAA section 175A. EPA is proposing to approve the second maintenance plan for the Fredericksburg Area as a revision to the Virginia SIP. EPA is soliciting public comments on the issues discussed in this document. These comments will be considered before taking final action.

IV. General Information Pertaining to SIP Submittals From the Commonwealth of Virginia

In 1995, Virginia adopted legislation that provides, subject to certain conditions, for an environmental assessment (audit) "privilege" for voluntary compliance evaluations performed by a regulated entity. The legislation further addresses the relative burden of proof for parties either asserting the privilege or seeking disclosure of documents for which the privilege is claimed. Virginia's legislation also provides, subject to certain conditions, for a penalty waiver for violations of environmental laws when a regulated entity discovers such violations pursuant to a voluntary compliance evaluation and voluntarily discloses such violations to the Commonwealth and takes prompt and appropriate measures to remedy the violations. Virginia's Voluntary Environmental Assessment Privilege Law, Va. Code Sec. 10.1–1198, provides

¹⁷ otc.air.org/upload/Documents/Model%20Rules/AIM_Preamble_Model_Rule.pdf.

¹⁸ otc.air.org/upload/Documents/Model%20Rules/OTC%20CP%20Model%20Rule%20Final%20Clean%202013%20Revision%20Clean.pdf.

¹⁹ otc.air.org/upload/Documents/Model%20Rules/2011%20OTC%20Model%20Rule%20for%20Solvent%20Degreasing.pdf.

a privilege that protects from disclosure documents and information about the content of those documents that are the product of a voluntary environmental assessment. The Privilege Law does not extend to documents or information that: (1) are generated or developed before the commencement of a voluntary environmental assessment; (2) are prepared independently of the assessment process; (3) demonstrate a clear, imminent and substantial danger to the public health or environment; or (4) are required by law.

On January 12, 1998, the Commonwealth of Virginia Office of the Attorney General provided a legal opinion that states that the Privilege law, Va. Code Sec. 10.1–1198, precludes granting a privilege to documents and information “required by law,” including documents and information “required by Federal law to maintain program delegation, authorization or approval,” since Virginia must “enforce Federally authorized environmental programs in a manner that is no less stringent than their Federal counterparts” The opinion concludes that “[r]egarding § 10.1–1198, therefore, documents or other information needed for civil or criminal enforcement under one of these programs could not be privileged because such documents and information are essential to pursuing enforcement in a manner required by Federal law to maintain program delegation, authorization or approval.”

Virginia’s Immunity law, Va. Code Sec. 10.1–1199, provides that “[t]o the extent consistent with requirements imposed by Federal law,” any person making a voluntary disclosure of information to a state agency regarding a violation of an environmental statute, regulation, permit, or administrative order is granted immunity from administrative or civil penalty. The Attorney General’s January 12, 1998 opinion states that the quoted language renders this statute inapplicable to enforcement of any federally authorized programs, since “no immunity could be afforded from administrative, civil, or criminal penalties because granting such immunity would not be consistent with Federal law, which is one of the criteria for immunity.”

Therefore, EPA has determined that Virginia’s Privilege and Immunity statutes will not preclude the Commonwealth from enforcing its program consistent with the Federal requirements. In any event, because EPA has also determined that a state audit privilege and immunity law can affect only state enforcement and cannot have any impact on Federal enforcement authorities, EPA may at

any time invoke its authority under the CAA, including, for example, sections 113, 167, 205, 211 or 213, to enforce the requirements or prohibitions of the state plan, independently of any state enforcement effort. In addition, citizen enforcement under section 304 of the CAA is likewise unaffected by this, or any, state audit privilege or immunity law.

V. Statutory and Executive Order Reviews

Under the CAA, the Administrator is required to approve a SIP submission that complies with the provisions of the CAA and applicable Federal regulations. 42 U.S.C. 7410(k); 40 CFR 52.02(a). Thus, in reviewing SIP submissions, EPA’s role is to approve state choices, provided that they meet the criteria of the CAA. Accordingly, this action merely approves state law as meeting Federal requirements and does not impose additional requirements beyond those imposed by state law. For that reason, this proposed action:

- Is not a significant regulatory action subject to review by the Office of Management and Budget under Executive Orders 12866 (58 FR 51735, October 4, 1993) and 13563 (76 FR 3821, January 21, 2011);
- Does not impose an information collection burden under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*);
- Is certified as not having a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*);
- Does not contain any unfunded mandate or significantly or uniquely affect small governments, as described in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104–4);
- Does not have federalism implications as specified in Executive Order 13132 (64 FR 43255, August 10, 1999);
- Is not an economically significant regulatory action based on health or safety risks subject to Executive Order 13045 (62 FR 19885, April 23, 1997);
- Is not a significant regulatory action subject to Executive Order 13211 (66 FR 28355, May 22, 2001); and
- Is not subject to requirements of Section 12(d) of the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995 (15 U.S.C. 272 note) because application of those requirements would be inconsistent with the Clean Air Act;

The SIP is not approved to apply on any Indian reservation land as defined in 18 U.S.C. 1151 or in any other area where EPA or an Indian tribe has demonstrated that a tribe has

jurisdiction. In those areas of Indian country, the rule pertaining to Virginia’s second maintenance plan for the Fredericksburg area does not have tribal implications and will not impose substantial direct costs on tribal governments or preempt tribal law as specified by Executive Order 13175 (65 FR 67249, November 9, 2000).

Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 59 FR 7629, February 16, 1994) directs Federal agencies to identify and address “disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects” of their actions on minority populations and low-income populations to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law. EPA defines environmental justice (EJ) as “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.” EPA further defines the term fair treatment to mean that “no group of people should bear a disproportionate burden of environmental harms and risks, including those resulting from the negative environmental consequences of industrial, governmental, and commercial operations or programs and policies.”

The VADEQ did not evaluate environmental justice considerations as part of its SIP submittal; the CAA and applicable implementing regulations neither prohibit nor require such an evaluation. EPA did not perform an EJ analysis and did not consider EJ in this action. Consideration of EJ is not required as part of this action, and there is no information in the record inconsistent with the stated goal of E.O. 12898 of achieving environmental justice for people of color, low-income populations, and Indigenous peoples.

List of Subjects in 40 CFR Part 52

Environmental protection, Air pollution control, Incorporation by reference, Nitrogen dioxide Ozone, Volatile organic compounds.

Adam Ortiz,

Regional Administrator, Region III.

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