

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 1-hour Ozone in New Orleans Ozone Maintenance Area

Prior to the 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act, the EPA identified and designated nonattainment areas with respect to the NAAQS. For such areas, States submitted SIPs to control emissions and achieve attainment of the NAAQS. The New Orleans Ozone Maintenance Area was originally designated as nonattainment for ozone on September 11, 1978. The state of Louisiana submitted an ozone SIP as required by part D on December 10, 1979. EPA fully approved this ozone SIP on October 29, 1981. (46 FR 53412)

On November 15, 1990, the CAAA were enacted (Public Law 101-549, 104 Stat. 2399, codified at 42 U.S.C. 7401-7671q). The New Orleans Ozone Maintenance Area was classified as a “transitional” ozone nonattainment area pursuant to sections 107(d) and 181(a) of the CAAA (56 FR 56694). The ozone nonattainment designation for the New Orleans Ozone Maintenance Area continued by operation of law according to section 107(d)(1)(C)(i) of the CAA, as amended in 1990 (See 56 FR 56694, November 6, 1991). Since the State had not yet collected in the New Orleans Ozone Maintenance Area the required three (3) years of ambient ozone air quality monitoring data necessary to petition for redesignation to attainment, the area continued its designation as a transitional ozone nonattainment area.

In order to demonstrate attainment with the 1-hour ozone NAAQS, the state collected the required ambient monitoring data in the New Orleans Ozone Maintenance Area that showed no violations of the 0.12 ppm 1-hour ozone standard; developed an ozone maintenance plan for the parish in accordance with section 175A of the CAAA; and on October 15, 1994, submitted to EPA for approval a request for redesignation to attainment and the ozone maintenance plan. The request was accompanied by ambient air monitoring data that showed no violations of the NAAQS standard of 0.12 parts per million (ppm) for a period of three years.

On October 2, 1995, EPA published a final rulemaking approving a revision to the Louisiana SIP to redesignate the New Orleans Ozone Maintenance Area to attainment for ozone (60 FR 51354). EPA determined that the redesignation request and maintenance plan met the requirements for redesignation in section 107 (d)(3)(E) of the CAAA. The EPA also determined that the redesignation met the requirements of section 182 (a)(1) of the CAAA as a revision to the Louisiana ozone SIP for the New Orleans Ozone Maintenance Area. The redesignation of the New Orleans Ozone Maintenance Area to attainment for ozone was effective December 1, 1995.

1.1.2 8-hour Ozone in New Orleans Ozone Maintenance Area

On April 15, 2004, the EPA designated and classified areas for the 8-hour ozone NAAQS (69 FR 23858, April 30, 2004). The New Orleans Ozone Maintenance Area was designated attainment with an effective date of June 15, 2004 and included the parishes of Jefferson, Orleans, St Bernard and St. Charles.

1.2 Geographic Location/Parish Description

The New Orleans Ozone Maintenance Area is located in southeast Louisiana and encompasses 1235.4 square miles. (See Figure 1) The area is very diverse in its economic and agricultural aspects. Jefferson Parish has numerous manufacturing and industrial facilities, including shipyards, port facilities as well as oil and its related firms. Offshore oil and gas production is supported by a number of production bases on Grand Isle in the southernmost portion of the parish.

The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, which is located in Orleans Parish, gives New Orleans access to points in Louisiana and Texas. New Orleans is the site of the 2nd largest port in the United States, which includes major import/export of hydrocarbon products. Furthermore, the Industrial Canal connects the Mississippi River with Lake Ponchartrain, providing access for deepwater shipping to the complex of industrial facilities that line the canal's banks.

St. Bernard Parish is the home of oil refineries, dock facilities and other diversified businesses. It has agricultural as well as aquacultural interests, which include fishing and trapping. St. Charles Parish is heavily populated with petrochemical industries and is home to many sugarcane plantations.

Because this area was devastated by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, the population of the area is only half of what it was during the 2000 Census. At the time of the census the four parishes had a combined population of over one million people. The latest estimates indicate a decline of almost 59%, with the combined estimate totaling only 625,288. The area is slowly recovering, rebuilding and repopulating; however, the area most likely will not reach pre-hurricane populations prior to the expiration of the maintenance plan in 2014.

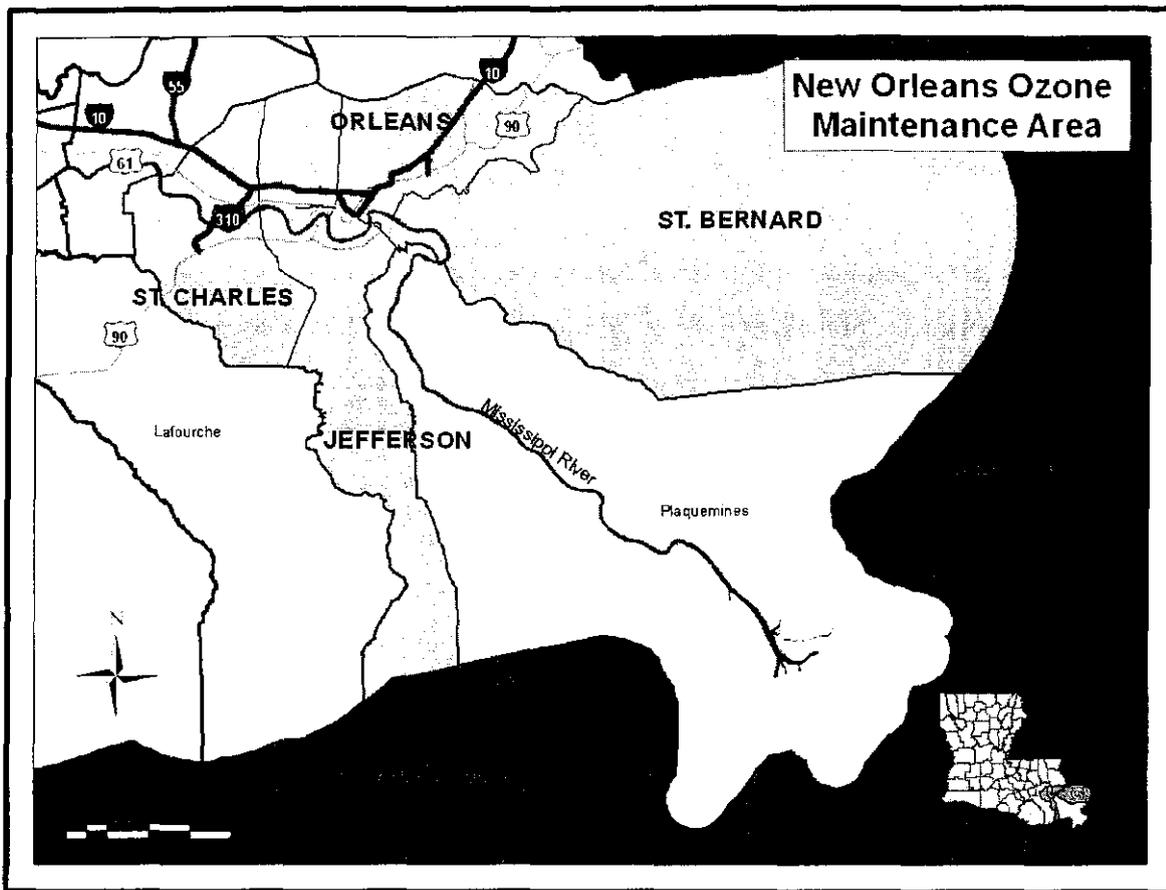


Figure 1: State Map Illustrating the New Orleans Ozone Maintenance Area

1.3 Public Notice

In accordance with La. R.S. 49:950 et seq., and to comply with 40 CFR 51.285 Public Notification, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality published a notice seeking comment on this SIP revision on April 20, 2007 in the *Louisiana Register*. A public hearing concerning this proposed SIP revision will be held at 1:30pm on May 30, 2007 in the Galvez Building, Oliver Pollock Room C-111, at 602 N. Fifth Street in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Interested parties are invited to submit written or oral comments on the proposal at that time. The comment period closes on June 6, 2007. A copy of the public notice is included in Appendix C.