



DATE: Jan. 25, 2011

CONTACT: Mark Shaffer, Director of Communications, (602) 771-2215 (o);
(480) 433-9551 (cell)

ADEQ, Maricopa County Choose to Improve Dust Control Plan; ADEQ Withdraws Earlier Plan to U.S. EPA

PHOENIX – (Jan. 25, 2011) – Despite measured reductions in particulate matter in the air around Maricopa County under a plan submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2007, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality is withdrawing the particulate matter air quality plan from EPA’s review.

On Sept. 3, 2010, EPA proposed to partially approve and partially disapprove the particulate matter air quality plan prepared by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and submitted by ADEQ to EPA in 2007. This plan, also known as the Five Percent Plan, called for significant reductions in emissions of particulate matter 10 microns or less, also known as PM-10, from a variety of sources throughout the Valley.

If the plan had not been withdrawn, EPA would have taken final action on Jan. 28, 2011, resulting in sanctions freezing regional transportation planning in Maricopa County. Unless resolved, disapproval could also impact the construction of new, large sources of dust within 18 months, and federal highway dollars after 24 months.

“We contend that the 2007 plan, which we have been following, has been effective in reducing dust throughout the county and should have been approved. We had no violations of the PM-10 standards at all in 2010,” said ADEQ Acting Director Henry Darwin. “There are always going to be opportunities to improve upon past submissions and this move will allow us to take advantage of new information that will improve the plan. ADEQ will soon convene a working group of stakeholders to assist ADEQ, Maricopa County and MAG in this important effort to further protect public health in this region.”

Air quality plans that require the reduction of PM-10 in the Maricopa County area have been effective at reducing emissions of dust throughout the county. As a direct result of the plans that have been submitted between 1990 and 2009, the annual average concentration of PM-10 within the Phoenix area has declined approximately 25 percent. Withdrawal of the plan from EPA’s review won’t threaten these gains.

Maricopa County Air Quality Department Director Bill Wiley said Maricopa County will continue to be vigilant in ensuring compliance with its dust control rules put in place under the 2007 plan while the new plan is being drafted.

ADEQ, Maricopa County Choose to Improve Dust Control Plan; ADEQ Withdraws Earlier Plan to U.S. EPA

01/25/2011

2-2-2

“Our record is clear in protecting the health of our residents by ensuring strict air quality measures that have been implemented by Maricopa County and local jurisdictions,” said Wiley. “We believe ADEQ’s action will result in an improved plan that will further enhance those efforts.”

Although withdrawing the plan is subject to the same set of sanctions as a disapproval, Arizona will have more control over how long those sanctions remain in place by the withdrawal. To avoid the imposition of long-term sanctions, ADEQ must submit an updated air quality plan for PM-10 to EPA before June 25, 2012.

To receive press releases by email: <http://www.azdeq.gov/subscribe.html>
Follow ADEQ on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/azdeq>
Follow ADEQ on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/ArizonaDEQ>