

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
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Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Nine Tribal Nations

Iowa's Scott and Muscatine Counties in Violation of Air Standards

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Kansas City, Kan., Dec. 22, 2008) - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officially notified the state of Iowa today that portions of Scott and Muscatine counties do not meet the Agency's daily standards for fine particle pollution, also known as fine particulate matter, or PM 2.5.

To protect public health, in 2006 EPA strengthened the 24-hour fine particle pollution standards from 65 micrograms per cubic meter of air to 35 micrograms per cubic meter of air. Nationwide, monitored levels of fine particle pollution fell 11 percent from 2000 to 2007. Fine particles can either be emitted directly, or they can form in the atmosphere from reactions with other pollutants. Exposure to fine particle pollution can cause serious health problems, including respiratory and cardiovascular difficulties, as well as premature death.

The Scott County nonattainment area includes the townships of Buffalo, Davenport, Pleasant Valley and Sheridan, and the area within the city limits of Davenport in the townships of Hickory Grove, Davenport and Blue Grass (including all of the City of Blue Grass). Muscatine County's nonattainment area includes the townships of Bloomington, Fruitland, Montpelier and Sweetland.

Townships in Rock Island, Ill., are also included in EPA's designations for the Quad City area. In Illinois, the Rock Island County nonattainment area includes the townships of Black Hawk, Coal Valley, Hampton, Moline, Rock Island, South Moline and South Rock Island. EPA Region 5 officials in Chicago will address the determination issues for the nonattainment area in Illinois.

EPA closely reviewed recommendations from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources along with public comments before making its decision. The nonattainment areas include those where air monitors indicate violations of the standard, and nearby areas that contribute to the violations. Iowa's DNR will be required to develop a plan and take steps to reduce the emissions that form these particles.

EPA weighs nine factors to help determine the boundaries of a nonattainment area, including pollutant emissions, air quality data, population density and degree of urbanization, traffic and community patterns, growth, meteorology, geography, jurisdiction, and the sophistication of emission control resources.

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For a full list of the designations and other information, go to:
<http://www.epa.gov/pmdesignations/2006standards/index.htm>