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Ohio EPA Requests Recognition of Improved Air Quality in Portsmouth Area; Public Hearing to be Held April 21

The State of Ohio plans to ask U.S. EPA to officially recognize that air quality in the Portsmouth area meets the 1997 federal fine particulate standard. Portsmouth is part of the Huntington, W.Va., and Ashland, Ky., metropolitan area.

An Ohio EPA public hearing to take comments on the proposal will be held on April 21, 2011. The hearing will begin at 1:30 p.m., at the Portsmouth City Health Department, first floor conference room, 605 Washington St., Portsmouth.

Air quality data from 2008-2010 show that the Huntington-Ashland area is meeting the 1997 national fine particulate matter standard. When asking for redesignation, states are required to demonstrate that the metropolitan area will be able to maintain compliance with the fine particulate standard for 10 years. Current national, state and local air pollution controls to limit particulate matter-causing emissions will enable the area to maintain the air quality, including: lower emissions from coal-burning power plants, additional controls on diesel-powered vehicles and enforcement efforts.

The proposed redesignation request affects Adams, Gallia, Lawrence and Scioto counties in Ohio. The states of West Virginia and Kentucky would need to submit separate requests to U.S. EPA to redesignate counties in their states associated with this area.

The national fine particulate standard regulates tiny particles, about 1/30th the diameter of a human hair, that lodge deep in human lungs. Particulate matter has been associated with heart attacks, chronic bronchitis, asthma attacks and missed days of school and work.

Comments on the redesignation proposal can be submitted until the close of business on April 21, by e-mail or mail to [Carolina Prado](#) or [Jennifer Hunter](#), Division of Air Pollution Control, Ohio EPA, P.O. Box 1049, Columbus, Ohio, 43216-1049. The [proposal](#) is available online or by calling Ohio EPA's Division of Air Pollution Control at (614) 644-2270.

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