

governments, as described in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-4). This proposed rule also does not have a substantial direct effect on one or more Indian tribes, on the relationship between the Federal Government and Indian tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal Government and Indian tribes, as specified by Executive Order 13175 (65 FR 67249, November 9, 2000), nor will it have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government, as specified in Executive Order 13132 (64 FR 43255, August 10, 1999), because it merely proposes to approve a state rule implementing a Federal requirement, and does not alter the relationship or the distribution of power and responsibilities established in the Clean Air Act. This proposed rule also is not subject to Executive Order 13045 (62 FR 19885, April 23, 1997), because it is not economically significant.

In reviewing SIP submissions, EPA's role is to approve state choices, provided that they meet the criteria of the Clean Air Act. In this context, in the absence of a prior existing requirement for the State to use voluntary consensus standards (VCS), EPA has no authority to disapprove a SIP submission for failure to use VCS. It would thus be inconsistent with applicable law for EPA, when it reviews a SIP submission, to use VCS in place of a SIP submission that otherwise satisfies the provisions of the Clean Air Act. Thus, the requirements of section 12(d) of the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995 (15 U.S.C. 272 note) do not apply. As required by section 3 of Executive Order 12988 (61 FR 4729, February 7, 1996), in issuing this proposed rule, EPA has taken the necessary steps to eliminate drafting errors and ambiguity, minimize potential litigation, and provide a clear legal standard for affected conduct. EPA has complied with Executive Order 12630 (53 FR 8859, March 15, 1988) by examining the takings implications of the rule in accordance with the "Attorney General's Supplemental Guidelines for the Evaluation of Risk and Avoidance of Unanticipated Takings" issued under the executive order. This proposed rule, to approve the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality State Implementation Plan revision request requiring implementation of NSR in the Virginia portion of the Ozone Transport

Region, does not impose an information collection burden under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*).

List of Subjects in 40 CFR Part 52

Environmental protection, Air pollution control, Carbon monoxide, Intergovernmental relations, Nitrogen dioxide, Ozone, Particulate matter, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Sulfur oxides, Volatile organic compounds.

Authority: 42 U.S.C. 7401 *et seq.*

Dated: December 28, 2005.

Donald S. Welsh,

Regional Administrator, Region III.

[FR Doc. E6-37 Filed 1-5-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

40 CFR Part 52

[EPA-R03-OAR-2005-VA-0016; FRL-8019-7]

Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Virginia; Amendments to the Ambient Air Quality Standards

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: EPA is proposing to approve a State Implementation Plan (SIP) revision submitted by the Commonwealth of Virginia. This revision pertains to the amendments of the Commonwealth's existing ambient air quality standards. This action is being taken under the Clean Air Act (CAA or the Act).

DATES: Written comments must be received on or before February 6, 2006.

ADDRESSES: Submit your comments, identified by Docket ID Number EPA-R03-OAR-2005-VA-0016 by one of the following methods:

A. www.regulations.gov. Follow the on-line instructions for submitting comments.

B. E-mail: morris.makeba@epa.gov.

C. Mail: EPA-R03-OAR-2005-VA-0016, Makeba Morris, Chief, Air Quality Planning Branch, Mailcode 3AP21, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III, 1650 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103.

D. Hand Delivery: At the previously-listed EPA Region III address. Such deliveries are only accepted during the Docket's normal hours of operation, and special arrangements should be made for deliveries of boxed information.

Instructions: Direct your comments to Docket ID No. EPA-R03-OAR-2005-VA-0016. EPA's policy is that all comments received will be included in the public docket without change, and may be made available online at www.regulations.gov, including any personal information provided, unless the comment includes information claimed to be Confidential Business Information (CBI) or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Do not submit information that you consider to be CBI or otherwise protected through www.regulations.gov or e-mail. The www.regulations.gov Web site is a "anonymous access" system, which means EPA will not know your identity or contact information unless you provide it in the body of your comment. If you send an e-mail comment directly to EPA without going through www.regulations.gov, your e-mail address will be automatically captured and included as part of the comment that is placed in the public docket and made available on the Internet. If you submit an electronic comment, EPA recommends that you include your name and other contact information in the body of your comment and with any disk or CD-ROM you submit. If EPA cannot read your comment due to technical difficulties and cannot contact you for clarification, EPA may not be able to consider your comment. Electronic files should avoid the use of special characters, any form of encryption, and be free of any defects or viruses.

Docket: All documents in the electronic docket are listed in the www.regulations.gov index. Although listed in the index, some information is not publicly available, *i.e.*, CBI or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Certain other material, such as copyrighted material, is not placed on the Internet and will be publicly available only in hard copy form. Publicly available docket materials are available either electronically in www.regulations.gov or in hard copy during normal business hours at the Air Protection Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region III, 1650 Arch Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103. Copies of the State submittal are available at the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, 629 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rose Quinto, (215) 814-2182, or by e-mail at quinto.rose@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

In 1997, EPA adopted an 8-hour ozone national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS) with a level of 0.08 parts per million (ppm) to provide greater protection to public health than the previous standard of 0.12 ppm averaged over a 1-hour block of time (62 FR 38894, July 18, 1997). At the same time, EPA established a new standard for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) that applies to particles 2.5 microns in diameter or less (62 FR 38711, July 18, 1997). These standards became effective on September 16, 1997 and are located in 40 CFR part 50.

On September 26, 2005, the Commonwealth submitted a SIP revision that amends the existing Virginia Regulations for the Control and Abatement of Air Pollution (9 VAC 5 Chapter 30, Ambient Air Quality Standards). This amendment includes the NAAQS for the 8-hour ozone and PM_{2.5}, as well as general revisions to the Commonwealth's regulations consistent with 40 CFR part 50.

II. Summary of SIP Revision

The Commonwealth's revision incorporates the 1997 NAAQS for the 8-hour ozone and PM_{2.5} standards into 9 VAC 5 Chapter 30. This SIP revision provides that the 8-hour primary and secondary ozone ambient air quality standards are met when the average of the fourth highest daily maximum 8-hour average ozone concentration is less than or equal to 0.08 ppm, averaged over three consecutive years. In addition, the SIP revision adds a new PM_{2.5} ambient air quality standard. The standards incorporated in this SIP revision are 65 micrograms per cubic meter based on a 24-hour average concentration and 15.0 micrograms per cubic meter annual arithmetic mean concentration.

The other SIP revisions incorporated into 9 VAC 5 Chapter 30, are amendments to the ambient air quality standards for sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone (1-hour), PM₁₀, nitrogen dioxide, and lead, to make the state regulation consistent with 40 CFR part 50.

III. 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 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 (1) that is generated or developed before the commencement of a voluntary environmental assessment; (2) that is prepared independently of the assessment process; (3) that demonstrates a clear, imminent and substantial danger to the public health or environment; or (4) that is 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 Clean Air Act, 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 Clean Air Act is likewise unaffected by this, or any, state audit privilege or immunity law.

IV. Proposed Action

EPA's review of this material indicates that the amendments to 9 VAC 5 Chapter 30 are consistent with 40 CFR part 50. EPA is proposing to approve the Virginia SIP revision for 9 VAC 5 Chapter 30, which was submitted on September 26, 2005. EPA is soliciting public comments on the issues discussed in this document. These comments will be considered before taking final action.

V. Statutory and Executive Order Reviews

Under Executive Order 12866 (58 FR 51735, October 4, 1993), this proposed action is not a "significant regulatory action" and therefore is not subject to review by the Office of Management and Budget. For this reason, this action is also not subject to Executive Order 13211, "Actions Concerning Regulations That Significantly Affect Energy Supply, Distribution, or Use" (66 FR 28355 (May 22, 2001)). This action merely proposes to approve state law as meeting Federal requirements and imposes no additional requirements beyond those imposed by state law. Accordingly, the Administrator certifies that this proposed rule will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities under the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*). Because this rule proposes to approve pre-existing requirements under state law and does not impose any additional enforceable duty beyond that required by state law, it 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). This proposed rule also does not have a substantial direct effect on one or more Indian tribes, on the relationship between the Federal Government and Indian tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal Government and Indian tribes, as specified by Executive Order 13175 (65 FR 67249, November 9, 2000), nor will it have substantial direct effects on the States, on the relationship between the national government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government, as specified in Executive Order 13132 (64 FR 43255, August 10, 1999), because it merely proposes to approve a state rule implementing a Federal requirement, and does not alter the relationship or the distribution of power and responsibilities established in the Clean Air Act. This proposed rule also is not subject to Executive Order 13045 (62 FR 19885, April 23, 1997), because it is not economically significant.

In reviewing SIP submissions, EPA's role is to approve state choices, provided that they meet the criteria of the Clean Air Act. In this context, in the absence of a prior existing requirement for the State to use voluntary consensus standards (VCS), EPA has no authority to disapprove a SIP submission for failure to use VCS. It would thus be inconsistent with applicable law for EPA, when it reviews a SIP submission, to use VCS in place of a SIP submission that otherwise satisfies the provisions of the Clean Air Act. Thus, the requirements of section 12(d) of the National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act of 1995 (15 U.S.C. 272 note) do not apply. As required by section 3 of Executive Order 12988 (61 FR 4729, February 7, 1996), in issuing this proposed rule, EPA has taken the necessary steps to eliminate drafting errors and ambiguity, minimize potential litigation, and provide a clear legal standard for affected conduct. EPA has complied with Executive Order 12630 (53 FR 8859, March 15, 1988) by examining the takings implications of the rule in accordance with the "Attorney General's Supplemental Guidelines for the Evaluation of Risk and Avoidance of Unanticipated Takings" issued under the executive order.

This proposed rule pertaining to the amendments of Virginia's ambient air quality standards, does not impose an information collection burden under the

provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*).

List of Subjects in 40 CFR Part 52

Environmental protection, Air pollution control, Carbon monoxide, Nitrogen dioxide, Ozone, Particulate matter, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Sulfur oxides, Volatile organic compounds.

Authority: 42 U.S.C. 7401 *et seq.*

Dated: December 28, 2005.

Donald S. Welsh,

Regional Administrator, Region III.

[FR Doc. E6-30 Filed 1-5-06; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

40 CFR Part 122

[OW-2002-0068; FRL-8019-6]

RIN 2040-AE81

Amendments to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Regulations for Storm Water Discharges Associated With Oil and Gas Exploration, Production, Processing, or Treatment Operations, or Transmission Facilities

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking.

SUMMARY: Today EPA proposes action to codify in the Agency's regulations changes to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act resulting from the Energy Policy Act of 2005. This proposed action would modify National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System regulations to provide that certain storm water discharges from field activities, including construction, associated with oil and gas exploration, production, processing, or treatment operations, or transmission facilities would be exempt from National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit requirements. This action also encourages voluntary application of best management practices for oil and gas field activities and operations to minimize the discharge of pollutants in storm water runoff and protect water quality.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before February 21, 2006.

ADDRESSES: Submit your comments, identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2002-0068 by one of the following methods:

- www.regulations.gov: Follow the on-line instructions for submitting comments.

- E-mail: ow-docket@epa.gov
- Mail: Water Docket, Environmental Protection Agency, Mailcode: 4101T, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460. Please include a total of three copies.

- Hand Delivery: EPA Docket Center, EPA West, Room B102, 1301 Constitution Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20004. Such deliveries are only accepted during the Docket's normal hours of operation, and special arrangements should be made for deliveries of boxed information.

Instructions: Direct your comments to Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2002-0068. EPA's policy is that all comments received will be included in the public docket without change and may be made available online at www.regulations.gov, including any personal information provided, unless the comment includes information claimed to be Confidential Business Information (CBI) or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Do not submit information that you consider to be CBI or otherwise protected through www.regulations.gov or e-mail. The www.regulations.gov Web site is an "anonymous access" system, which means EPA will not know your identity or contact information unless you provide it in the body of your comment. If you send an e-mail comment directly to EPA without going through www.regulations.gov, your e-mail address will be automatically captured and included as part of the comment that is placed in the public docket and made available on the Internet. If you submit an electronic comment, EPA recommends that you include your name and other contact information in the body of your comment and with any disk or CD ROM you submit. If EPA cannot read your comment due to technical difficulties and cannot contact you for clarification, EPA may not be able to consider your comment. Electronic files should avoid the use of special characters, any form of encryption, and be free of any defects or viruses. For additional information about EPA's public docket, visit the EPA Docket Center homepage at www.epa.gov/epahome/dockets.htm. For additional instructions on submitting comments, go to Unit I.C of the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of the document.

Docket: All documents in the docket are listed in the www.regulations.gov index. Although listed in the index, some information is not publicly available, e.g., CBI or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Certain other material, such as copyrighted material, will be publicly