



State of Utah

Department of
Environmental Quality

Amanda Smith
Executive Director

Brad T Johnson
Deputy Director

GARY R. HERBERT.
Governor

GREG BELL
Lieutenant Governor

NEWS RELEASE

May 2, 2012

Contact:

Donna Kemp Spangler, (801) 536-4484
Communications Director

Utah Meets Ozone Standard, EPA Reports

Salt Lake City, Utah – In a significant achievement in approving air quality in Utah, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that the Wasatch Front is meeting the tighter standards for ozone set in 2008.

EPA, however, has designated the Uintah Basin as “unclassifiable,” leaving it out of the regulatory designations until future air monitoring data shows noncompliance with the Clean Air Act.

“This is great news because it means that our air has improved,” said Bryce Bird, director of the Division of Air Quality (DAQ). “This shows that our planning efforts to bring counties along the Wasatch Front into compliance with the new standards have worked.”

In 2008, EPA set a new ozone standard from an effective standard of 84 parts per billion (ppb) measured over the highest 8-hour average on a given day to 75 ppb. Ozone monitoring available prior to 2008 showed that ozone trends were improving but several areas along the Wasatch Front were just above the new standard. Ozone reduction strategies continued the trend of improvement. The most recent three years of monitoring showed attainment with the standard.

Ozone is created when nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds from vehicles, industries and other sources react with heat and sunlight and can cause respiratory problems.

The EPA notified Governor Gary R. Herbert that Utah is meeting federal standards for ozone. The ozone along the Wasatch Front has improved because of cleaner-burning vehicles, voluntary efforts by individuals to reduce driving on smoggy days and stricter controls on industry.

“This is a notable milestone for Utahns,” said Gov. Gary R. Herbert. “It demonstrates we all can make a difference and improve Utah's air. We need to go further, however, and commit to continued improvements on a statewide scale. I encourage everyone to make a pledge for better air quality by signing up for U-CAIR.” (<http://www.ucair.utah.gov/>)

-MORE-

195 North 1950 West • Salt Lake City, UT
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 144810 • Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4810
phone (801) 536-4402 • fax (801) 536-0061
T.D.D. (801) 536-4414 • www.deq.utah.gov

Printed on 100% recycled paper

“I am pleased to inform you that no areas in Utah violate the 2008 standards based on monitored information from regulatory monitors,” said Lisa Jackson, EPA administrator.

However, she noted that although the Uintah Basin began detecting levels of ozone exceeding the standards beginning in 2009 there has yet been three consecutive years of certified monitoring to determine whether there is a violation of the 2008 standard.

“For this reason, the EPA is designating Uintah and Duchesne counties ‘unclassifiable.’” Once three consecutive years of certified data are available, EPA will evaluate whether the designation for that area will be revised.

This past winter, DAQ scientists lead a multi-agency ozone study in the Uintah Basin to gather data to find out what’s causing the ozone. That data is under review. Air monitoring in the Basin will continue to assess the problem and partner with the oil and gas industry to come up with solutions before the designation takes place, said Bird.

DAQ is currently working with stakeholders on a plan – to be unveiled by December – to meet the federal standards for small particulate pollution, a problem typically in the winter.

“Air quality improvements can be achieved as shown here,” Bird said. “It can be achieved through voluntary efforts through the Governor’s U-CAIR initiative and better pollution controls on vehicles and industry.”

For more information, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/ozonedesignations/2008standards/regs.htm>

###