

November 26, 2025

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
EPA Docket Center, Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2025-1477
Mail code: 28221T
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Attention: Docket No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2025-1477

Re: Comments on the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for Visibility Protection:
Regional Haze State Plan Requirements Rule Revision

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments regarding the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) October 2, 2025 advanced notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM) entitled "Visibility Protection: Regional Haze State Plan Requirements Rule Revision." 90 Fed. Reg. 47677. The ANPRM seeks input regarding how the Regional Haze Rule (RHR) can be restructured to streamline states' visibility improvement obligations under the federal Clean Air Act. *Id.* In the ANPRM EPA requested comments and information on the following topics:

- Topic 1: Development and implementation of a reasonable progress metric and consideration of the four statutory factors
- Topic 2: Development of criteria used to determine when a SIP revision is necessary
- Topic 3: Determining SIP content requirements.

PADEP provides the following comments, submitted herein, to the topics for which EPA requested input.

Topic 1: Development and Implementation of a Reasonable Progress Metric and Consideration of the Four Statutory Factors

PADEP submitted a comment letter on August 12, 2024, in response to EPA's early engagement memorandum for proposed revisions for the Third Regional Haze planning period, Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2023-0262¹. PADEP's letter provides a thorough background on the RHR and a robust analysis of and recommendations on reasonable further progress and the four-factor analysis. PADEP remains committed to the comments made in that document and does not wish to modify them at this time. PADEP's complete comment document is attached (Attachment 1) and incorporated herein by reference for EPA's consideration.

¹ EPA Memorandum, "Posting EPA-HQ-OAR-2023-0262 to Regulations.gov for Public Access;" E. Miller. (March 27, 2024). See "RH Nonregulatory Docket Posting Memo" at <https://www.regulations.gov/document/EPA-HQ-OAR-2023-0262-0001>

Topic 2: Development of Criteria Used to Determine When a SIP Revision is Necessary

Currently, the SIP revision for the third planning period is due July 31, 2028, see 40 CFR 51.308(f), ten years after the second planning period SIP revision's original deadline.

Considering EPA's three-year deadline extension for the second planning period SIP revision from July 31, 2018 to July 31, 2021, PADEP recommends an extension of the deadline for the third planning period. PADEP recommends EPA consider extending the deadline for the third planning period for an additional ten years after July 31, 2021, making the new deadline July 31, 2031. This extension could also be applied to future planning periods.

PADEP also finds the requirement for states to complete a five-year progress report to be repetitive, burdensome, and lacking the flexibility needed for air resource management planning. PADEP recommends that EPA consider making the five-year progress report optional. Removing this requirement would reduce administrative burden, allowing PADEP to allocate staffing resources towards achieving additional mission outcomes to further reduce air pollution and better protect Pennsylvania residents and visitors.

Topic 3: Determining SIP Content Requirements

Two benchmarks have been identified by the Mid-Atlantic/Northeast Visibility Union (MANE-VU) Technical Support Committee, of which Pennsylvania is a member, to determine if a Class I area, or a national park or wilderness area, has made reasonable progress: (1) the universal rate of progress (URP) and (2) the reasonable progress goal (RPG).

Previously, EPA asserted that URP is not the single determining factor to achieving visibility goals. 90 FR 25933, June 18, 2025. PADEP supports MANE-VU's position that a Class I area that is below its URP and achieves its RPG on a five-year rolling average is considered as making reasonable progress. In this scenario, certain SIP revision requirements, such as evaluation of additional measures for making reasonable further progress, for example, would be suspended.

Further, since there are diminished, and limited availability of emission reductions from point sources in the Commonwealth, PADEP recommends EPA consider evaluating the potential emission reductions that could be achieved from large emitting point sources in upwind states. There are additional annual emission reductions for nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and sulfur dioxide (SO₂) through optimizing pollution controls in these states. This is particularly true for coal-fired power plants in states outside of the Ozone Transport Region. Additionally, PADEP notes that a large portion of NO_x emissions in the Commonwealth are not typically addressed by the Regional Haze Program and are often not within PADEP's authority to regulate. Examples include on-road vehicles, non-road vehicles, and wood-fired residential heating devices. PADEP recommends that EPA explore opportunities for further emission reductions from these types of sources to benefit both visibility and public health and safety.

Last, PADEP recommends that EPA consider pursuing a more inclusive strategy to achieve further emission reductions, including fostering partnerships with states to research and develop

cost effective and technically feasible control techniques for Regional Haze pollutants to achieve emission reductions from non-point sources. These control techniques could be adopted by states and incorporated in future SIP revisions.

Conclusion

PADEP appreciates the opportunity to comment on the ANPRM for the RHR. PADEP is committed to implementing technically and economically feasible point source emission reduction strategies. However, this cannot be the sole emission reduction strategy. Significant emission reductions are available from implementing control measures on upwind sources outside of the Commonwealth's jurisdiction.

Should you have any questions or need additional information please contact Nicholas Lazor, Director of the Bureau of Air Quality, by e-mail at nlazor@pa.gov or by telephone at (717) 772-3952. We look forward to working with you in the future to achieve the best solutions to improve visibility in Class I areas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica L Shirley".

Jessica Shirley
Secretary

Attachment