

News Release

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For Immediate Release



San Joaquin Valley
Air Pollution
Control District

TO:

**Local News, Agriculture and
Business Sections**

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Air District reaches historic air quality milestone District attains a federal standard for particulate matter

Fresno, CA – The San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District has submitted a letter to the California Air Resources Board requesting that the San Joaquin Valley air basin be reclassified as in attainment for the federal health-based standard for airborne particulate matter that is 10 microns and smaller, or PM10.

The letter states that the air basin has recorded three consecutive calendar years with no violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standard for PM10. Since 1990, emissions of PM10 and its precursors have dropped 36% as a result of the extraordinary commitments undertaken by the Air District and the Valley's businesses, citizens and local governments. In order to meet the standard, the Valley Air District has provided three years of data showing that PM10 concentrations did not exceed 24-hour and annual caps.

"The magnitude of this achievement cannot be understated. Over that past 15 years, the residents of the Valley have come to understand the gravity of our air quality situation, and the work and money invested into cleaning our air is beginning to produce dividends," stated Seyed Sadredin, Executive Director of the Air District.

Studies have linked particulate pollution to the reduction of lung function, increased hospital and emergency room admissions, and premature deaths. Epidemiological studies have shown a direct link between exposure to PM and these adverse health effects. Substantial improvement in PM10 air quality, including three consecutive years without exceeding the health standard, is a major step forward in improving the quality of life for all Valley residents.

Sadredin cautions, however, that much work still exists if the Valley is to reach similar success with the federal standards for the smaller PM2.5 and ozone.

"Although reaching the federal standard for PM10 is a huge accomplishment for the Valley, it by no means indicates that we can relax our efforts. If anything, it indicates that only through continued innovation, diligence, and strategic partnerships can major air-quality goals be reached," Sadredin stated.

Once the data is fully reviewed, the California Air Resources Board will initiate the process for the US Environmental Protection Agency to officially declare that the San Joaquin Valley is in attainment of the federal ambient PM10 standards. Once that declaration has been received, the Valley Air District will develop a PM10 maintenance plan to ensure the continued attainment of the PM10 standards, including implementation of regulations and initiatives needed to mitigate public health concerns caused by population growth.

District staff will be available for on camera interviews April 25-27, 2006. The Valley Air District covers eight counties including San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare and the valley portion of Kern. For more information, visit www.valleyair.org. Or, call the nearest District office: Fresno (559) 230-6000, Bakersfield (661) 326-6900 and Modesto (209) 557-6400.