



Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

December 17, 2021

Summary of 179B Demonstration for El Paso County

Ozone Background

Ozone is a chemical that can cause breathing problems when there is too much of it in the air. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets health-based standards for the ozone level allowed in an area. When the air in an area has high ozone pollution, state and local officials must take certain actions, including possibly creating new rules to reduce emissions in the area.

Introduction

Because El Paso County did not meet the ozone standard in 2021, the EPA is requiring additional actions. Studies show areas in Mexico contribute to ozone levels in El Paso County, therefore, TCEQ plans to submit a demonstration to the EPA that shows El Paso County would have met the ozone standard if there had been no emissions from Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. This demonstration is allowed under Section 179B of the federal Clean Air Act (FCAA).

Summary

Analyses of the El Paso region's air quality over the past decade show:

- Ciudad Juárez has twice the population as the City of El Paso.
- Municipio de Juárez emits two and half times the ozone forming pollution as El Paso County.
- Emissions from Municipio de Juárez have increased, while El Paso County emissions have decreased.
- On most days with high ozone pollution in El Paso County, the winds blow from Ciudad Juárez.
- Computer model results show El Paso County would meet the EPA ozone standard if emissions from Ciudad Juárez were removed.

Effect

If the demonstration is approved by the EPA, the TCEQ would not be required by the EPA to create new rules to reduce emissions in El Paso County.