

# EPA: Lucas County, Ohio, Now Meets Health-based Sulfur Dioxide Standard

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CHICAGO (Jan. 21, 2004) — U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced today that all of Lucas County, Ohio, now meets the health-based, outdoor air-quality standard for sulfur dioxide.

Lucas County east of Toledo has several industrial facilities that have substantially reduced their sulfur dioxide emissions over the years. EPA is redesignating this area as a sulfur dioxide attainment area. The action will be published soon in the Federal Register.

"This area once had a serious sulfur dioxide problem," said EPA Region 5 Administrator Tom Skinner. "We congratulate Lucas County and the state of Ohio on this achievement."

Sulfur dioxide is a pungent, colorless gas formed primarily by the burning of sulfur-containing fossil fuels and ores. Major sources include fossil fuel-burning power plants and industrial boilers. To meet the health-based standard, outdoor air concentrations must not exceed 0.14 parts per million, averaged over 24 hours.

"This is great news for people in the area and another completed item in Ohio EPA's plan to bring all of Ohio into compliance with clean-air standards," said Ohio EPA Director Christopher Jones. EPA also approved several Ohio rules limiting sulfur dioxide emissions. Finally, EPA approved state plans to maintain the health-based standard at least through 2014.

Exposure to sulfur dioxide can impair breathing, aggravate existing respiratory diseases like bronchitis and reduce the ability of the lungs to clear foreign particles. Sulfur dioxide can also cause acid rain and contribute to fine particle pollution. Children, the elderly and people with existing heart and lung conditions are the most sensitive to sulfur dioxide.

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