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SIP Revision: Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂) Modeling Demonstration, Harris County, June 29, 1994

On June 29, 1994, the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) adopted a modeling demonstration State Implementation Plan (SIP) revision to prevent redesignation to nonattainment for Harris County for SO₂.

Summary of the SIP Revision

Adoption Date: 06/29/1994

EPA Approval Date: 03/06/1995 ([60 FR 12125](#))

Background: During 1986, 1988, and 1990, four monitored violations of the primary 24-hour SO₂ National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) occurred at a monitoring site near the Houston Ship Channel in Harris County. Due to these violations and a 1987 modeling study that predicted exceedances of the SO₂ NAAQS in Harris County, the EPA initiated the process of redesignating the area to nonattainment on April 22, 1991. On May 10, 1991, the governor recommended that a small portion of Harris County be designated nonattainment for SO₂, but the EPA proposed that the nonattainment area include a larger area within Harris County based on the 1987 modeling analysis. In response to these developments, the Radian Corporation, which represented the Houston Regional Monitoring Network (HRM), approached the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and TNRCC with a proposal to forestall nonattainment designation through voluntary reductions in allowable SO₂ emissions from Houston industries. By achieving these emission reductions, making them federally enforceable, and executing an in-depth modeling study, HRM sought to demonstrate that Harris County would be in attainment for SO₂, and could thereby avoid an SO₂ nonattainment designation. The EPA agreed to defer its final designation for Harris County to allow time to complete the modeling analysis.

Key Changes: Local companies agreed to a "Voluntary Reduction Plan" to reduce allowable SO₂ emissions by approximately 94,000 tons per year. This represented about 33% of the original 287,000 tons. The new maximum-allowable emissions rates, when modeled under worst-case meteorological conditions, predicted no exceedances of the SO₂ NAAQS. On June 29, 1994, the TNRCC adopted this SIP revision, which contained the agreed orders limiting SO₂ allowable emissions at 13 non-permitted companies in Harris County and the modeling demonstrating that these emissions reductions would result in attainment of the SO₂ NAAQS.

SIP Narrative and Appendices

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Harris County Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂) Modeling Demonstration SIP Revision

- [Harris County Sulfur Dioxide SIP Revision](#)
- Appendices
 - Appendix A: Governor Richards' Nonattainment Declaration
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- Appendix C: SO₂ Monitoring Station Data
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