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11	Diversity and Sterra Citio			
12	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT			
13	FOR THE NORTHERN DIS'	TRICT OF CALIFORNIA		
14				
15	CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY and SIERRA CLUB,	)		
16	Plaintiffs,			
17	Fiamijjs,	Civil Action No		
18	V			
19	ANDREW R. WHEELER, in his official	COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE		
20	capacity as Administrator, United States Environmental Protection Agency,	RELIEF		
21	Defendant.			
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COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

#### INTRODUCTION

- 1. All areas of the country are legally entitled to healthy, clean air. Not all areas have it.

  Plaintiffs Center for Biological Diversity and Sierra Club bring this action for declaratory judgment and injunctive relief to compel Defendant Andrew R. Wheeler ("Administrator," "EPA," or "Defendant"), in his official capacity as Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to carry out his overdue legal obligation to officially determine whether certain moderate nonattainment areas of the country attained or did not attain the 2008 National Ambient Air Quality Standards ("standard" or "standards") for ozone by the statutory deadline, an action necessary to strengthen clean air protections so as to bring communities with unhealthy levels of ozone pollution into compliance with clean air standards by a new legal deadline.
- 2. Ground-level ozone, or smog, seriously harms human health and the environment. Ozone is formed when volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides, emitted from, for example, tailpipes, smokestacks, and oil and gas production, react with sunlight. At high enough levels, it impairs breathing, inflames lungs, sends people to the hospital, and can even kill. Ozone also harms growing plants and ecosystems. The Clean Air Act requires EPA to establish health- and welfare-protective national ambient air quality standards ("ozone standards") to limit the amount of ozone allowed in the outdoor air. 42 U.S.C. § 7409(a), (b). Areas with ozone pollution levels that violate the standards must clean up their air.
- 3. EPA created the ozone standard at issue here in 2008, based on its finding that the prior ozone standard was inadequate to protect public health and welfare. 73 FR 16,436 (Mar. 27, 2008) (promulgated Mar. 12, 2008). EPA then seriously delayed the implementation of the 2008 ozone standard and made initial nonattainment designations with respective classifications effective July 20, 2012 well after the Clean Air Act's two-year deadline. *See* 42 U.S.C.

§ 7407(d)(1)(B)(i) (designations due two years from the date of promulgation of the new or revised standard); *NRDC v. EPA*, 777 F.3d 456, 463 (D.C. Cir. 2014). Under the Act, the attainment deadline for certain nonattainment areas – those classified as "moderate" – was July 20, 2018. 42 U.S.C. § 7511(a)(1); 40 C.F.R. § 51.1103(a) tbl.1.

- 4. Within six months of the passage of the attainment deadline, or by January 20, 2019, the Act required EPA to determine whether each moderate nonattainment area met the deadline, with those that did not being reclassified by operation of law so that they are subject to more effective protections, and to publish notice in the Federal Register of the attainment determinations and reclassifications. 42 U.S.C. § 7511(b)(2)(A), (B).
- 5. This deadline has passed and the Administrator has not yet finalized attainment determinations and published the required notice in the Federal Register for moderate nonattainment areas under the 2008 ozone standard. These areas include some of the most polluted areas of the country, where millions of people live and work, including Petitioners' members. EPA's failure to meet the deadline that Congress prescribed violates the Clean Air Act. Thus, Plaintiffs seek both declaratory relief and an order to compel the Administrator to make and publish in the Federal Register final determinations for the following areas: Imperial County, CA; Mariposa County, CA; Nevada County (Western part), CA; San Diego County, CA; Phoenix-Mesa, AZ; Baltimore, MD; Chicago-Naperville, IL-IN-WI; Dallas-Fort Worth, TX; Greater Connecticut, CT; Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, TX; New York-N. New Jersey-Long Island, CT-NJ-NY; and Sheboygan County, WI.

## JURISDICTION, VENUE, AND NOTICE

6. This action arises under the Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7511(b)(2)(A), (B). Because this action raises a federal question, this Court has jurisdiction pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 7604(a)(2)

and 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1361. This Court may grant the relief Plaintiffs request pursuant to 42

U.S.C. § 7604(a)(2) and 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201(a), 2202, and 1361. Plaintiffs have a right to bring

this action pursuant to the Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7604(a)(2); 28 U.S.C. § 1361; and the Administrative Procedure Act, 5 U.S.C. §§ 701-706.

7. By certified mail, with a courtesy copy sent by electronic mail, Plaintiffs provided the Administrator with written notice posted on March 4, 2019, of this action as required by the

Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7604(b)(2), and 40 C.F.R. Part 54.

- 8. Venue is proper in this Court under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e) because a) a Plaintiff resides in this district; b) this district is one in which Defendant EPA resides and performs its official duties; and c) a substantial part of the events and omissions giving rise to this claim occurred and is occurring in this district because EPA's Regional Office in San Francisco, California, has a substantial role in implementing the EPA duties at issue in this case.
- 9. Pursuant to Civil L.R. 3-2(c), (d), this case is properly assigned to the San Francisco or Oakland Division of this Court because a Plaintiff resides in Oakland, and Defendant EPA resides in San Francisco.

#### **PARTIES**

- 10. Plaintiff **Center for Biological Diversity** is an organization incorporated and existing under the laws of the State of California, with its main California office in Oakland. The Center uses science and law in its work, which focuses on the preservation, protection, and restoration of biodiversity, native species, ecosystems, public lands and waters, and public health.
- 11. Plaintiff **Sierra Club** is a nonprofit corporation organized and existing under the laws of the State of California, with its headquarters located in Oakland. The Club is dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the environment.

- 12. Plaintiffs have members living, working, and engaging in outdoor activities in all 50 states and Washington, DC, including in the areas at issue here.
- 13. Defendant Andrew R. Wheeler is the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Administrator Wheeler is charged with the duty to uphold the Clean Air Act and to take required regulatory actions according to the schedules established by the Act. Administrator Wheeler is sued in his official capacity.

# FACTUAL BACKGROUND: OZONE

- 14. Ozone, the main component of smog, is a corrosive air pollutant that inflames the lungs and constricts breathing, and likely kills people. *See Am. Trucking Ass'ns v. EPA*, 283 F.3d 355, 359 (D.C. Cir. 2002); 80 FR 65,292, 65,308/3-09/1 (Oct. 26, 2015); EPA, *Integrated Science Assessment for Ozone and Related Photochemical Oxidants* 2-20 to -24 tbl.2-1, EPA-HQ-OAR-2008-0699-0405 (Feb. 2013) ("ISA"). It causes and exacerbates asthma attacks, emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and other serious health harms. *E.g.*, EPA, *Policy Assessment for the Review of the Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards* 3-18, 3-26 to -29, 3-32, EPA-HQ-OAR-2008-0699-0404 (Aug. 2014) ("PA"); ISA 2-16 to -18, 2-20 to -24 tbl.2-1. Ozone-induced health problems can force people to change their ordinary activities, requiring children to stay indoors and forcing people to take medication and miss work or school. *E.g.*, PA 4-12.
- Ozone can harm healthy adults, but others are more vulnerable. *See* 80 FR 65,310/1-3. Because their respiratory tracts are not fully developed, children are especially vulnerable to ozone pollution, particularly when they have elevated respiratory rates, as when playing outdoors. *E.g.*, *id.* 65,310/3, 65,446/1; PA 3-81 to -82. People living with lung disease and the elderly also have heightened vulnerability. *See* 80 FR 65,310/3. People living with asthma suffer more severe impacts from ozone exposure than healthy individuals and are more vulnerable at lower levels of exposure. *Id.* 65,311/1 n.37, 65,322/3.

16. Ozone also damages vegetation and forested ecosystems, causing or contributing to widespread stunting of plant growth, tree deaths, visible leaf injury, reduced carbon storage, and reduced crop yields. PA 5-2 to -3; ISA 9-1. By harming vegetation, ozone can also damage entire ecosystems, leading to ecological and economic losses. 80 FR 65,370/1-2, 65,377/3.

# STATUTORY AND REGULATORY BACKGROUND

- 17. Congress enacted the Clean Air Act "to protect and enhance the quality of the Nation's air resources so as to promote the public health and welfare and the productive capacity of its population." 42 U.S.C. § 7401(b)(1). One "primary goal" is "pollution prevention." *Id.* § 7401(c). Congress found the Act to be necessary in part because "the growth in the amount and complexity of air pollution brought about by urbanization, industrial development, and the increasing use of motor vehicles, has resulted in mounting dangers to the public health and welfare." *Id.* § 7401(a)(2).
- 18. Central to the Act is the requirement that EPA establish national ambient air quality standards for certain widespread air pollutants that endanger public health and welfare, referred to as "criteria pollutants." *Id.* §§ 7408-7409. One criteria pollutant is ground-level ozone. *See* 40 C.F.R. §§ 50.9, 50.10, 50.15, 50.19.
- 19. The national ambient air quality standards establish allowable concentrations of criteria pollutants in ambient air, *i.e.*, outdoor air. Primary standards protect public health, including that of sensitive populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly. 42 U.S.C. § 7409(b)(1). Secondary standards protect public welfare, including protection against damage to animals, crops, vegetation, and water. *Id.* §§ 7409(b)(2), 7602(h). EPA must review and, as appropriate, revise these standards at least every five years. *Id.* § 7409(d)(1).
- 20. After EPA sets or revises a standard, the Clean Air Act requires EPA to take steps to implement the standard. *See*, *e.g.*, 73 FR 16,503/1-3. Within two years of revising a standard,

- EPA must "designate" areas as not meeting the standard, or "nonattainment"; meeting the standard, or "attainment"; or, if EPA lacks information to make a designation, "unclassifiable." 42 U.S.C. § 7407(d)(1)(A)-(B).
- 21. States must plan how they will attain the new or revised standard. They must implement certain protections designed to ensure that air quality in nonattainment areas will attain ozone standards by specified deadlines. *Id.* §§ 7410(a), (c), 7502; *see also id.* §§ 7511-7511f (provisions specific to ozone nonattainment areas). Among the protections is a preconstruction permitting program, which requires modified and new "major" factories and power plants in nonattainment areas to operate state-of-the-art pollution controls and to secure reductions in air pollution from other sources sufficient to more than offset the new pollution they will introduce. *Id.* §§ 7503, 7511a. Each state must adopt a "state implementation plan" that includes all the protections Congress required for nonattainment areas and any specific measures the state determines should be implemented to address local sources of air pollution contributing to elevated ozone levels. *Id.* § 7410(a)(2)(I).
- 22. Simultaneous with designations, the Act requires EPA to classify each ozone nonattainment area based on the severity of its ozone pollution. *Id.* § 7511(a)(1) tbl.1. The classifications are, in increasing order, "marginal," "moderate," "serious," "severe," and "extreme." *Id.*
- 23. The higher the classification, the longer the area has to come into attainment, but the more stringent the controls a state must adopt. For example, in a "moderate" nonattainment area, the Act's preconstruction permitting program applies only to a source with the potential to emit at least 100 tons per year of an ozone-forming pollutant, and it requires the source to offset each new ton with 1.15 tons of reductions in that pollutant. *Id.* §§ 7511a(b)(5), 7602(j). By contrast, in

a "serious" nonattainment area, the threshold for the preconstruction permitting program is 50 tons per year, and the offset ratio increases to 1.2 tons of reductions for every ton proposed to be emitted. *Id.* § 7511a(c), (c)(10). Thus, in a serious area, more new and modified sources must apply state-of-the-art pollution controls and obtain offsetting pollution reductions, and they must obtain more offsets, than in a moderate area.

24. Within six months of the passage of an attainment deadline, the Act requires EPA to determine whether each area met the deadline; areas that failed to meet their deadline are reclassified by operation of law, and EPA must publish notice in the Federal Register of its attainment determinations and any reclassifications. 42 U.S.C. § 7511(b)(2)(A), (B). Under limited circumstances, an area may qualify for up to two one-year extensions. 42 U.S.C. § 7511(a)(5); 40 C.F.R. § 51.1107.

# FACTUAL BACKGROUND: 2008 OZONE STANDARD REVISION AND EPA'S FAILURE TO MAKE ATTAINMENT DETERMINATIONS FOR MODERATE NONATTAINMENT AREAS

- 25. EPA strengthened the ozone standard in 2008 based on an extensive scientific record demonstrating that the prior ozone standards were inadequate to protect public health and welfare. 73 FR 16,436. EPA set the level of the standard at 75 parts per billion.
- 26. Violations of the 2008 ozone standard are found by analyzing air monitoring data about the actual level of ozone in the air to determine whether the three-year average of the annual fourth highest eight-hour ozone concentrations exceed 75 parts per billion. 40 C.F.R. § 50.15(b).
- 27. The revision to the ozone standard triggered EPA's obligation to "promulgate the designations of all areas" of the country as meeting ("in attainment of") or not meeting ("in nonattainment of") the standard within two years—*i.e.*, by March 12, 2010. 42 U.S.C.

§ 7407(d)(1)(B)(i). EPA extended the two-year deadline by an additional year, to March 12, 2011, and then missed it. 77 FR 30,088, 30,091/1 (May 21, 2012). 1

28. Ultimately, EPA completed all designations effective July 20, 2012. *Id.* 30,088/2; 77 FR 34,221, 34,221/3 (June 11, 2012). The Administrator's designations triggered Clean Air Act attainment deadlines. Moderate nonattainment areas had up to six years, *i.e.*, until July 20, 2018, to attain the 2008 ozone standard. 77 FR 30,160 (May 21, 2012); *see* 80 FR 12,264, 12,267/3-68/2 (Mar. 6, 2015) (revising attainment deadlines in light of *NRDC*, 777 F.3d 456).<sup>2</sup>

29. Within six months of the moderate attainment deadline, *i.e.*, by January 20, 2019, EPA had a mandatory duty to determine whether those moderate areas had in fact attained the 2008 ozone standard. *See* 40 C.F.R. § 51.1103(a) tbl.1; 83 FR 56,781 (Nov. 14, 2018). Areas that did not attain would be reclassified by operation of law, and EPA had a mandatory duty to publish notice in the Federal Register identifying the areas that failed to attain and those areas' reclassifications.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2015, EPA reviewed and revised the ozone standard. EPA set a new more stringent ozone standard at 70 parts per billion based on a finding that the 2008 standard is not requisite to protect public health with an adequate level of safety. 80 FR 65,292 (Oct. 26, 2015). This standard is not at issue here.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The marginal area attainment deadline passed on July 20, 2015. EPA subsequently made attainment determinations, including reclassifications and extensions, and published notices in the Federal Register for all marginal nonattainment areas. 81 FR 26,697, 26,699 tbl.3 (May 4, 2016) (among areas that failed to attain the standard and were reclassified to "moderate" are Chicago-Naperville, IL-IN-WI; Greater Connecticut, CT; Imperial County, CA; Mariposa County, CA; Nevada County (Western part), CA; New York-N. New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-CT; Phoenix-Mesa, AZ; and San Diego County, CA); 81 FR 90,207 (Dec. 14, 2016) (reclassifying Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, TX, area to "moderate" after granting one-year extension); 81 FR 91,841 (Dec. 19, 2016) (reclassifying Sheboygan County, WI, to "moderate" after granting one-year extension).

On November 14, 2018, EPA initiated a proposal for certain moderate nonattainment

areas. 83 FR 56,781. This proposal fails to address all moderate nonattainment areas and is not

January 20, 2019, has passed, and, to date, EPA has failed to make the required

attainment determinations under the 2008 standard and to publish the required notice in the

Federal Register for the following moderate areas under the 2008 ozone standard: Imperial

County, CA; Mariposa County, CA; Nevada County (Western part), CA; San Diego County,

CA; Phoenix-Mesa, AZ; Baltimore, MD; Chicago-Naperville, IL-IN-WI; Dallas-Fort Worth,

Island, CT-NJ-NY; and Sheboygan County, WI. See 42 U.S.C. § 7511(b)(2)(A), (B).

TX; Greater Connecticut, CT; Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, TX; New York-N. New Jersey-Long

PLAINTIFFS' INJURIES

activities in the areas for which EPA has failed to make and publish in the Federal Register final

attainment determinations, including reclassifications, in the timeframe required by 42 U.S.C.

§ 7511(b)(2)(A). These areas include major metropolitan areas where air quality violates the

2008 ozone standard, such as San Diego, Phoenix, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, and New York

poor air quality conditions that adversely affect or threaten their health, and by nullifying or

delaying measures and procedures mandated by the Act to protect their health from ozone

the 2008 standard can exacerbate Plaintiffs' members' health problems such as asthma and

chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, causing physical problems that force them to limit

pollution in places where they live, work, travel, and recreate. Indeed, ozone levels that exceed

The acts and omissions of EPA alleged here harm Plaintiffs' members by prolonging

Plaintiffs' members include individuals who live, work, travel, and engage in recreational

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COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

outdoor activities that they would otherwise be able to do and enjoy.

City, as well as other communities like Imperial County, CA.

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34. The acts and omissions of EPA alleged here also harm Plaintiffs' members because their reasonable concerns about the health effects of their ozone exposure diminish their enjoyment of activities they previously enjoyed or would like to continue to engage in, and of areas they previously enjoyed or would like to continue to use.

- 35. The acts and omissions of EPA alleged here further harm Plaintiffs' members' welfare interest in using and enjoying the natural environment in areas that do not meet the 2008 standard. Elevated levels of ozone damage plant life, aquatic life, and natural ecosystems, thus harming Plaintiffs' members' recreational and aesthetic interests. Ozone damage to vegetation can lead to wildlife avoidance of certain areas, as well as a reduction in biodiversity or other changes to a local community's ecosystem, making it more difficult for Plaintiffs' members to observe, fish, cultivate, study, research, or write about wildlife, plants, or ecosystems.
- 36. Even Plaintiffs' members in other areas that are downwind of the areas at issue in this Complaint are injured by EPA's failure to act. By delaying enhanced controls on ozone pollution in the areas at issue here, EPA prolongs and exacerbates ozone levels downwind that harm Plaintiffs' members in those areas.
- 37. The acts and omissions of EPA alleged here further deprive Plaintiffs and their members of procedural rights and protections to which they would otherwise be entitled, including, but not limited to, the right to participate in proceedings to determine whether their communities (or upwind communities) meet the 2008 ozone standard or must increase protections against ozone pollution, the right to judicially challenge final attainment determinations adversely affecting their members, the right to enforce requirements of the Act for preparation and implementation of plans to remedy and prevent violations of the 2008 ozone standard, and the right to comment on and judicially challenge such plans.

38. The EPA acts and omissions alleged here further injure Plaintiffs and their members by
depriving them of information to which they are entitled by law, including, but not limited to,
EPA's published identification of each area's attainment status. If Plaintiffs had access to such
information, they would use it to, among other things: educate their members and the public
about the scope of ozone standard violations nationwide, including identification of areas that
still violate the 2008 ozone standard and areas that now meet the standard; advocate for adoption
of adequate measures to bring areas that continue to violate that standard into compliance and
prevent relapse of violations in areas found to have timely attained; and more efficiently target
Plaintiffs' actions to promote effective implementation of the 2008 ozone standard. Such
information would also assist Plaintiffs' members in determining whether they are exposed to
ozone levels that violate the health standard and in taking action to protect themselves, their
families, their property, and their animals from ozone pollution. The acts and omissions
complained of here deprive Plaintiffs and their members of the benefits of such information and
thus cause them injury.

- 39. EPA's failure also hampers Plaintiffs' ability to perform certain programmatic functions essential to their missions, such as ensuring that states put in place the public health and environmental protections that accompany more stringent nonattainment classifications, and educating the public about these protections.
- 40. Accordingly, the health, recreational, aesthetic, procedural, informational, and organizational interests of Plaintiffs and their members have been and continue to be adversely affected by the acts and omissions of EPA alleged here.

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41. A court order requiring EPA to promptly make and publish in the Federal Register final determinations for the nonattainment areas complained of here, as the law requires, would redress Plaintiffs' and Plaintiffs' members' injuries.

## **CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

42. The allegations of all foregoing paragraphs are incorporated as if set forth fully below.

# Violation of the Clean Air Act

- 43. EPA's deadline for making moderate area attainment determinations and publishing notice thereof in the Federal Register under the 2008 ozone standard was January 20, 2019.
- 44. To date, the Administrator has failed to make and publish in the Federal Register final attainment determinations and reclassifications by that deadline, as required by 42 U.S.C. § 7511(b)(2)(A) and (B), for the following moderate areas: Imperial County, CA; Mariposa
- County, CA; Nevada County (Western part), CA; San Diego County, CA; Phoenix-Mesa, AZ;
- Baltimore, MD; Chicago-Naperville, IL-IN-WI; Dallas-Fort Worth, TX; Greater Connecticut,
- CT; Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, TX; New York-N. New Jersey-Long Island, CT-NJ-NY; and Sheboygan County, WI.
  - 45. This constitutes a "failure of the Administrator to perform any act or duty under this chapter which is not discretionary" within the meaning of the Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7604(a)(2), and thus is a violation of the Act. EPA's violations are ongoing.

## **RELIEF REQUESTED**

Plaintiffs respectfully request that the Court:

(1) Declare that EPA's failure to timely make and publish in the Federal Register attainment determinations, including any reclassifications, for each of the moderate areas under the 2008 National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone identified in Paragraph 44 by the deadline required by 42 U.S.C. § 7511(b)(2)(A) and (B) constitutes a "failure of the

	Administrator to perform any act or duty under this chapter which is not discretionary"		
	within the meaning of 42 U.S.C. § 7604(a)(2);		
)	Enjoin the Administrator from continuing to violate the above-described nondiscretiona		
	duty for each such area;		
)	Order the Administrator to make area attainment determinations for each of the moderate		
	nonattainment areas under the 2008 National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone		
	dentified in Paragraph 44 and to publish notice in the Federal Register identifying the		
	attainment determination and reclassification, if any, by an expeditious date-certain		
	deadline specified by this Court;		
) Retain jurisdiction to ensure compliance with the Court's decree;			
) Award Plaintiffs the costs of this action, including attorneys' fees; and,			
) Grant such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.			
Ξ.	D: May 7, 2019		
ectfully Submitted,			
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