

**California Air Resources Board
Air Quality Planning and Science Division
Air Quality Analysis Section**

**RECOMMENDED AREA DESIGNATIONS FOR THE
0.070 PPM FEDERAL 8-HOUR OZONE STANDARD**

STAFF REPORT

September 2016

California Environmental Protection Agency

 **Air Resources Board**

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Summary

On October 1, 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) revised the federal 8-hour average ozone standard, lowering it from 0.075 parts per million (ppm) to 0.070 ppm (Federal Register 26594, October 26, 2015). By October 1, 2016, all states are required to submit to U.S. EPA recommendations for area designations, together with appropriate boundaries, for this standard. The purpose of this report is to share Air Resources Board (ARB) staff's technical analysis and initial recommendations to be sent to U.S. EPA. U.S. EPA is required to make final designations by October 1, 2017.

Section 107(d)(1)(A) of the federal Clean Air Act defines a nonattainment area as any area that does not meet, or that contributes to a nearby area not meeting, the ambient air quality standard. Additionally, any area not identified as nonattainment and that meets the standard will be designated attainment, while any area that cannot be designated on the basis of available information as meeting or not meeting the standard will be designated unclassifiable.

ARB staff has performed analysis to determine appropriate designation recommendations throughout the State using the criteria outlined in the U.S. EPA's guidance memorandum¹. Based on ozone air quality monitoring data from the years 2013-2015, there are 19 areas that do not meet the 0.070 ppm standard. Sixteen of these areas are currently designated nonattainment for the 2008 federal 8-hour ozone standard of 0.075 ppm. The three remaining areas were attainment for the federal 8-hour ozone standard of 0.075 ppm, but were nonattainment for the previous 1997 federal 8-hour standard of 0.08 ppm. Staff is recommending that the boundaries for the 16 existing nonattainment areas remain the same as the boundaries for the 0.075 ppm standard. Similarly, the boundaries for the remaining three areas are consistent with the areas designated as nonattainment for the 0.08 ppm standard.

Additionally, the federal Clean Air Act allows for the designation of a Rural Transport Area if certain conditions based on emissions, population, and location exist for a nonattainment area. After evaluating each of the recommended nonattainment areas, ARB staff determined that only one area, the Tuscan Buttes nonattainment area, meets all of the criteria for a Rural Transport Area.

1.2 Air Quality Analysis

ARB maintains one of the most comprehensive ozone monitoring networks in the world. Initial recommendations from ARB staff are based on ambient ozone concentrations measured during the years 2013, 2014, and 2015 by over 170 monitors located throughout the State that have been sited and operated in accordance with federal requirements. Designation status will be updated with 2016 ozone data when U.S. EPA promulgates final designations in 2017.

¹ February 25, 2016, Area Designations for the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards, Memorandum from Janet G. McCabe, Acting Assistant Administrator, Office of Air and Radiation to Regional Administrators, Regions 1-10.

One of the first steps to determining of attainment/nonattainment is to compare the ozone design value to the level of the standard. The design value reflects a three-year average of the fourth highest 8-hour average concentration at each monitoring site. If the design value is 0.071 ppm or greater, it violates the federal standard. These three-year average design values are updated once the monitoring data from each calendar year are reviewed and certified.

Ozone design values used by ARB staff in this analysis are based on a modified calculation procedure specified by U.S. EPA as part of the 0.070 ppm ozone standard. For the prior ozone standards, the daily maximum 8-hour average for each site is determined from all 24 of the rolling 8-hour averages calculated for each day, with 18 out of the 24 averages needed for data completeness. However, for the 0.070 ppm standard, the 8-hour averages calculated for hours 00 through 06 are no longer considered and the daily maximum is determined from the 8-hour averages for hours 07 through 23, with 13 out of the 17 averages needed for data completeness. The change in calculation method was made to eliminate the occurrence of multiple exceedances of the ozone standard in the middle of the night due to overlapping 8-hour periods on two consecutive days. The new method treats this situation as one exceedance of the ozone standard, rather than two exceedances. A reduction in the number of exceedance days has the potential to lower design values. Applying the new method to data for 2013-2015, a few design values decreased, but the changes do not impact the attainment/nonattainment status for any monitoring sites in California.

U.S. EPA's guidance memorandum also states that air quality monitoring data affected by exceptional events may be excluded from use in identifying a violation if certain criteria are met. The 2015 design values in this document do not reflect the exclusion of impacts from exceptional events, as ARB staff is not aware of any events that would have affected attainment status. If ARB becomes aware of any exceptional events before final designations are promulgated, ARB will work with U.S. EPA and the air districts with jurisdiction over the exceptional event area to submit all necessary documentation.

1.3 Nonattainment Area Boundary Analysis

Ozone is not a directly emitted pollutant, but is formed in the atmosphere via photochemical reactions driven by sunlight. Because it takes time for these reactions to occur, high ozone concentrations are often found at downwind locations, sometimes far away from the initial ozone precursor emissions sources. Thus, the ozone problem is often regional in nature and encompasses many different areas, including highly populated urban areas to sparsely-populated, rural downwind areas impacted by transport.

In California, for regional pollutants, the primary considerations for air quality planning are the air basin and air district boundaries. Consistent with State law, California's air basin boundaries were established based on a scientific assessment of emissions, geography, and meteorology with a consideration of political jurisdictions. Basin boundaries are formally adopted by ARB in regulation. Local air districts have been established and their jurisdictions are defined in State law. ARB typically uses a

combination of air basin and air district boundaries to identify boundaries for areas that violate standards. However, California has several unique areas that are located far downwind of urban areas, in which cases boundaries smaller than air basin or District boundaries are warranted.

The U.S. EPA designations guidance memorandum prescribes that a five factor analysis be performed to determine nonattainment area boundaries, which includes evaluating:

1. Air Quality Data
2. Emissions and Emissions-Related Data
3. Meteorology
4. Geography/Topography
5. Jurisdictional Boundaries

The first factor, Air Quality Data, involves the evaluation of ambient ozone air quality data collected by the monitors throughout the State and was briefly discussed in Section 1.2 above. In addition to the design value for each monitoring site, assessing the spatial variation in concentrations and the trends over recent years is helpful for determining nonattainment area boundaries.

The second factor, Emissions and Emission-Related Data, involves the analysis of stationary emission sources and locations, mobile sources and traffic patterns, and population within a region. Assessing the location and magnitude of emissions in neighboring regions is also essential for determining the potential impact of transport. Statewide and county-level emissions inventories prepared by ARB and U.S. EPA and model forecasts prepared by ARB support this analysis.

The third factor, Meteorology, involves the review of climatology, including wind flow patterns, diurnal and seasonal temperature variations, and large-scale weather patterns; assessing the impact of weather on pollutant levels within a region; and determining the types of large-scale and small-scale weather features that lead to pollutant transport between regions.

The fourth factor, Geography/Topography, involves the evaluation of the diverse terrain throughout the State and the potential impact on local weather patterns and the buildup and transport of pollutants. The mountains and valleys throughout California, combined with population centers, emissions source locations, and meteorology, were the primary factor in defining distinct air basins throughout the State. Understanding the terrain within California and its impact on ozone air quality is essential to determining nonattainment area boundaries.

The fifth factor, Jurisdictional Boundaries, involves the evaluation of existing boundaries such as counties, air districts, and metropolitan planning organizations within California when determining nonattainment boundaries. Considering existing jurisdictional features provides clear legal boundaries to reference, and incorporating the boundaries assists the State and local air quality agencies in air quality planning and enforcement activities.

The five factors have been analyzed for all areas of the State and a summary of ARB's recommendations are discussed below. The ozone nonattainment boundaries already in existence for the 2008 federal 8-hour ozone standard of 0.075 ppm are the result of extensive technical analysis and continue to appropriately reflect conditions under the revised ozone standard of 0.070 ppm.

1.4 Designation Recommendations

After consideration of the five factors outlined in U.S. EPA guidance memorandum, ARB staff recommends that 19 areas in California be designated as nonattainment for the 0.070 ppm federal ozone standard. The 16 areas that are designated as nonattainment for the 0.075 ppm ozone standard would continue to be designated as nonattainment for the new standard. In addition, there are three areas that were attainment for the 0.075 ppm federal 8-hour ozone standard that violate the new standard and would also be designated nonattainment. These same three areas had previously been nonattainment for the 0.08 ppm federal 8-hour ozone standard before receiving attainment designations for the 0.075 ppm standard.

Figure 1 shows all of the areas in California that ARB is recommending for designations of Attainment, Nonattainment, and Unclassifiable. Table 1, also below, contains a listing of all the recommended nonattainment areas, the current design values based on 2013-2015 ozone data, and the geographic area covered by each nonattainment area.

1.5 Ozone Classifications

Classifications are assigned to all ozone nonattainment areas by the U.S. EPA when designations are finalized. Classifications are based on the severity of the ozone problem and trigger associated regulatory and control requirements. U.S. EPA has stated that they will release a draft implementation rule and associated guidance later this year. This draft rule, which will be available for public comment, will also include a proposed classification scheme for determining which nonattainment areas are Marginal, Moderate, Serious, Severe-15, Severe-17, or Extreme. U.S. EPA intends to finalize the draft rule prior to when, or at the same time, designations are made final. Because U.S. EPA has not released the draft implementation rule and classification scheme, no information is available at this time to enable ARB to provide information on classifications for the 0.070 ppm ozone standard.

Figure 1
Recommended Area Designations for the 0.070 ppm Federal
8-Hour Ozone Standard



Table 1

Recommended California Nonattainment Areas for the 0.070 ppm Federal 8-Hour Ozone Standard (Based on 2013-2015 Ozone Air Quality Data)

	Recommended Nonattainment Area	Design Value (ppm)	Area Included
Designated attainment for the 0.075 ppm standard	Amador County	0.071	Amador County
	Sutter Buttes	0.072	Sutter Buttes in Sutter County above 2,000 feet
	Tuolumne County	0.073	Tuolumne County
Designated nonattainment for the 0.075 ppm standard – and now meeting that standard	Calaveras County	0.073	Calaveras County
	Chico (Butte County)	0.074	Butte County
	Mariposa County	0.075	Mariposa County
	San Francisco Bay Area	0.073	Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties; southern Sonoma County; and western Solano County
	San Luis Obispo (Eastern San Luis Obispo County)	0.073	Eastern portion of San Luis Obispo County
	Tuscan Buttes	0.074	Tuscan Buttes in Tehama County above 1,800 feet
Designated nonattainment for the 0.075 ppm standard – and not yet meeting that standard	Imperial County	0.078	Imperial County
	Kern County (Eastern Kern)	0.083	Eastern portion of Kern County within the Mojave Desert Air Basin (excluding Indian Wells Valley)
	Los Angeles-San Bernardino Counties (Western Mojave Desert)	0.090	Northeastern Los Angeles County and central San Bernardino County
	Los Angeles-South Coast Air Basin	0.102	Orange County; western Los Angeles County (including Catalina and San Clemente Islands); western Riverside County; and southwestern San Bernardino County
	Nevada County (Western Part)	0.081	Portion of Nevada County west of the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains
	Riverside County (Coachella Valley)	0.088	Central Riverside County
	Sacramento Metropolitan Area	0.081	Sacramento and Yolo counties; eastern Solano County; southern Sutter County; and portions of Placer and El Dorado counties west of the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains

	Recommended Nonattainment Area	Design Value (ppm)	Area Included
	San Diego County	0.079	San Diego County
	San Joaquin Valley	0.093	Fresno, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tulare counties and western portion of Kern County within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin
	Ventura County	0.077	Continental portion of Ventura County (excludes Anacapa and San Nicholas islands)

2.0 Recommended Nonattainment Areas

2.1 Amador County

Amador County is a small county in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains that has limited population and is largely mountainous and forested. The County extends from the Central Valley floor in the west to the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the east and only has a few cities with more than 1,000 people and a limited number of small highways that inhibit vehicle miles travelled.

Amador County is bordered by the Sacramento Metropolitan Nonattainment Area to the north and west, the San Joaquin Valley Nonattainment Area to the southwest, and the Calaveras County Nonattainment Area to the south. Amador County was part of the Central Mountain Counties Nonattainment Area for the 1997 federal 8-hour ozone standard of 0.08 ppm, which also included Calaveras County. As a result of ongoing air quality improvement, by the time U.S. EPA finalized designations for the 2008 ozone standard of 0.075 ppm, Amador County met the more health-protective standard and was designated attainment. As a result, U.S.EPA eliminated the Central Mountain Counties nonattainment area and Calaveras County became its own nonattainment area.

Amador County's single ozone monitor is situated in Jackson, the second largest city in the county with approximately 4,500 people. At an elevation of about 1,250 feet and roughly in the middle of the county, this location enables the monitor to capture peak ozone concentrations from wind flows out of the north, west, and south and adequately represents air quality in a centralized and populated area of the county.

The design value for the county of 0.071 ppm is just above the new federal ozone standard. With ozone concentrations in the region trending lower over time, Amador County is expected to be attainment within the next few years. In addition, because Amador County and Calaveras County have population centers that are fairly isolated from one another, do not have significant emissions sources that impact ozone concentrations in the neighboring county, and operate and manage separate air quality programs, ARB is recommending that Amador County be designated as a separate nonattainment area from the Calaveras County nonattainment area.

2.2 Calaveras County

The Calaveras County nonattainment area will continue to include all of Calaveras County. The design value for Calaveras County is 0.073 ppm at the San Andreas-Gold Strike Road monitoring site.

2.3 Chico (Butte County)

The Chico (Butte County) nonattainment area would continue to comprise all of Butte County. There are two monitoring sites in Butte County, Chico-East Avenue and Paradise-4405 Airport Road. With a design value of 0.074 ppm, only the Paradise site in the eastern foothills portion of the county has a design value that violates the new ozone standard.

2.4 Imperial County

The Imperial County nonattainment area would continue to include the entire county. The design value for Imperial County is 0.078 ppm at the El Centro-9th Street monitor.

2.5 Kern County (Eastern Kern)

The Kern County (Eastern Kern) nonattainment area would continue to encompass almost all of Kern County within the Mojave Desert Air Basin and which falls under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Kern Air Pollution Control District. The nonattainment area would continue to exclude the Indian Wells Valley (defined as the Kern County portion of hydrologic unit 18090205), which is located in the northeastern portion of Kern County.

The Indian Wells Valley includes the town of Ridgecrest, which is located about 18 miles southwest of the Trona-Athol and Telegraph ozone monitor. The 2015 design value for the Trona monitor is 0.067 ppm and is considered more reflective of ozone concentrations in the Indian Wells Valley than the Mojave-923 Poole Street ozone monitor, located about 48 miles to the southwest of Ridgecrest.

The design value for the nonattainment area is 0.083 ppm at the Mojave-923 Poole Street monitoring site. As a result, ARB is recommending that the existing Kern County (Eastern Kern) ozone nonattainment area be designated nonattainment for the 0.070 ppm standard.

2.6 Los Angeles-San Bernardino Counties (Western Mojave Desert)

The Los Angeles-San Bernardino Counties (Western Mojave Desert) nonattainment area would continue to comprise the northeastern portion of Los Angeles County (all of the Antelope Valley) and the central portion of San Bernardino County located within the Mojave Desert Air Basin. Ozone concentrations at all monitoring sites within the nonattainment area exceed the 0.070 ppm federal 8-hour ozone standard. The design value for the nonattainment area is 0.090 ppm at the Lancaster 43301 Division Street monitor.

2.7 Los Angeles-South Coast Air Basin

The Los Angeles-South Coast Air Basin nonattainment area would continue to include the South Coast Air Basin: western Los Angeles County (including Catalina and San Clemente Islands), Orange County, southwestern San Bernardino County, and western Riverside County. The design value for the nonattainment area is 0.102 ppm at the Crestline monitoring site.

2.8 Mariposa County

The Mariposa County nonattainment area will continue to include all of Mariposa County. The design value for Mariposa County is 0.075 ppm at the Jerseydale-6440 Jerseydale Road monitoring site.

2.9 Nevada County (Western Part)

This Nevada County (Western Part) nonattainment area will continue to comprise the portion of Nevada County from the western boundary with Yuba and Placer counties up to the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The current design value for Western Nevada County is 0.081 ppm at the Grass Valley-Litton Building monitoring site.

2.10 Riverside County (Coachella Valley)

The Riverside County (Coachella Valley) ozone nonattainment area would continue to include the portion of Riverside County that is located in the Salton Sea Air Basin. The design value for this area is 0.088 ppm at the Palm Springs-Fire Station monitoring site.

2.11 Sacramento Metropolitan Area

The Sacramento Metropolitan Area nonattainment area would continue to include all of Sacramento and Yolo counties, southern Sutter County, the Sacramento Valley Air Basin portion of Solano County, the Sacramento Valley and Mountain Counties Air Basin portions of Placer County, and the Mountain Counties Air Basin portion of El Dorado County. The design value for the nonattainment area is 0.081 ppm at the Placerville-Gold Nugget Way monitoring site.

2.12 San Diego County

The San Diego County nonattainment area would continue to include San Diego County. The design value for the nonattainment area is 0.079 ppm at the Alpine-Victoria Drive monitoring site.

2.13 San Francisco Bay Area

The San Francisco Bay Area nonattainment area would continue to comprise all of the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin: Marin, Napa, Contra Costa, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Francisco, and San Mateo counties and the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin portions of Solano and Sonoma counties. The design value for the nonattainment area is 0.073 ppm at the Livermore-793 Rincon Avenue ozone monitoring site in Alameda County.

2.14 San Joaquin Valley

The San Joaquin Valley nonattainment area would continue to comprise the entire San Joaquin Valley Air Basin: San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and western Kern counties. The design value for the nonattainment area is 0.093 ppm at the Clovis-N Villa Avenue monitoring site in Fresno County.

2.15 San Luis Obispo (Eastern San Luis Obispo County)

The San Luis Obispo County nonattainment area would continue to include only the eastern half of San Luis Obispo County. The design value for the nonattainment area is 0.073 ppm at the Red Hills monitoring site.

2.16 Sutter Buttes

The Sutter Buttes are a small, isolated area of steep-ridged mountains in the center of the southern Sacramento Valley. Elevations of the Sutter Buttes extend up to about 2,120 feet above sea level and are completely surrounded by flat terrain at only 60-70 feet above sea level. The Sutter Buttes are roughly circular and only 11 miles across, making the topography of the area extremely unique. The Sutter Buttes are also unpopulated, have no emission sources, and do not have any significant roads crossing over them.

An ozone monitor is sited at the top of the Sutter Buttes. For the 0.08 ppm federal 8-hour zone standard, the Sutter Buttes was designated as its own nonattainment area and was limited to the portion of the Sutter Buttes above 2,000 feet. For the 0.075 ppm standard, similar to Amador County, ozone concentrations dropped below the attainment threshold by the time U.S. EPA finalized designations; therefore, the Sutter Buttes nonattainment area was designated attainment. However, the 2015 design value for the Sutter Buttes is 0.072 ppm, which is slightly above the 0.070 ppm standard. As a result, ARB is recommending that the Sutter Buttes be designated as a separate nonattainment area and limited to the portion of the Sutter Buttes above 2,000 feet.

2.17 Tuolumne County

Tuolumne County is very similar to Amador County discussed above in terms of geography, population, emission sources, and proximity to other larger nonattainment areas. Just as Amador County was combined with Calaveras County into a larger nonattainment area, Tuolumne County was grouped with Mariposa County to form the Southern Mountain Counties Nonattainment Area for the 0.08 ppm federal 8-hour ozone standard. For the 0.075 ppm standard, as with Amador County and the Sutter Buttes, by the time U.S. EPA finalized designations, ozone concentrations in Tuolumne County had dropped sufficiently to merit an attainment designation. As a result, U.S. EPA eliminated the Southern Mountain Counties nonattainment area and designated Mariposa County as a separate nonattainment area.

The design value for Tuolumne County of 0.073 ppm is slightly above the new federal ozone standard and, with ozone concentrations in the region trending lower over time, it is expected to meet the standard within the next few years. In addition, because Tuolumne County and Mariposa County are fairly isolated from one another; are impacted from ozone transport from different, upwind nonattainment areas; do not have significant emission sources that impact ozone concentrations in the neighboring county; and operate and manage separate air quality programs, ARB is recommending that Tuolumne County be designated as a separate nonattainment area from the Mariposa County nonattainment area.

2.18 Tuscan Buttes

The Tuscan Buttes are located in Tehama County, which is in the northeastern portion of the Sacramento Valley. The Tuscan Buttes ozone monitor is located at an elevation

of 1,844 feet and was sited to study high-elevation transport of pollutants from upwind urban areas into the upper-Sacramento Valley. Additionally, there are no emission sources or residents near the monitoring site and design values for low elevation sites in areas near the monitor are below the level of the standard, indicating that ozone concentrations on the Tuscan Buttes are isolated and unlike other monitors.

The Tuscan Buttes were designated nonattainment for the 0.075 ppm federal 8-hour ozone standard. Because of the high elevation location and a lack of population and emission sources in the vicinity of the monitor, the nonattainment area was limited to the portion of the Tuscan Buttes above 1,800 feet. The current design value for the Tuscan Buttes is 0.074 ppm; therefore, ARB is recommending that the Tuscan Buttes remain nonattainment and that the nonattainment area continue to be limited to the portion of the Tuscan Buttes above 1,800 feet. This approach is consistent with the approach U.S. EPA used in designating the Sutter Buttes ozone nonattainment area.

2.19 Ventura County

The Ventura County nonattainment area would continue to include only the continental portion of Ventura County and exclude the two Channel Islands within the county: Anacapa Island and San Nicolas Island. The design value for the nonattainment area is 0.077 ppm at the Simi Valley-Cochran Street monitoring site.

3.0 Rural Transport Areas

The Clean Air Act allows for the designation of a Rural Transport Area based on the following two conditions:

1. The area does not contain emissions sources that make a significant contribution to monitored ozone concentrations in the area, or in other areas; and
2. The area does not include and is not adjacent to a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)

Additionally, U.S. EPA's ozone guidance memorandum states that areas within a Metropolitan Statistical Area are eligible for consideration as Rural Transport Areas, provided that the two criteria listed above are also met. This is a change from previous guidance and prompted ARB to review all nonattainment areas in California. The Tuscan Buttes nonattainment area is the only nonattainment area in California that meets the conditions necessary for designation as a Rural Transport Area.

Because there are no VOC or NO_x emission sources within the recommended Tuscan Buttes nonattainment area boundary and the recommended boundary is not within or adjacent to a MSA, ARB is requesting that the Tuscan Buttes nonattainment area be designated as a Rural Transport Area.

4.0 Attainment Areas

Ozone air quality monitoring in California indicates that many areas have design values that meet the 0.070 ppm federal 8-hour ozone standard. Table 2 below includes a listing of all the areas attaining the new standard, the peak design value in each area, and the geographical extent of each area.

Table 2
Recommended California Attainment Areas
for the 0.070 ppm Federal 8-Hour Ozone Standard
(Based on 2013-2015 Ozone Air Quality Data)

Attainment Area	Design Value (ppm)	Area Included
Colusa County	0.060	Colusa County
Eastern Riverside County	0.066	Eastern portion of Riverside County within the Mojave Desert Air Basin
Glenn County	0.065	Glenn County
Inyo County	0.069	Inyo County
Lake County	0.059	Lake County
North Central Coast Air Basin	0.068	Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito counties
North Coast Air Basin	0.058	Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, and Trinity counties and North Coast Air Basin portion of Sonoma County
Northeast Plateau Air Basin	0.061	Lassen, Modoc, and Siskiyou counties
Northeast San Bernardino County	0.067	Northern and eastern portions of San Bernardino County within the Mojave Desert Air Basin
Santa Barbara County	0.067	Continental portion of Santa Barbara County (excludes San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, and Santa Barbara islands)
Shasta County	0.067	Shasta County
Sutter and Yuba Counties	0.064	Yuba County and portion of Sutter County outside of the Sacramento Metropolitan and Sutter Buttes nonattainment areas
Tehama County	0.067	Portion of Tehama County outside of the Tuscan Buttes nonattainment area
Western San Luis Obispo County	0.061	Portion of San Luis Obispo County to the west of the Eastern San Luis Obispo County nonattainment area

5.0 Unclassifiable Areas

The areas listed in Table 3 have either no ozone monitoring data or the available monitoring data do not meet completeness criteria established by U.S. EPA; therefore, ARB recommends that the areas listed in Table 3 below be considered unclassifiable for the 0.070 ppm federal 8-hour ozone standard.

Four of the areas listed below (Eastern Nevada County, Northeastern Kern County, Northern Channel Islands, and Northern Mountain Counties) do not have any ozone monitoring. However, an ozone monitor began operating near the city of Bishop in Mono County at the beginning of 2015 and there will likely be two years of data available by the time U.S. EPA prepares the final designations. Based on the final 2015 data and preliminary 2016 data, it is expected that Mono County could be designated attainment.

Similarly, an ozone monitor in Tahoe City, within the Placer County portion of the Lake Tahoe Basin, began operation in November 2013. As a result, this monitor is expected to have three full years of data available by the time U.S. EPA prepares final designations and this area is expected to be in attainment of the 0.070 ppm federal 8-hour ozone standard as well.

Table 3
Recommended California Unclassifiable Areas for the
0.070 ppm Federal 8-Hour Ozone Standard

Unclassifiable Area	Area Included
Eastern Nevada County	Portion of Nevada County east of the crest of the Sierra Nevada Mountains
Northern Great Basin Valleys Air Basin	Alpine and Mono counties
Lake Tahoe Air Basin	Eastern portion of Placer and El Dorado counties within the Lake Tahoe Air Basin
Northeastern Kern County	Portion of Kern County within the Indian Wells Valley
Northern Channel Islands	The Channel Islands located in the South Central Coast Air Basin: Anacapa, San Miguel, San Nicholas, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and Santa Rosa
Northern Mountain Counties	Plumas and Sierra counties

6.0 Environmental Analysis

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the basis for ARB's determination that the proposed action is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A brief explanation of this determination is provided in Section 6.2 below. ARB's regulatory program, which involves the adoption, approval, amendment, or repeal of standards, rules, regulations, or plans for the protection and enhancement of the State's ambient air quality, has been certified by the California Secretary for Natural Resources under Public Resources Code section 21080.5 of CEQA (14 CCR 15251(d)). Public agencies with certified regulatory programs are exempt from certain CEQA requirements, including but not limited to, preparing environmental impact reports, negative declarations, and initial studies. ARB, as a lead agency, prepares a substitute environmental document (referred to as an "Environmental Analysis" or "EA") as part of the Staff Report prepared for a proposed action to comply with CEQA (17 CCR 60000-60008). If the proposal is finalized, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse for public inspection.

6.2 Analysis

ARB has determined that the proposed action is exempt from CEQA under the general rule or "common sense" exemption (14 CCR 15061(b)(3)). CEQA Guidelines state "the activity is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA". The proposal is also categorically exempt from CEQA under the "Class 8" exemption (14 CCR 15308) because it is an action taken by a regulatory agency for the protection of the environment. By October 1, 2016, all states are required to submit to U.S. EPA recommendations for area designations, together with appropriate boundaries, for the updated federal 8-hour average ozone standard. ARB staff has performed analysis to determine appropriate designation recommendations throughout the State using the criteria outlined in the U.S. EPA's guidance memorandum². The purpose of this report is to share ARB staff's technical analysis and initial recommendations to be sent to U.S. EPA. Based on ARB's review it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed action may result in a significant adverse impact on the environment. Further, the proposed action is designed to protect the environment and ARB found no substantial evidence indicating that submitting these area designation recommendations to U.S. EPA could adversely affect air quality or any other environmental resource area, or that any of the exceptions to the exemption applies (14 CCR 15300.2). Therefore, this activity is exempt from CEQA.

² February 25, 2016, Area Designations for the 2015 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards, Memorandum from Janet G. McCabe, Acting Assistant Administrator, Office of Air and Radiation to Regional Administrators, Regions 1-10.