Equivalent Test Methods/Clean Air Act: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Designates Two New Methods for Monitoring Ambient Air Quality

Walter Wright, Jr.
wwright@mwlaw.com
(501) 688.8839

12/13/2023

The United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") published a November 6th Federal Register Notice announcing it has designated:

- One new equivalent method for measuring concentrations of lead (pb)
- One new equivalent method for measuring concentrations of particulate matter (PM10)

The equivalent methods are utilized for measuring concentrations in ambient air.

Sampling ambient air conditions is an important part of the process for determining whether an area is and/or will remain in compliance with the Clean Air Act NAAQS.

Pursuant to the authority of the Clean Air Act and in accordance with regulations 40 C.F.R. Part 53, EPA evaluates methods for monitoring the concentrations of National Ambient Air Quality Standards ("NAAQS") as set forth in 40 C.F.R. Part 50.

Such monitoring methods must meet certain specific requirements for adequacy as either reference or equivalent for utilization by states to determine compliance with the applicable NAAQS. EPA typically announces approval of an equivalent test or monitoring method as it is approved.

EPA describes the new equivalent method for lead as a manual method that uses a sampling procedure specified in the Reference Method for the Determination of Lead in Suspended Particulate Matter Collected from Ambient air (High-Volume Sampler), 40 C.F.R. Part 50, Appendix G, with a different extraction and analytical procedure.

The application for equivalent method determination for this Pb method was submitted by South Coast Air Quality Management District.

The new equivalent method of PM10 is described as an automated monitoring method (monitor) utilizing the measurement principle based on beta-ray attenuation.

This monitor is stated to be commercially available from the applicant, Vasthi Instruments located in Andhra Pradesh, India.

A copy of the Federal Register Notice can be downloaded here.