



# INTRODUCTION TO REGIONAL HAZE

## Protecting Visibility

The Clean Air Act established a national visibility goal to prevent any future, and remedy any existing, *visibility impairment* in national parks and wilderness areas. “Impairment” specifically refers to human-caused air pollution.

**1980:** EPA finalized regulations to address Reasonably Attributable Visibility Impairment (RAVI).

**1999:** EPA promulgated the Regional Haze Rule (RHR) which called for states to establish goals and emission reduction strategies for improving visibility in mandatory Class I Federal areas.

- RH state implementation plans (SIPs) and interim progress reports must demonstrate how states have made, and will continue to make, progress toward achieving their visibility improvement goals.
- Each RH planning period covers 10 years. The first state plans were due in 2007 and covered 2008-2018, the first planning period.

### **Utah’s RH Plans and Progress**

**2003:** First Utah RH SIP adopted. Based on recommendations of the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission reductions were focused on SO<sub>2</sub>. The SIP set SO<sub>2</sub> milestones from 2003 to 2018.

**2008:** RH SIP revised to include Best Available Retrofit Technology (BART) for NO<sub>x</sub> and PM.

**2011:** SO<sub>2</sub> milestones were adjusted to reflect changes in the number of states participating in the program.

**2015:** Utah approved a SIP to address BART for NO<sub>x</sub> emissions at Carbon, Hunter, and Huntington power plants.

### **Proposed RH Rule Revisions, 2016**

The EPA proposed a revised RH Rule on May 4, 2016. The following is a brief summary of the revisions.

- Extension of the next regional haze SIP deadline from 2018 to 2021 to allow states to coordinate regional haze planning with other federal programs. Other programs include the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, the 2010 1-hour SO<sub>2</sub> National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and the 2012 annual fine particulate (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) NAAQS.

Visibility at Canyonlands National Park



Source: IMPROVE Steering Committee - <http://vista.cira.colostate.edu/Datawarehouse/IMPROVE/Data/Photos/CANY/start.htm>

Utah Division of Air Quality

**Contact**

Jay Baker

Policy Section/Regional Haze SIP  
Coordinator

(801) 536-4015

Email: [jbaker@utah.gov](mailto:jbaker@utah.gov)



- Changes to definitions and terminology related to how days are selected for tracking progress. A clarification that “visibility impairment” means the deviation from natural visibility and therefore is due to anthropogenic impacts. For SIP planning, the 20% most impaired days should be selected based on anthropogenic impairment.
- Change the scheduling of RH Progress Reports. The change would require that a progress report be due every 10 years, at the midpoint of each planning period, as opposed to every five years. Information from the Progress Reports that would have been due at the same time as a SIP will be included in the SIP.
- RH Progress Reports would no longer be considered the same as a SIP revision.
- Clarification of, and changes to, the required content of Progress Reports. This includes clarification of “current visibility conditions.” Would require a summary of the most recent periodic assessment of a state’s smoke management program.
- Changes to FLM consultation requirements. Consultation must take place no less than 120 days prior to a public hearing or other public comment opportunity. Used to be 60 days.
- Changes to requirements related to Section 51.309 and the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission. Its provisions would apply only to the first regional haze implementation period.