



## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Air District Committed to Continuing to Protect Public Health from Air Pollution as EPA Releases Final Rule on More Stringent Annual PM2.5 Standard** *New Limit Likely Will Result in Nonattainment for the Sacramento Region*

**Sacramento, Calif.** – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today released a new, more stringent health-based National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for annual particulate matter (PM2.5) of 9.0  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . Exposure to PM2.5 is linked with premature death, cancer, and other serious respiratory and cardiovascular effects. The Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (Air District) supports EPA's decision as the new standard aligns with the most current scientific evidence and technical information on the adverse health impacts of PM2.5 pollution. However, EPA's decision will have profound implications for many urban areas in the country, including the Sacramento region, as it will likely result in a new nonattainment status.

The federal government is required to review the NAAQS approximately every five years. This final rule of 9.0  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  represents a significant reduction from the former standard of 12.0  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . In the past, ambient PM2.5 pollution levels in the Sacramento region have steadily decreased thanks to various strategies and programs administered by the Air District and its regional air agency partners. As a result, today the Sacramento region meets the EPA's former annual PM2.5 NAAQS of 12.0  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

The new standard of 9.0  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  will be significantly more difficult to attain and require substantial additional emission reductions in our region. Today's federal action will impact the work of many state and local air pollution control agencies which, like Sacramento, will be required to develop a new set of air quality management plans for meeting the new limit and implementing several new additional technical requirements.

“The Sac Metro Air District supports the scientific review process that results in adoption of health-protective standards and is pleased the federal evaluation of the latest evidence regarding the effects of PM2.5 pollution is concluded,” says Air Pollution Control Officer Dr. Alberto Ayala. “While a lower annual standard of 9.0  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  will be more challenging for our region to meet, we are up to the task and ready to work with our residents and businesses on a plan to get there. The Air District’s commitment to reducing PM pollution, particularly in areas most at risk, is unwavering because the health of our residents depends on it.”

The Air District has long-standing programs in place to reduce PM2.5 pollution in the region, using a combination of rules and financial incentives and relying on state and federal regulations and investments. For example, the Air District’s annual [Check Before You Burn](#) program, a county-wide law aimed at reducing PM2.5 pollution from November through February each year, has been vital in our progress. Check Before You Burn will remain an important component in any new local approach for meeting a more stringent standard since residential burning is a major source of PM2.5 pollution. The Air District also will continue to enforce existing rules, perform inspections, promote alternative means of transportation, and invest in the transition to clean energy for the region as we consider the new air pollution control requirements imposed by the new standard.

For an overview of what the new rule will mean for the Sacramento region, please see [this flyer](#).

### **About the Sac Metro Air District**

The Sac Metro Air District is the regional agency responsible for monitoring air quality, reducing air pollution, enforcing air quality regulations in Sacramento County, and promoting decarbonization and climate adaptation efforts through innovative financial incentive programs and initiatives throughout the greater region. The Air District also works to ensure clean air, reduce greenhouse gas pollution, and meet National Ambient Air Quality standards.

For more information about the Air District, please visit [www.AirQuality.org](http://www.AirQuality.org).

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