



NEWS

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Bay Area achieves federal particulate matter air quality standard *Significant milestone in long-term Bay Area air quality improvement*

SAN FRANCISCO - The Bay Area Air Quality Management District has achieved a significant air quality milestone – successfully attaining the fine particulate matter standard by the federal December 2015 deadline.

Eleven years after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency adopted the more stringent health-based requirement, the Bay Area has achieved the air quality standard of 35 micrograms per cubic meter. The Air District learned this week that the US EPA found that regionally, the nine counties meet the current health protective standard for fine particle pollution.

“Meeting this air quality milestone is truly a clean air success story for the Bay Area – and the Air District’s 2008 Wood Burning Rule has played a significant role helping us meet the standard,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Air District. “Residents have stepped up and have stopped burning wood. Now we can work at further reducing pockets of pollution in neighborhoods and toxic diesel emissions so that everyone in the Bay Area benefits from cleaner air.”

The Air District’s actions, such as the 2008 Wood Burning rule and controls on stationary diesel engines have helped reduce fine particle pollution. Since 2009 the Air District directed over \$100 million in grant funding to reduce pollution around the ports by cleaning up or replacing older, dirtier trucks and electrifying shipping berths. The Air District will continue to work at further reducing particulate matter in impacted communities such as inland valleys and along major roadways.

PM2.5, consists of microscopic sized solid particles or liquid droplets that can either be emitted directly into the air, or formed by reacting to chemicals in the atmosphere. Particulate matter is emitted during the combustion of automobile and diesel truck fuels, smoke from power generation and residential wood burning. PM2.5 is a serious health concern because these microscopic particles can evade the body’s natural defenses and penetrate deep into the lungs where they cause serious health effects.

Exposure to PM2.5 is linked to a variety of problems, including premature death in people with heart or lung disease, heart attacks and irregular heartbeat, aggravated asthma, increased respiratory symptoms, and coughing or difficulty breathing. Higher levels of PM2.5 are linked with a higher rate of emergency room visits. Lower PM2.5 levels are associated with longer life expectancy.

Federal ambient air quality standards are set to protect public health. The Bay Area Air District now will work to maintain this clean air standard. Cars, trucks, diesel engines, wood burning and dust all contribute to PM2.5 levels.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area.

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