



NEWS RELEASE

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Air District blasts Trump Administration for failure to protect public health

EPA fails to strengthen PM standard amid intensifying pandemic in waning days of administration

SAN FRANCISCO - The Bay Area Air Quality Management District today condemned the inaction of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regarding their recent decision to retain the existing National Ambient Air Quality Standards for particulate matter.

Despite overwhelming scientific evidence and warnings from experts that keeping currently inadequate health limits for particulate matter in place could lead to thousands of premature deaths annually in the United States, the EPA chose not to follow this urgent advice and strengthen these standards.

“As air quality and public health experts have pleaded with the Trump Administration to strengthen standards for particulate matter amid the worst public health crisis this country has faced in more than a century, the EPA did nothing,” said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Bay Area Air District. “This failure to act to protect public health at such a crucial juncture in our history represents a colossal failure on the part of our federal government and will have serious public health implications, especially in communities already heavily impacted by air pollution.”

The EPA’s own Integrated Science Assessment from late last year includes studies that identify PM_{2.5} as a significant public health threat, underscoring the need to lower the federal standard for this air pollutant. This assessment echoes that of the nongovernmental Independent Particulate Matter Review Panel, made up of experts from the former EPA Particulate Matter Review Panel, that was dismissed by the Trump Administration in 2018. That panel had already concluded that the current PM_{2.5} standards are insufficient to protect public health.

To make this matter even more critical, preliminary studies also indicate that those recovering from COVID-19 may be more susceptible to health impacts from PM_{2.5} levels in the air.

The [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](#) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area. Connect with the Air District via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

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