



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Air District supports EPA's more stringent health standard for particulate matter**

*New targets for cleaner air urgently needed to protect Bay Area residents from harmful air pollution*

**SAN FRANCISCO** – The Air District is announcing its support for proposed revisions to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, or NAAQS, for particulate matter pollution.

The Clean Air Act requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards for pollutants considered harmful to public health and the environment. Air quality standards define the maximum amount of these pollutants that can be present in ambient air for it to be considered healthy to breathe. The EPA has proposed lowering the annual standard for particulate matter from 12 to a level between 9 and 10 micrograms per cubic meter of air.

“The Air District wholeheartedly supports the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s recent move to strengthen the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for particulate matter,” said Sharon Landers, interim executive officer of the Air District. “As air quality impacts in our communities increase with the changing climate, more stringent standards are a critical tool to protect public health. This bold and informed action by EPA signals a return to relying on the latest science and will help protect the health of all Bay Area residents, especially those living in communities disproportionately impacted by air pollution.”

In 2019, the Air District and its Advisory Council convened the Particulate Matter Symposium Series to facilitate a discussion among nationally recognized scientists and stakeholders to consider the current state of particulate matter science. A major finding was that while the Bay Area has made significant progress at reducing levels of particulate matter, more stringent standards are needed to protect public health.

Particulate matter is the most significant driver of health risks from Bay Area air quality. Exposure to particulate matter has been linked to serious respiratory illnesses and increased risk of heart attacks and is especially harmful for children, the elderly and those with respiratory conditions.

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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