

Proposed 2026 Amendments to the Area Designations for State Air Quality Standards

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Slide 1 Title Slide

Good afternoon and welcome to the California Air Resources Board's (or CARB) webinar workshop on the proposed amendments to the area designations for state ambient air quality standards. My name is Daisy Perault, and I will give the presentation today.

Slide 2 Logistics

Before we get started, there are a few logistical matters to address. The audio portion of this presentation is available over the Microsoft Teams website connection.

If audio fails during the presentation, please log off and try to reconnect. This should solve most problems. You can also email Alan Huston at Alan.Huston@arb.ca.gov. The links throughout this presentation are also clickable.

Because we are using integrated audio, we will be muting everyone.

If you cannot see this presentation or lose connection with the webinar, this presentation (slides and text) will be placed on CARB's [State Area Designations webpage - Current Activities](#) after the workshop is completed. This page can also be accessed via our main webpage at arb.ca.gov. Use the search feature to search for "designations" and after loading the State and Federal Area Designations page, click on Current Activities.

If you have questions or comments during the webinar, please feel free to send them at any time through the webinar chat. We will go through them and respond at the end of the presentation so everyone can hear the answers.

If you have any questions or comments after the conclusion of this webinar, please feel free to contact us at the email addresses provided at the end of this presentation or through the [State Area Designations webpage - Current Activities](#), or use the raise hand function and we will unmute you.

Slide 3 Presentation Outline

Today's presentation will include the basic area designation process, the criteria, and our proposed changes to the area designations for state standards. More detailed information regarding the process and the criteria can be found on our [website](#) and is always included in the most recent staff report.

Slide 4 California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS)

In 1959, California enacted legislation requiring the State Department of Public Health to establish air quality standards, known as the California Ambient Air Quality Standards, or CAAQS. The CAAQS cover four pollutants that are not covered by the national standards –

sulfates, H₂S, visibility-reducing particles, and vinyl chloride). CARB makes designations for ten of the pollutants for which CAAQS were established.

The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) and CARB's Research Division periodically review the health literatures to evaluate whether changes to the CAAQS are necessary based on new science.

Slide 5 CARB Designation Process

CARB sets state ambient air quality standards designed to protect public health.

In addition to adopting these state standards, CARB also adopts designation criteria, last updated in 2010. These criteria provide the basis for designating areas for the state standards. These designations are reviewed annually, updated where appropriate, and indicate whether the state health-based standards are being met.

Slide 6 Data Used in Designations

The data for making area designations comes from a statewide air monitoring network. We generally refer to these data as "data for record." Data for record must meet established quality assurance procedures. Generally, these data are collected by CARB or the local districts, using California-approved samplers (CAS). We can, however, use data from other sources if the requirements are met. The data must also represent the averaging time of the state standard and reflect both the location and time of the expected highest concentrations.

The period reviewed is the most recent three calendar years. This year's review is based on data from 2023 through 2025.

Slide 7 Exceedance vs. Violation

When making designations, it is important to distinguish between an exceedance and a violation of the air quality standard. An exceedance is any concentration higher than the level of the state standard. In contrast, a violation is an exceedance that has not been excluded as having been affected by a highly irregular or infrequent event, including extreme concentration events, exceptional events, and unusual concentration events. Not all exceedances are violations. For example, the graphic shows a scenario where exceedances that were caused by wildfire smoke are determined to be exceptional events and therefore are not counted as violations. The distinction between exceedances and violations is important when discussing designation categories.

Slide 8 Designation Categories

There are specific requirements for the designation categories. To be designated Nonattainment, data for an area must show one or more violations of the state standard

during the last three years. Data for making this designation must be representative of the averaging time, but it is not necessary for the data to be complete. To be designated as attainment, an area must have data showing no violations of the state standard during the past three years. Data for making this designation must be both representative and complete.

As I mentioned, some high values may be excluded from the designation process and not considered violations. However, we can exclude values only if they qualify under the definitions contained in the criteria. Because some high values may be excluded, an attainment area may still show occasional values above the standard.

Data excluded as a State Exceptional Event is reflected in the designation category but not reflected in the designation value.

Finally, we designate areas as unclassified if they do not have sufficient data and are not likely to violate the state standards.

Slide 9 Designation Categories Nonattainment-Transitional

The nonattainment-transitional designation is a subset of the nonattainment category for standards with an averaging time less than or equal to 24 hours. For Ozone, there must have been three or fewer exceedances during the last complete calendar year. In this sub-category, we look at all the measurements and do not exclude any of them. This includes recognized exceptional events.

The nonattainment-transitional designation is given to areas with a few exceedances but progressing and getting close to attaining the state standard.

Slide 10 Proposed 2026 State Area Designation Changes

As I mentioned, the proposed 2026 changes to the area designations for state standards are based on the most recent air quality data - data collected from 2023 through 2025. Area designation changes are proposed for three of the ten state standards. As displayed in the graphic, there are twelve areas with designation changes. In addition to the ten ozone area designation changes, one area has a PM10 change, and one area has an H2S change.

Slide 11 Ozone CAAQS

The ozone designations are based on two standards - one for 8- hour ozone and one for 1-hour Ozone. Both standards must be met for an area to be designated Attainment. This year, there are ten ozone changes.

Slide 12 Proposed Ozone Change - Amador County

Amador County in the Mountain Counties Air Basin is currently designated Nonattainment. Staff propose to redesignate this area as Nonattainment-Transitional because there have been three or fewer exceedances in the last calendar year.

Slide 13 Proposed Ozone Change - Calaveras County

Calaveras County in the Mountain Counties Air Basin is currently designated Nonattainment. Staff propose to redesignate this area as Nonattainment-Transitional because there have been three or fewer exceedances in the last calendar year.

Slide 14 Proposed Ozone Change - El Dorado County

El Dorado County in the Mountain Counties Air Basin is currently designated Nonattainment. Staff propose to redesignate this area as Nonattainment-Transitional because there have been three or fewer exceedances in the last calendar year.

Slide 15 Proposed Ozone Change - Placer County

Placer County in the Mountain Counties Air Basin is currently designated Nonattainment-Transitional. Staff propose to redesignate this area as Attainment because there have been no violations in the last three years.

Slide 16 Proposed Ozone Change - Tuolumne County

Tuolumne County in the Mountain Counties Air Basin is currently designated Nonattainment. Staff propose to redesignate this area as Nonattainment-Transitional because there have been three or fewer exceedances in the last calendar year.

Slide 17 Proposed Ozone Change - Butte County

Butte County in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin is currently designated Nonattainment-Transitional. Staff propose to redesignate this area as Nonattainment due to violations occurring during the past three years.

Slide 18 Proposed Ozone Change - Shasta County

Shasta County in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin is currently designated Nonattainment-Transitional. Staff propose to redesignate this area as Nonattainment due to violations occurring during the past three years.

Slide 19 Proposed Ozone Change - Yolo/Solano Counties

Yolo and Solano Counties in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin are currently designated Nonattainment-Transitional. Staff propose to redesignate this area as Attainment because there have been no violations in the last three years.

Slide 20 Proposed Ozone Change - Placer County

Placer County in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin is currently designated Nonattainment. Staff propose to redesignate this area as Nonattainment-Transitional because there have been three or fewer exceedances in the last calendar year.

Slide 21 Proposed Ozone Change - Tehama County

Tehama County in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin is currently designated Nonattainment. Staff propose to redesignate this area as Nonattainment-Transitional because there have been three or fewer exceedances in the last calendar year.

Slide 22 Suspended Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) CAAQS

The Suspended Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) designations are based on two standards - a 24-hour average and an annual average. Both standards must be met for an area to be designated Attainment. This year there is one PM₁₀ change.

Slide 23 Proposed PM₁₀ Change - Mendocino County

Mendocino County in the North Coast Air Basin is currently designated as Attainment. Staff propose to redesignate this area as Nonattainment due to violations occurring during the past three years.

Slide 24 Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S) CAAAQS

Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S) designations are based on one standard - a 1-hour average, not to be equaled or exceeded. There is one proposed H₂S change.

Slide 25 Proposed H₂S Change - San Diego County

San Diego County in the San Diego Air Basin is currently designated Unclassified for hydrogen sulfide. Staff propose to redesignate this area as Nonattainment due to violations occurring during the past year. San Diego county was previously designated Unclassified. This is the first year complete data has been submitted from a regulatory air quality monitor. This data is now being considered data for record and triggers a designation change for this purpose.

Slide 26 What's Next

So, what are our next steps?

The initial staff report, also known as the initial statement of reasons or ISOR, will be released on December 1, 2026, and the 45-day comment period will begin on December 1, 2026, and close on January 19, 2027. Any comments on the report must be submitted during the public comment period or during the public hearing to be considered official comments.

A public hearing is not currently scheduled; however, interested members of the public may request a public hearing on this item. If a request for a public hearing is received, CARB will conduct a public hearing in February 2027. If no request for a public hearing is received, a hearing will not be held.

Slide 27 Further Information

Additional information can be obtained from the [State Area Designations - Current Activities](#) webpage. You can receive email updates by [subscribing](#) to our webpage.

You can also contact either Jenette Kwong, Alan Huston, or myself if you have further questions or concerns.

Slide 28 Conclusion Slide

This concludes the presentation, and we can now answer any questions you might have. Please type your questions in the webinar chat or questions box or raise your hand, and we can call on you.