

# **PM2.5 Area Designation Recommendations for the Revised Federal Annual PM2.5 Standard**

## **Resolution 25-2**

**January 23, 2025**

Agenda Item No.: 25-1-4

Whereas, sections 39600 and 39601 of the Health and Safety Code authorize the California Air Resources Board (CARB or Board) to adopt standards, rules, and regulations and to do such acts as may be necessary for the proper execution of the powers and duties granted to and imposed upon the Board by law;

Whereas, the Legislature in Health and Safety Code section 39602 has designated CARB as the air pollution control agency for all purposes set forth in federal law;

Whereas, section 109(b)(1) of the Clean Air Act (Act) requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) to set primary air quality standards at levels that protect public health with an adequate margin of safety;

Whereas, on February 7, 2024, the U.S. EPA promulgated a new annual fine particulate matter (PM2.5) primary standard at a level of 9.0 micrograms per cubic meter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) to protect public health based on a review of an extensive body of scientific evidence;

Whereas, section 107(d)(1)(A) of the Act requires states to submit to U.S. EPA a list designating areas as nonattainment, attainment, or unclassifiable for a new or revised national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS) no later than one year after the promulgation of the standard and requires U.S. EPA to finalize the designations within two years of the promulgation of the new or revised standard;

Whereas, section 107(d)(1)(A)(i) of the Act provides that any area that does not meet, or that contributes to ambient air quality in a nearby area that does not meet, the NAAQS for a pollutant shall be designated nonattainment;

Whereas, section 107(d)(1)(A)(ii) of the Act also provides that any area (other than an area identified as nonattainment under section 107(d)(1)(A)(i)) that meets the NAAQS for the pollutant shall be designated attainment;

Whereas, section 107(d)(1)(A)(iii) of the Act provides that any area that cannot be classified on the basis of available information as meeting or not meeting the NAAQS for the pollutant shall be designated unclassifiable;

Whereas, CARB has developed proposed recommendations for area designations and boundaries for the 9.0  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  annual PM2.5 standard in consultation with local air districts and

U.S. EPA, as set forth in the Staff Report: PM<sub>2.5</sub> Area Designation Recommendations for the 2024 Annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> National Ambient Air Quality Standard (Staff Report);

Whereas, the Staff Report was released to the public on December 13, 2024, for a 30-day public review prior to the Board hearing;

Whereas, the Staff Report lists CARB's recommendations for nonattainment, attainment, and unclassifiable area designations and boundaries for each nonattainment area for the 9.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup> annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard;

Whereas, CARB staff is recommending nine areas be designated as nonattainment for the 9.0 µg/m<sup>3</sup> annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard, namely Mendocino County (partial), Plumas County (partial), Yuba City-Marysville, Sacramento County, San Francisco Bay Area, San Joaquin Valley, Los Angeles-South Coast Air Basin, San Diego County, and Imperial County (partial);

Whereas, CARB staff recommend the remainder of the State be designated as attainment or unclassifiable as specified in the Staff Report;

Whereas, in developing the recommendations contained in the Staff Report, CARB staff engaged in a thorough public process, including two public workshops held in person and via Zoom in English and Spanish to facilitate discussion of the recommendations in a public setting and provide opportunity for public feedback, input, and ideas;

Whereas, the recommendations are based on PM<sub>2.5</sub> air quality monitoring data from 2021 to 2023, the most recent data available;

Whereas, U.S. EPA will base the final designations on PM<sub>2.5</sub> air quality monitoring data from 2022 to 2024;

Whereas, CARB's regulatory program that involves the adoption, approval, amendment, or repeal of standards, rules, regulations, or plans has been certified by the Secretary for Natural Resources under Public Resources Code section 21080.5 (California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); see also the CEQA Guidelines found in California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15251(d)), and CARB conducts its CEQA review according to this certified program (California Code of Regulations, title 17, sections 60000-60007); and

Whereas, CARB staff has determined that the proposed recommendations are exempt from CEQA under California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061(b)(3) ("common sense" exemption) and section 15308 ("Class 8" exemption: Actions Taken by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment) because the record evidence shows with certainty that the proposed recommendations will enhance the environment by better protecting the public from health impacts associated with exposure to PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and there is no possibility that the proposed activity may result in a significant adverse impact on the environment; and

Whereas, the Board finds that:

The proposed recommendations for area designations and Staff Report were developed in an open public process, in consultation with affected parties, through numerous public workshops, individual meetings, and other outreach efforts, and these efforts are expected to continue;

The proposed recommendations for area designations and Staff Report are consistent with CARB's environmental justice policies and do not disproportionately impact people of any race, culture, income, or national origin;

The proposed recommendations for area designations contained in the Staff Report meet the requirements of the Act.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Board directs the Executive Officer to forward the Staff Report including the recommended area designations and boundaries for the 9.0  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard to U.S. EPA to satisfy section 107(d)(1)(A) of the Act, and to work with U.S. EPA to resolve any issues that may arise regarding the recommendations.

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of Resolution 25-2 as adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

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Board Clerk