

2025 Amendments to Area Designations for State Ambient Air Quality Standards

Final Statement of Reasons for Rulemaking, Including Summary of Comments and Agency Response

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I. General

The Staff Report: Initial Statement of Reasons for Rulemaking (staff report), entitled Proposed 2025 Amendments to the Area Designations for State Air Quality Standards, released November 18, 2025, is incorporated by reference herein. The staff report contained a description of the rationale for the proposed amendments. On November 18, 2025, all references relied upon and identified in the staff report were made available to the public.

On May 18, 2026, the Executive Officer took final action to adopt the amendments to the area designation regulations by Executive Order. Utilizing air quality data collected from 2022 through 2024, the Executive Officer adopted amendments that changed the area designations for ozone, suspended particulate matter (PM₁₀), and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). These changes are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Proposed Designation Amendments for State Standards (Based on 2022-2024 data)

Pollutant	Designation Area	Current Designation	Proposed Designation
Ozone	Lake Tahoe Air Basin	Nonattainment-Transitional	Attainment
Ozone	Mountain Counties Air Basin – Amador County	Nonattainment-Transitional	Nonattainment
Ozone	Mountain Counties Air Basin – Calaveras County	Nonattainment-Transitional	Nonattainment
Ozone	Mountain Counties Air Basin – Tuolumne County	Nonattainment-Transitional	Nonattainment
Ozone	Sacramento Valley Air Basin – Sutter County – Sutter Buttes	Nonattainment-Transitional	Nonattainment
Ozone	Sacramento Valley Air Basin – Remainder of Sutter County	Nonattainment-Transitional	Attainment
Ozone	Sacramento Valley Air Basin – Yuba County	Nonattainment-Transitional	Attainment
PM ₁₀	Mountain Counties Air Basin – Calaveras County	Nonattainment	Attainment
PM _{2.5}	Sacramento Valley Air Basin – Sutter and Yuba Counties	Nonattainment	Attainment

Mandates and Fiscal Impacts to Local Governments and School Districts

The Executive Officer has determined that this regulatory action will not result in a mandate to any local agency or school district the costs of which are reimbursable by the state pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with section 17500), Division 4, Title 2 of the Government Code.

A change in area designation status can result in a change in requirements for some local air districts, which are local government agencies. State law requires Nonattainment air districts to develop plans for attaining the State standards for ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide. The nonattainment districts must submit these attainment plans to California Air Resources Board (CARB) for approval (Health and Safety Code (HSC) § 40911). An air district with an area designated as Nonattainment for any remaining pollutants is not subject to any specific statutory planning requirements. However, such air districts must adopt and enforce rules and regulations to expeditiously attain the State standards for these pollutants (HSC §§ 40001 and 40913). The impacts from subsequent actions by local government due to changes in area designations, other than those described below, are not discussed in this rulemaking because those actions are speculative and unknown at this time.

a) Fiscal Impact on Placer County Air Pollution Control District (APCD)

A portion of the Lake Tahoe Air Basin is covered by Placer County APCD. The Placer County APCD is spread over three air basins, Lake Tahoe, Sacramento Valley, and Mountain Counties Air Basins. The change in the Lake Tahoe Air Basin from Nonattainment-Transitional to Attainment for ozone would allow the Placer County APCD to discontinue the development of triennial plans and annual updates (HSC §§ 40925.5(c), 40925.5(d)) in the Lake Tahoe Air Basin. Due to the existing Nonattainment designation for the Placer County portion of the Sacramento Valley Air Basin and the Nonattainment-Transitional designation for the Mountain Counties Air Basin, the air district will still be submitting triennial plans and annual updates, so there will be no cost change to the Placer County APCD.

b) Fiscal Impact on El Dorado County Air Quality Management District (AQMD)

A portion of the Lake Tahoe Air Basin is covered by El Dorado County AQMD. The El Dorado County AQMD is spread over two air basins, Lake Tahoe and Mountain Counties Air Basins. The change in the Lake Tahoe Air Basin from Nonattainment-Transitional to Attainment for ozone would allow the El Dorado County AQMD to discontinue the submittal of triennial plans and annual updates (HSC §§ 40925.5(c), 40925.5(d)) in the Lake Tahoe Air Basin. Due to the existing Nonattainment-Transitional designation for the El Dorado portion of the Mountain Counties Air Basin, the air district will still be submitting triennial plans and annual updates, so there will be no cost change to the El Dorado County AQMD.

c) Fiscal Impact on Amador County APCD and Tuolumne County APCD

The change in Amador and Tuolumne Counties in the Mountain Counties Air Basin from Nonattainment-Transitional to Nonattainment for ozone should not result in cost changes to the Amador County APCD and Tuolumne County APCD. The Nonattainment-Transitional designation is a subset of the Nonattainment designation, so the air districts will still be submitting triennial plans and annual updates.

d) Fiscal Impact on Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District

The change in Calaveras County in the Mountain Counties Air Basin from Nonattainment-Transitional to Nonattainment for ozone should not result in cost changes to the Calaveras County APCD. The Nonattainment-Transitional designation is a subset of the Nonattainment designation, so the air district will still be submitting triennial plans and annual updates.

The change from Nonattainment to Attainment for PM₁₀ has no fiscal impact to the Calaveras County APCD because this pollutant is not subject to any specific statutory planning requirements related to particulate matter (HSC § 40911).

e) Fiscal Impact on Feather River AQMD

Feather River AQMD administers air quality programs for all of Sutter and Yuba Counties. The change in Sutter County (Sutter Buttes) in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin from Nonattainment-Transitional to Nonattainment for ozone has no cost impact on the Feather River AQMD. There are no planning requirements for Sutter Buttes.

Upon the change in Yuba County and the remainder of Sutter County in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin from Nonattainment-Transitional to Attainment for ozone, the Feather River AQMD is no longer required to submit triennial plans or annual updates to CARB of its plan to achieve the air quality standards. The air district would have been required to submit a triennial plan in the 2027/2028 fiscal year and annual updates in 2028/2029 and 2029/2030 fiscal years. According to air district staff, the triennial plan usually takes about seventy hours to prepare at a cost of \$111.46 per hour of staff time. The district also incurs costs for legal review (\$500), publication of a public notice (\$500), and compensation for the district board (\$900). The cost of a triennial plan is then estimated to be \$9,702.20 (i.e., \$111.46 x 70 hours + \$500 legal + \$500 publication + \$900 board). The two annual updates each take approximately ten hours to prepare at a cost of \$111.46 per hour of staff time, with a lower legal review cost of \$200 but full compensation for the district board (\$900), according to the air district. The cost of each annual update is estimated to be \$2,214.60 (i.e., \$111.46 x 10 hours + \$200 legal + \$900 board). Therefore, the total cost savings to the affected air district will amount to \$14,131.40 (\$9,702.20 + \$2,214.60 + \$2,214.60) over the three-year period. The annual savings amount to \$9,702.20 in the 2027/2028 fiscal year, \$2,214.60 in the 2028/2029 fiscal year, and \$2,214.60 in the 2029/2030 fiscal year.

The change in Sutter and Yuba Counties in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin from Nonattainment to Attainment for PM_{2.5} has no fiscal impact on the Feather River AQMD because this pollutant is not subject to any specific statutory planning requirements related to particulate matter (HSC § 40911).

f) Summary of Impacts on Local Government

Overall, the proposed amendments would result in cost savings of approximately \$14,131 to the Feather River AQMD over a three-year period. Amador County APCD, Calaveras County APCD, and Tuolumne County APCD are currently in a subset of ozone Nonattainment. Portions of Placer County APCD and El Dorado County AQMD are in existing Nonattainment areas that require the submittal of triennial plans and annual updates. Therefore, the total impact to these districts would result in costs of approximately \$0 because updating the required plans would be minor over the three-year period, which would begin in the fiscal year 2027/2028 and continue for two subsequent fiscal years (2028/2029 and 2029/2030).

g) Fiscal Impact on State Government

Upon the change in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin in Yuba County and most of Sutter County area designations from Nonattainment-Transitional to Attainment for ozone, the Feather River AQMD is no longer required to submit the triennial plan or annual updates as described previously. This could reduce CARB staff review time resulting in minor cost savings. The triennial plan usually takes about an hour of CARB staff time to review and tracking the annual updates involves less than an hour of CARB staff time per plan. The change in designation status for Yuba County and most of Sutter County will, therefore, relieve CARB of the requirement to review and track the plans prepared by the local air district, resulting in staff time savings of approximately one hour, or less, annually. The savings would be minor over the three-year period, which would begin in the fiscal year 2027/2028 and continue for two subsequent fiscal years (2028/2029 and 2029/2030).

The Executive Officer has determined that this regulatory action will not have a significant statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting businesses, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states, or on representative private persons.

In accordance with Government Code section 11346.3, the Executive Officer has determined that this regulatory action will not affect the creation or elimination of jobs within the State of California, the creation of new businesses or elimination of existing businesses within the State of California, or the expansion of businesses currently doing business within the State of California.

In addition, the agency is not aware of any cost impacts that a representative private person or business would necessarily incur in reasonable compliance with the proposed action as defined in Government Code section 11346.5(a)(9).

Finally, the Executive Officer has determined, pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 1, section 4, that this regulatory action will not affect small businesses because the proposed regulatory action does not contain any requirements for action.

Consideration of Alternatives

State law (HSC § 39607(e)) requires CARB to establish criteria for designating areas as attainment or nonattainment for the State standards. State law (HSC § 39608(c)) further requires CARB to use the designation criteria in an annual review of the area designations.

The proposed amendments to the area designations are described in the section “The Specific Purpose and Rationale of Each Adoption, Amendment, or Repeal” of the Initial Statement of Reasons. The proposed amendments reflect the application of the designation criteria set forth in CCR, title 17, sections 70300 through 70306 and appendices 1 through 3 thereof. Each proposed amendment is accompanied by a discussion of its basis and justification.

Government Code section 11346.2, subdivision (b)(4) requires CARB to consider and evaluate reasonable alternatives to the proposed regulatory action and provide reasons for rejecting those alternatives. This section discusses alternatives evaluated and provides reasons why these alternatives were not included in the proposal. As explained below, no alternative proposed was found to be less burdensome and equally effective in achieving the purposes of the regulation in a manner that ensures full compliance with the authorizing law. The Executive Officer has not identified any reasonable alternatives that would lessen any adverse impact on small business.

CARB staff considered potential alternatives to the proposed amendments (namely, the no-action alternative). CARB staff find the proposed amendments are more appropriate than the no-action alternative, which would be inconsistent with State law, and would retain designations based on older, outdated data. In addition, the no-action alternative would not inform the public or districts whether the health-based air quality standards are being met, based on the most recent data.

CARB staff also considered the potential alternatives to the proposed amendments that would lessen any adverse impact on small business (namely, the no-action alternative). However, as discussed above, the proposed amendments are more appropriate than the no-action alternative, which would retain the ozone nonattainment-transitional designations for the Lake Tahoe Air Basin; Amador County, Calaveras County, and Tuolumne County in the Mountain Counties Air Basin; and the Sutter Buttes, the remainder of Sutter County, and Yuba County in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin. The no-action alternative would also retain the nonattainment designation for Calaveras County in the Mountain Counties Air Basin for PM₁₀ and the nonattainment designation in Sutter and Yuba counties in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin for PM_{2.5}.

The proposed amendments will not affect small businesses because they contain no requirements for any action. The no-action alternative would neither lessen nor increase any impact on small businesses. For the reasons set forth in the Staff Report, in staff's comments, and in this Final Statement of Reasons, the Executive Officer determined that no alternative considered by the agency would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the regulatory action was proposed, or would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons, or would be more cost-effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provisions of law than the action taken by the Executive Officer.

II. Modifications Made to the Original Proposal

There were no modifications to the original proposal. The amended regulations which the Executive Officer adopted are identical to those initially proposed by the staff and made available in the staff report released November 18, 2025.

Non-Substantial Modifications

There were no modifications to the original proposal.

III. Documents Incorporated by Reference

No documents are incorporated by reference in this regulation.

IV. Summary of Comments and Agency Response

Written comments were received during the 45-day comment period in response to the public notice. Listed below are the organizations and individuals that provided comments during the 45-day comment period:

Table 1. Written Comments Received During the 45-Day Comment Period

Commenter, Date	Affiliation
Kevin Stone, November 25, 2025	N/A
Mark Blaydes, December 9, 2025	N/A
Gina M., December 26, 2025	N/A

1. Comment: CA My home and the area surrounding it is increasingly affected by natural wood being burned in neighbors fireplace during the months October/November thru March/April. Specifically smoke is entering my home and my out door air quality monitor measures in the very unhealthy to hazardous levels typically between the hours of 6pm-10pm. I've spoken with the specific polluter and requested they burn the manufactured logs instead of natural wood, as a compromise. Please consider tightening the air quality standards so as San Diego County will have no burn days and the ability to file complaints or report offenders like other areas of California. Thank you.

Agency Response: This comment was not responsive to the amendments in this rulemaking and therefore no response is needed.

2. Comment: As a legal Voter and have right to speak for we the people ! that any and all of the state of california air resource board that all amendments be squashed and that the board be abolished immediately due to the bueraucrat ongoing shenanigans and flat out lies from the board and that the members be charged with crimes against the state and the people you are not elected state officals but common employees given to much power you can't make up your own rules over federal laws you are not kings or queens but you are servants to the people of the state california is only .01 percent of the environmental affect of the world that's nothing it is proof that the air resource board is only political and a waste of taxpayers funds and is not a necessity but a burden to society thus that we call for the abolishment of california air resourcse board

Agency Response: This comment was not responsive to the amendments in this rulemaking and therefore no response is needed.

3. Comment: On Christmas Eve morning, I loaded my car up and was about to head out for a day of cookie making, present wrapping, and family connection. When I started my car I realized something was wrong, only to find someone stole my catalytic converter. They also cut past the flanges in my exhaust system so I have to replace that plus the o2 censor.

The fact this board has hiked the cost up to over 900 for a catalytic converter is effectively rewarding the thieves, and causing lower income constituents in the state SEVERE financial hardships because of some arbitrary state board.

If the EPA approves, it should be good enough for us. And if you're requiring CARB approvals, you need to do something about the clear and present price gouging happening to Californians. Catalytic converter thefts are a statewide epidemic and with the lack of police support regarding these type of victimless crimes it leave us between a rock and a hard place. You need to do better and fix the cost or get rid of the arbitrary emissions standards you are assigning to them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Agency Response: This comment was not responsive to the amendments in this rulemaking and therefore no response is needed.

V. Peer Review

Health and Safety Code section 57004 sets forth requirements for peer review of identified portions of rulemakings proposed by entities within the California Environmental Protection Agency, including CARB. Specifically, the scientific basis or scientific portion of a proposed rule may be subject to this peer review process. As this rulemaking only updates the labels identifying air quality in each area of the State, a peer review is not required.