

California Air Resources Board

Proposed 2025 Amendments to the Area Designations for State Air Quality Standards Staff Report: Initial Statement of Reasons

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Executive Summary

The California Air Resources Board (CARB or Board) has established State ambient air quality standards (State standards or standards) to protect public health and welfare. State law requires CARB to annually assess the air quality in each area of California and determine whether it meets State standards. These area designations are based on established criteria, ensuring they are made in a consistent manner. CARB reviews area designations for all State standards using the most currently available air quality data. Each area of the State is designated as one of four categories, based on analysis of air quality data collected at the more than 200 regulatory air monitoring sites (sites) across California operated by CARB, the local air districts, and federal agencies:

- Nonattainment – pollutant concentrations violate the State standard;
- Nonattainment-Transitional – pollutant concentrations violate the State standard, but air quality is nearing attainment;
- Attainment – pollutant concentrations do not violate the State standard; and
- Unclassified – no data or insufficient data to support a designation of attainment or nonattainment.

A. Proposed Changes

This review of the area designations is based on 2022 through 2024 air quality data. Based on these data, CARB staff is proposing amendments to current area designation regulations for ozone, suspended particulate matter (PM₁₀), and fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). While designation changes from nonattainment to nonattainment-transitional occur by operation of law, other amendments to the designations require formal CARB action. The proposed designation amendments 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

Pollutant	Designation Area	Current Designation	Proposed Designation
PM ₁₀	Mountain Counties Air Basin – Calaveras County	Nonattainment	Attainment
PM _{2.5}	Sacramento Valley Air Basin – Sutter and Yuba Counties	Nonattainment	Attainment

B. Additional Information

State law also requires CARB to annually review and publish maps and tables identifying the attainment status of each area of the State with respect to both the State and national ambient air quality standards (national standards). Updated maps and tables are provided in Appendix C to this report. They reflect the proposed amendments to area designations for State standards that are summarized in this staff report, those changes that occurred by operation of law, and the current area designations for the national standards.

I. Introduction and Background

A. Introduction

This chapter provides background information on the differences between the State and national standards, the legal requirements for the State designation criteria and area designation regulations, and the annual data review.

B. State and National Ambient Air Quality Standards

California law requires CARB to establish State standards in consideration of public health, safety, and welfare. These standards define the maximum amount of a pollutant that can be present in the ambient air. Currently, there are State standards for the following air pollutants: ozone, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), sulfates, lead, hydrogen sulfide (H₂S), and visibility-reducing particles (California Code of Regulations (CCR), title 17, § 70200), as well as vinyl chloride (as a hazardous substance in CCR, title 17, § 70200.5). In addition to the State standards, the federal Clean Air Act requires the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) to establish national standards. In some cases, California's State standards are more health-protective than the corresponding national standards. Additionally, CARB has established State standards for pollutants not covered by national standards (sulfates, H₂S, visibility-reducing particles, and vinyl chloride).

Both State and national standards are generally specified as a concentration averaged over a specific period, such as 1 hour, 8 hour, 24 hour, 30 days, or 1 year. The different averaging times and concentrations are meant to protect against different exposure impacts. Some standards are expressed as a concentration that is not to be exceeded, while others are expressed as a concentration that is not to be equaled or exceeded. The national standards are further categorized as primary standards (established to protect public health) and secondary standards (established to protect public welfare). Appendix C contains a table listing the State and national standard levels, averaging times, and analytical measurement methods.

C. General Provisions of the Designation Criteria

The designation criteria describe the procedures CARB must use in determining an area's designation status with respect to each of the pollutants for which state ambient air quality standards have been established in CCR, title 17, section 70200. In summary, the designation criteria specify the:

- Requirements for each designation category;
- Data to use in making area designation determinations;
- Procedure for excluding qualifying high concentrations;
- Size of the designated area; and
- Requirement for an annual review of the area designations.

D. Designation Categories

The designation criteria specify four designation categories: nonattainment, nonattainment-transitional, attainment, and unclassified. Determining which category is appropriate for an

area is generally based on the number of violations in the area. Therefore, it is essential to understand the difference between an exceedance and a violation. An exceedance is any concentration that is higher than the level of the State standard. In contrast, violations are a subset of exceedances. A violation is an exceedance that is not affected by a highly irregular or infrequent event and therefore cannot be excluded from the area designation process (see the subsection “Highly Irregular or Infrequent Events” below).

1. Nonattainment.

CARB designates an area as nonattainment for a pollutant if air quality data show a State standard for that pollutant was violated one or more times during the previous three calendar years.

2. Nonattainment-Transitional.

The nonattainment-transitional category is a subcategory of nonattainment, with different requirements for ozone than for the other pollutants. For non-ozone pollutants, CARB designates an area as nonattainment-transitional if air quality data show a State standard for that pollutant was violated two or fewer times at each site in the area during the most recent calendar year, California Code of Regulations (CCR), title 17, section 70303.1. In contrast, the nonattainment-transitional requirements for ozone are further detailed in CCR, title 17, section 70303.5 and Health and Safety Code (HSC) section 40925.5. These specify that a nonattainment air pollution control or air quality management district (district) (or entire portion of a district within an air basin) is designated as nonattainment-transitional for ozone if air quality data show three or fewer exceedances of the State standard at each site in the area during the most recent calendar year.

There are four key differences in the ozone nonattainment-transitional requirements, compared with those for the other pollutants. First, the designated area is always a district (or the entire portion of a district within an air basin), rather than an air basin, county, or other geographic area. Second, the designation is based on exceedances, which means all air quality measurements are considered—none are excluded. Third, only nonattainment areas may be designated as nonattainment-transitional for ozone. Finally, the ozone nonattainment-transitional designation occurs by operation of law and is non-discretionary (HSC § 40925.5). CARB updates the area designation regulations to reflect the change.

3. Attainment.

In contrast to nonattainment and nonattainment-transitional, CARB designates an area as in attainment for a pollutant if data show the State standard was not violated during the previous three calendar years. Data used for an attainment designation must be representative of the averaging time of the standard and complete for the time-period evaluated.

4. Unclassified.

Finally, CARB designates an area as unclassified for a pollutant if no data or the available data are insufficient to support a designation of attainment or nonattainment. The Area Designation Criteria (Appendix B) describes the procedures that CARB must use in determining area

designations for State standards (CCR, title 17, §§ 70300 through 70306, and appendices 1 through 3).

E. Designation Process

The area designations are based on air quality data for record as defined in section 70301 of the designation criteria (Appendix B). The process used to designate an area is generally the same for each pollutant:

- Gather data for the three-year period for each site in the area;
- Evaluate data representativeness and data completeness for each site;
- Identify and exclude exceedances affected by highly irregular or infrequent events;
- Tabulate the number of exceedances and violations by site;
- Determine the designation value for each site;
- Determine the designation value for the area; and
- Determine the appropriate designation category.

F. Designation Value

Determining the designation value is the most critical part of the designation process because the designation value determines the designation category. The designation value is the measured concentration that is used to determine the designation status of a given area. In practice, the designation value is the highest measured concentration in the three-year period that remains after excluding concentrations affected by highly irregular or infrequent events.

A designation value is determined for each monitoring site by pollutant. The highest designation value for any site in the area by pollutant becomes the designation value for the area for the given pollutant. When there is more than one standard for a single pollutant, a designation value is determined for each standard. For example, there are both a 1-hour and an 8-hour State ozone standard. As a result, there is a 1-hour designation value as well as an 8-hour designation value. The final area designation will reflect the designation category with the most violations of the standard for either of the two averaging periods. Using ozone as an example, consider an area with a 1-hour ozone designation value that is lower than the State standard, indicating attainment, and an 8-hour designation value that is higher than the State standard, indicating nonattainment. In this case, the area would be designated as nonattainment for ozone.

G. Size of Designated Area

The size of the area designated for a pollutant varies, depending on the nature of the pollutant, the location of contributing emissions sources, meteorology, and topographic features. An air basin is the area generally designated for pollutants with a regional impact: ozone, NO₂, sulfates, and visibility-reducing particles. A county (or portion of a county located within an air basin) is generally the area designated for pollutants with a more localized impact: CO, SO₂, lead, and H₂S. Depending on the area and the characteristics of the emissions sources, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} may be considered to have either regional or localized impacts. In some cases, CARB may designate a smaller area if it finds that the smaller area has distinctly different air quality.

H. Data Requirements

To the extent possible, the area designations are based on the most recent air quality data. These must be data for record, which means they satisfy specific siting and quality assurance procedures established by U.S. EPA and CARB. Generally, data for record are those data collected by or under the direction of CARB or the local districts. Air quality data from other sources may also qualify as data for record if the same requirements are met. For area designation purposes, air quality measurements and statistics are rounded to the precision of the State standard before being compared with the standard. The rounding convention is summarized in Appendix D.

When adequate and recent air quality data are not available, CARB may use other types of information to determine an appropriate area designation. These other types of information may include historical air quality data, emissions data, meteorological data, topographical data, and data relating to the characteristics of population or emissions.

I. Highly Irregular or Infrequent Events

The designation criteria provide for excluding certain high air quality measurements from the area designation process. More specifically, the criteria provide for excluding exceedances affected by highly irregular or infrequent events, because it is not reasonable to mitigate these exceedances through the regulatory process. Appendix 2 to CCR, title 17, sections 70300 to 70306 (the designation criteria) defines three types of highly irregular or infrequent events: extreme concentration events, exceptional events, and unusual concentration events.

1. Extreme Concentration Event

An extreme concentration is identified using a statistical procedure. This procedure calculates a concentration that is not expected to be exceeded more than once per year, on average. The calculated value is commonly called the Expected Peak Day Concentration or EPDC (described in more detail in Appendix E). In practice, a pollutant-specific EPDC is calculated for each monitoring site, using air quality data measured at the site during at least the most recent three calendar years. The EPDC value is rounded to the precision of the State standard and then compared with air quality measurements for the same site, which are also rounded to the precision of the State standard. Measurements that exceed the State standard and are higher than the rounded EPDC are excluded from the area designation process; these exceedances are not considered violations of the standard. In contrast, measurements that exceed the State standard but are equal to or lower than the rounded EPDC are not excluded from the designation process; these values are considered violations of the State standard.

In cases where data are not complete for the three-year period being evaluated, the EPDC may not be valid for area designation purposes. If the EPDC is not valid, no measurements are excluded as extreme concentration events. Finally, an EPDC is calculated only for standards with an averaging time equal to or less than 24 hours.

2. Exceptional Event

In contrast to an extreme concentration event, an exceptional event is an exceedance of a State standard that is caused by a specific, identifiable event and is beyond reasonable

regulatory control. An exceptional event may be caused by an act of nature (for example, a wildfire or severe windstorm) or it may be of human origin (for example, a chemical spill or industrial accident). Air quality measurements identified as exceptional events are not considered violations and are excluded from the designation process.

3. Unusual Concentration Event

An unusual concentration is an unexpected or atypical exceedance of a State standard that cannot be identified as an extreme concentration or an exceptional event. Unusual concentrations are identified only for areas already designated as attainment or unclassified. Generally, unusual concentrations are identified for sites with limited air quality data, and therefore, uncertainty as to the expected concentration levels. In identifying such events, the Executive Officer must make specific findings based on relevant information. An area may retain its attainment or unclassified designation based on the exclusion of unusual concentrations for up to three consecutive years. If an exceedance occurs during the fourth year, the area is redesignated as nonattainment, unless the exceedance can be excluded as an extreme concentration or an exceptional event.

J. Legal Requirements

HSC section 39607(e) requires CARB to establish and periodically review criteria for designating areas as attainment or nonattainment for the State standards. The criteria (Appendix B) describe the procedures that CARB must use in determining area designations for State standards (CCR, title 17, §§ 70300 through 70306, and appendices 1 through 3). CARB originally adopted the required designation criteria in June 1989 and has updated them several times since, most recently in March 2010.

HSC section 39608 requires CARB to use the designation criteria to designate areas of California as attainment, nonattainment, or unclassified for the State standards. In addition, HSC section 40925.5 provides for the redesignation of a nonattainment district as nonattainment-transitional for ozone by operation of law. Finally, HSC section 39608 requires CARB to conduct an annual review of the area designations and update them, as warranted. The area designations are made for each of the ten pollutants previously listed.

In addition to the designation criteria and area designation requirements, HSC section 40718 requires CARB to publish maps showing the areas with one or more violations of any State or national standard. The maps and summary tables provided in Appendix C to this report fulfill this requirement by indicating the attainment status of each area of the State. The maps and tables for the State standards reflect the proposed area designation amendments of this report, as well as those changes that occurred by operation of law. The maps and tables for the national standards reflect the current national area designations, as promulgated by U.S. EPA.

K. Annual Data Review

Each year, CARB monitors air pollutants in California in cooperation with local air districts and with other agencies. Based on these monitoring data, and in consultation with the districts, CARB is required to annually identify and designate each area which is in attainment and each area which is in nonattainment for each State standard. CARB must make this identification

and designation on a pollutant-by-pollutant basis. Where CARB finds that data are not sufficient to determine the attainment or nonattainment status for an area, CARB will identify the area as unclassified.

CARB has completed its annual review of the latest complete monitoring data (2022 to 2024). These data indicate that the previous designations for certain pollutants in certain air basins are no longer applicable. Therefore, the air quality in these affected air basins is not accurately portrayed to the public and the districts. CARB proposes to update the designations and maps to be consistent with the monitoring data.

II. The Problem that the Proposal is Intended to Address

HSC section 39608 requires CARB to monitor air quality and to annually designate each air basin as attainment, nonattainment, or unclassified for the State standards based on these data. The purposes, benefits, and goals of this statute, which is identified as references to this rulemaking, are:

- To protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public, including those at risk of adverse effects with exposure to air pollution, such as children, the elderly, and people who are active outdoors;
- To safeguard the quality of the physical environment in which Californians live by an intensive, coordinated State, regional, and local effort to protect and enhance the ambient air quality of the State;
- To encourage a regional approach to meeting State standards throughout the State, whenever possible; and
- To be consistent with the State goal of providing a decent home and suitable living environment for every Californian.

A. Rationale

1. The proposed amendments meet statutory requirements to identify the attainment status of air pollution in the ambient air.

The Legislature found and declared that the people of the State of California have a primary interest in the quality of the physical environment in which they live (HSC § 39000). As part of protecting this interest, HSC section 39608 requires CARB to annually designate each air basin as attainment, nonattainment, or unclassified for the State standards based on these data. This proposal fulfills that requirement.

Furthermore, this public interest must be safeguarded by an intensive, coordinated State, regional, and local effort to protect and enhance the ambient air quality of the State (HSC § 39001). As stated previously, CARB is required to establish State standards in consideration of public health, safety, and welfare. CARB is charged with coordinating efforts to attain and maintain ambient air quality standards (HSC § 39003). CARB is also required to adopt rules and regulations that will achieve the ambient air quality standards (HSC § 39602.5). Attainment of these health-based standards is necessary to protect public health and welfare, particularly of children, the elderly, and those with respiratory diseases. It is therefore in the public interest that these standards be attained and maintained. Toward this end, the proposed

amendments are necessary for informing what, if any, further actions may be needed to attain and maintain the State standards.

2. The proposed amendments provide the public with information for personal decisions.

The annual review and update of the area designations provide the public with an indication of whether the health-based standards are being met. This information allows the public to make more educated decisions regarding personal residency and employment, as well as participation in outdoor activities.

3. The proposed amendments provide businesses and the government with information for worker health and safety decisions.

The annual review and update of the area designations also give businesses and governments an indication of whether the health-based standards are being met. This information provides businesses and governments the opportunity to make better-informed decisions regarding worker health and safety.

4. The proposed amendments fulfill statutory requirements.

CARB is required to post on its website information on air quality conditions and trends statewide and on the status and effectiveness of State and local air quality programs (HSC § 39604). Therefore, the proposed amendments are also necessary to provide data to fulfill this requirement.

The proposed amendments are necessary to satisfy the statutory requirement in HSC section 39608 to annually review and update the area designations based on the most recent, complete, and quality-assured air quality monitoring data, i.e., from 2022 through 2024.

5. The proposed amendments assist the districts in developing plans, if needed.

These designations are used to measure or estimate progress, or lack thereof, in the attainment of State standards. This, in turn, allows the districts to submit to CARB a plan for attaining and maintaining the State standards to ensure that the future health and welfare of the people of the State of California, and the State's environment and economy, are protected. The districts' plans may include the adoption and implementation of regulations to reduce emissions of those pollutants and their precursors that exceed the standards. Therefore, the proposed amendments also serve to inform the basis, framework, and rationale for future plans to reduce emissions.

As the area designations are labels that describe whether the health-based air quality standards are being met in each area, the proposed amendments do not contain any requirements for action.

III. The Specific Purpose and Rationale of Each Adoption, Amendment, or Repeal

The purpose of the proposed amendments is to update the area designations using the most recent, complete air quality data for each pollutant. Currently, designations are made for ten pollutants: ozone, PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, CO, NO₂, SO₂, sulfates, lead, H₂S, and visibility-reducing particles. The proposed amendments would update the designation of the specified air basin, or portion thereof, as attainment, nonattainment, or unclassified for the State standards based on these data.

The proposed amendments to the area designations would not result in any direct impact on public health or the environment because the regulations do not contain any requirements for action; they are labels identifying the air quality in each area.

As required by HSC section 39608, CARB staff review and update the area designations each year, based on air quality data from the most recent three calendar years. This year's review considered air quality data collected during 2022 through 2024. Based on these data, CARB staff proposes amendments to area designations for ozone, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5}. These changes, listed below, amend the existing CCR, title 17, chapter 1, subchapter 1.5, article 1.5, sections 60201, 60205, and 60210. The proposed amendments, once adopted by CARB, must be approved by the Office of Administrative Law before they become effective.

A. Section 60201 – Table of Area Designations for Ozone

This section identifies the ozone designation status for all areas in California. Updating the designation statuses reflects the latest ozone air quality data.

The State ozone standards are a 1-hour standard of 0.09 parts per million (ppm) and an 8-hour standard of 0.070 ppm, neither to be exceeded. To be considered in attainment, the designation values for sites in the area by air basin or county must be at or below both standards. An area is designated as nonattainment if either (or both) of the designation values exceed the level of the standard and the area does not qualify for nonattainment-transitional.

HSC section 40925.5 specifies that a nonattainment district is redesignated as nonattainment-transitional for ozone if air quality data show three or fewer exceedances of the State standard at each site in the area during the most recent calendar year. This designation occurs by operation of law, is non-discretionary, and includes all data collected during the previous calendar year, including data possibly affected by exceptional events.

Based on ozone air quality data collected during 2022 through 2024, CARB staff recommend designation changes for the following area:

- Redesignate the Lake Tahoe Air Basin as Attainment;
- Redesignate Amador County in the Mountain Counties Air Basin as Nonattainment;
- Redesignate Calaveras County in the Mountain Counties Air Basin as Nonattainment;
- Redesignate Tuolumne County in the Mountain Counties Air Basin as Nonattainment;
- Redesignate the Sutter Buttes in Sutter County in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin as Nonattainment;

- Redesignate the remainder of Sutter County in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin as Attainment; and
- Redesignate Yuba County in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin as Attainment.

1. Lake Tahoe Air Basin

The Lake Tahoe Air Basin (LTAB) is comprised of the eastern portions of El Dorado and Placer counties and is currently designated as nonattainment-transitional for ozone. During 2022 through 2024, monitoring data are available for one site, and data for the Tahoe City site are representative. Data are complete for 2022 and 2023. Data for the first quarter of 2024 are not complete, but the data are representative and the months of potentially high concentrations are included from the Tahoe City site. The Tahoe City monitoring site has a State 1-hour ozone designation value of 0.07 ppm and a State 8-hour ozone designation value of 0.070 ppm, which do not exceed the State ozone standards.

CARB staff conclude that LTAB did not have any ozone violations during the three-year period. Therefore, CARB staff recommend the Board redesignate LTAB as attainment for the State ozone standard and amend CCR, title 17, section 60201 to reflect this change.

2. Mountain Counties Air Basin

a) Amador County

The Amador County Air Pollution Control District is comprised entirely of Amador County and is currently designated as nonattainment-transitional for ozone. During 2022 through 2024, monitoring data are available for one site in Amador County, Jackson. Monitoring data for the Jackson site are both representative and complete. The Jackson monitoring site has a State 1-hour ozone designation value of 0.09 ppm and a State 8-hour ozone designation value of 0.076 ppm, which exceeds the State 8-hour ozone standard. The Jackson monitoring site has more than 3 exceedances in 2024.

CARB staff recommend the Board redesignate Amador County in the Mountain Counties Air Basin as nonattainment for ozone and amend CCR, title 17, section 60201 to reflect this change.

b) Calaveras County

The Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District is comprised entirely of Calaveras County and is currently designated as nonattainment-transitional for ozone. During 2022 through 2024, monitoring data are available for one site in Calaveras County, San Andreas. Monitoring data for the San Andreas site are both representative and complete. The San Andreas monitoring site has a State 1-hour ozone designation value of 0.09 ppm and a State 8-hour ozone designation value of 0.077 ppm, which exceeds the State 8-hour ozone standard. The San Andreas monitoring site has more than 3 exceedances in 2024.

CARB staff recommend the Board redesignate Calaveras County in the Mountain Counties Air Basin as nonattainment for ozone and amend CCR, title 17, section 60201 to reflect this change.

c) Tuolumne County

The Tuolumne County Air Pollution Control District is comprised entirely of Tuolumne County and is currently designated as nonattainment-transitional for ozone. During 2022 through 2024, monitoring data are available for one site in Tuolumne County, Sonora. The data are both representative and complete. The Sonora monitoring site has a State 1-hour ozone designation value of 0.09 ppm and a State 8-hour ozone designation value of 0.076 ppm, which exceeds the State 8-hour ozone standard. The Sonora monitoring site has more than 3 exceedances in 2024.

CARB staff recommend the Board redesignate Tuolumne County in the Mountain Counties Air Basin as nonattainment for ozone and amend CCR, title 17, section 60201 to reflect this change.

3. Sacramento Valley Air Basin

a) Sutter County – Sutter Buttes

Sutter Buttes are an area in Sutter County within the Feather River Air Quality Management District. The Sutter Buttes are currently designated as nonattainment-transitional for ozone. During 2022 through 2024, monitoring data are available for one site in the Sutter Buttes. Monitoring data for the Sutter Buttes are complete. The Sutter Buttes monitoring data are not representative but sufficient data are available to support a designation of nonattainment. The Sutter Buttes monitoring site has a State 1-hour ozone designation value of 0.08 ppm and a State 8-hour ozone designation value of 0.076 ppm, which exceeds the State 8-hour ozone standard. The Sutter Buttes monitoring site has more than 3 exceedances in 2024.

CARB staff recommend the Board redesignate the Sutter Buttes in the Sutter County portion of the Sacramento Valley Air Basin as nonattainment for ozone and amend CCR, title 17, section 60201 to reflect this change.

b) Remainder of Sutter County

The remainder of Sutter County is also encompassed by the Feather River Air Quality Management District and is currently designated as nonattainment-transitional for ozone. During 2022 through 2024, monitoring data are available for one site in the remainder of Sutter County, Yuba City. Monitoring data for the Yuba City site are complete. The data are representative for 2023 and 2024. The data are not representative for 2022 but have more than the minimum of 75% of all the values. The Yuba City site has a State 1-hour ozone designation value of 0.07 ppm and a State 8-hour ozone designation value of 0.067 ppm, which do not exceed the State ozone standards.

CARB staff conclude that the remainder of Sutter County did not have any ozone violations during the three-year period. Therefore, CARB staff recommend the Board redesignate the remainder of Sutter County in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin as attainment for the State ozone standard and amend CCR, title 17, section 60201 to reflect this change.

c) Yuba County

Yuba County is encompassed by the Feather River Air Quality Management District and is currently designated as nonattainment-transitional for ozone. During 2022 through 2024, monitoring data are available for one site in Sutter County, Yuba City, and is representative of the air quality in Yuba County. The Yuba City site has a State 1-hour ozone designation value of 0.07 ppm and a State 8-hour ozone designation value of 0.067 ppm, which do not exceed the State ozone standards.

CARB staff conclude that Yuba County did not have any ozone violations during the three-year period. Therefore, CARB staff recommend the Board redesignate Yuba County in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin as attainment for the State ozone standard and amend CCR, title 17, section 60201 to reflect this change.

B. Section 60205 - Table of Area Designations for Suspended Particulate Matter (PM₁₀)

This section identifies the PM₁₀ designation status for all areas in California. Updating the designation statuses reflects the latest PM₁₀ air quality data.

The State PM₁₀ standards are a daily standard of 50 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) and an annual standard of 20 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, not to be exceeded. To be considered in attainment, the designation values for sites in the area must be at or below both standards. An area is designated as nonattainment if either (or both) of the designation values exceed the level of the standard.

Based on PM₁₀ air quality data collected during 2022 through 2024, CARB staff determined that the current designation status of one area no longer accurately reflects air quality in that area and recommend the following designation change:

- Redesignate Calaveras County in the Mountain Counties Air Basin as Attainment.

1. Mountain Counties Air Basin

a) Calaveras County

The Calaveras County Air Pollution Control District is comprised entirely of Calaveras County and is currently designated as nonattainment for PM₁₀.

Data completeness criteria, set forth in "Criteria for Determining Data Completeness," contained in Appendix 3 to CCR, title 17, sections 70300 to 70306, allows for the use of one year of complete data, if the maximum pollutant concentration is less than half the applicable State standard, or the use of two years of complete data if the maximum concentration is less than three-quarters of the standard.

During 2022 through 2024, PM₁₀ monitoring data are available for one site in Calaveras County, San Andreas. The San Andreas monitoring site has a three-year maximum 24-hour designation value of 36 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and a three-year maximum annual designation value of 13 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, less than three-quarters of the relevant standards and with at least two years of complete data.

Based on these data, CARB staff recommend the Board redesignate Calaveras County in the Mountain Counties Air Basin as attainment for PM₁₀ and amend CCR, title 17, section 60205 accordingly to reflect this change.

C. Section 60210 - Table of Area Designations for Fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5})

This section identifies the PM_{2.5} designation status for all areas of California. Updating the designation statuses reflects the latest PM_{2.5} air quality data.

The State PM_{2.5} standard is an annual standard of 12 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³), not to be exceeded. To be in attainment, the designation values for sites in the area must be at or below this standard. An area is designated as nonattainment if the designation values exceed the level of the standard.

Based on PM_{2.5} air quality data collected during 2022 through 2024, CARB staff determined that the current designation status of one area no longer accurately reflects air quality in that area and recommend the following designation change:

- Redesignate Sutter and Yuba Counties in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin as Attainment

1. Sacramento Valley Air Basin

a) Sutter and Yuba Counties

Sutter and Yuba counties comprise the Feather River Air Quality Management District and are currently designated as nonattainment. The two most populated areas in these two counties, Yuba City in Sutter County, and Marysville in Yuba County, form a contiguous urbanized area, separated only by the Feather River. During 2022 through 2024, PM_{2.5} monitoring data are available for one site in Sutter and Yuba counties, Yuba City. The data are complete. The Yuba City monitoring site has a State PM_{2.5} annual designation value of 9 µg/m³, which meets the State PM_{2.5} annual standard.

Based on these data, CARB staff recommend the Board redesignate Sutter and Yuba Counties in the Sacramento Valley Air Basin as attainment for PM_{2.5} and amend CCR, title 17, section 60210 accordingly to reflect this change.

IV. Benefits Anticipated from the Regulatory Action, Including the Benefits or Goals Provided in the Authorizing Statute

The intent of the proposed regulatory action is to update the air quality designations for each air basin, or portion thereof, to be consistent with the most recent complete monitoring data. Adopting the proposed amendments to the area designations would not result in any direct impact on public health or the environment because the regulations do not contain any requirements for action.

A. Impacts for Local Districts

State law requires districts and CARB to make a coordinated effort to protect and enhance the ambient air quality (HSC §§ 39001 through 39003). As part of this effort, the districts must adopt rules and regulations sufficiently effective to achieve and maintain the State standards (HSC §§ 40001 and 41500). These requirements, if determined to be necessary, would result in improved air quality in communities throughout the State, resulting in lower potential health risks.

B. Purpose, Benefits, and Goals

Protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

The designations provide labels indicating whether the health-based air quality standards are being met throughout the State. These labels allow the public to make better informed decisions regarding their personal health, safety, and welfare.

Safeguarding the quality of the physical environment.

This goal is to be accomplished by an intensive, coordinated State, regional, and local effort to protect and enhance the ambient air quality of the State. CARB and the districts have coordinated their efforts in obtaining and reviewing air quality monitoring data, identifying highly irregular or infrequent events, and evaluating meteorological, topographical, and other data relating to the characteristics of population or emissions. This coordinated effort has resulted in the proposed amendments to the area designations in order to accurately reflect whether the health-based air quality standards are being met in each area.

Encouraging a regional approach to meeting the State ambient air quality standards, whenever possible.

The proposed amendments designate areas as attainment, nonattainment, nonattainment-transitional, or unclassified by pollutant. Designations are not made on a statewide basis. Where appropriate, these designations are made for each air basin, district, or sub-region based on meteorological, topographical, and other data relating to the characteristics of population or emissions. CARB encourages a regional approach to meeting the State standards by working with the local air districts. While CARB focuses on statewide sources like vehicles, the proposed designations by discrete areas allow each district to assess the air quality of individual areas and address their unique situations and needs by identifying the most effective and efficient approach to regulating emissions from businesses and stationary facilities within their local boundaries. This tiered system allows for tailored strategies that address the unique pollution challenges of different communities across California.

Consistency with the State goal of providing a healthy and safe environment.

As the area designations are labels that describe whether the health-based air quality standards are being met in each area, the proposed amendments do not contain any requirements for action. However, the annual review and update of the area designations provides the public with an indication of whether the health-based standards are met. This information allows the public to make more educated decisions regarding personal residency.

C. Implications of Area Designations

The State designation criteria specify four designation categories: nonattainment, nonattainment-transitional, attainment, and unclassified. A nonattainment designation indicates one or more violations of the State standard have occurred. A nonattainment-transitional designation is a subcategory of nonattainment that indicates improving air quality, with only occasional violations or exceedances of the State standard. In contrast, an attainment designation indicates no violation of the State standard. Finally, an unclassified designation indicates either no, or an incomplete set of, air quality data. Although the area designations themselves are labels indicating if an area has met air quality standards and do not contain any requirements for action, there may be other legal requirements, based on an area's designation status, as described below.

1. Areas Designated as Nonattainment

State law requires nonattainment districts to develop plans for attaining the State standards for ozone, CO, NO₂, and SO₂. The nonattainment districts must submit these attainment plans to the Board for approval (HSC § 40911). Ozone nonattainment districts that are impacted by transport from upwind areas (in other words, ozone violations are caused by emissions transported from upwind areas located outside the district) are required to develop ozone attainment plans to mitigate those violations that occur in the absence of transport (in other words, ozone violations that are caused by locally generated emissions). (HSC § 39610(b) and 40912). Violations caused by a combination of transported and locally generated emissions must be mitigated by both the upwind and downwind areas. Ozone violations caused by overwhelming transport must be mitigated by the responsible upwind district(s).

A district with an area designated as nonattainment for any of the remaining pollutants is not subject to any specific statutory planning requirements. However, such districts must adopt and enforce rules and regulations to expeditiously attain the State standards for these pollutants (HSC §§ 40001 and 40913). Furthermore, a nonattainment district has the option of developing and implementing an attainment plan or adopting regulations to control the emissions that contribute to these pollutants (HSC § 40926).

Gasoline dispensing facilities in districts that CARB determines are nonattainment for the State ozone standard are required to meet CARB's Enhanced Vapor Recovery performance standards and specifications set forth in sections 3 through 9, inclusive, of CP-201 Certification Procedure for Vapor Recovery Systems at Dispensing Facilities, while such facilities in attainment areas are generally exempted. If exempt facilities become subject to additional standards due to a subsequent redesignation of their district from attainment to nonattainment, the facilities will have four years to comply.

An additional consequence of a nonattainment designation is that the Board collects fees from large, non-vehicular sources located in the nonattainment area (HSC § 39612; CCR, title 17, §§ 90800.8 through 90806). District sources permitted to emit 250 tons per year or more of any nonattainment pollutant or its precursors are subject to these fees (HSC § 39612(d)). The fees are used to help defray the costs of State programs related to non-vehicular sources.

The environmental and economic impacts from the regulations discussed above were addressed in their respective rulemaking files.

2. Areas Designated as Nonattainment-Transitional

Nonattainment-transitional is a subcategory of the nonattainment designation. Therefore, a district with a nonattainment area that is redesignated as nonattainment-transitional is still subject to the same requirements as described in the preceding section. However, in contrast to the nonattainment designation, a nonattainment-transitional designation may signal a change in how these requirements are implemented. For example, a district that currently is implementing an approved attainment plan may determine that some of the additional control measures contained in the attainment plan are not needed to reach attainment by the earliest practicable date. As a result, the nonattainment-transitional designation provides the district with a signal that it may be appropriate to review, and perhaps modify, its approved attainment plan. However, district actions in response to a nonattainment-transitional designation must be consistent with State and federal regulations and statutes.

HSC section 40925.5 specifically allows a district with an area designated as nonattainment-transitional for ozone to shift some stationary source control measures from the rulemaking calendar to the contingency category if the district finds these control measures are no longer necessary to accomplish expeditious attainment of the State ozone standard. These actions do not apply to control measures required to mitigate the effects of pollutant transport. The Board may disapprove any action of the district within 90 days if the Board finds that the action will delay expeditious attainment of the State ozone standard.

3. Areas Designated as Attainment or Unclassified

State law does not impose any specific planning requirements upon districts with areas designated as attainment or unclassified. However, State law does require that the State standards not only be attained but also maintained. State law requires the districts and the Board to make a coordinated effort to protect and enhance the ambient air quality (HSC §§ 39001 through 39003). As part of this effort, the districts must adopt rules and regulations sufficiently effective to achieve and maintain the State standards (HSC §§ 40001 and 41500).

Gasoline dispensing facilities in districts that CARB determines are unclassified for the State ozone standard are required to meet CARB's Enhanced Vapor Recovery performance standards and specifications set forth in sections 3 through 9, inclusive, of CP-201 Certification Procedure for Vapor Recovery Systems at Dispensing Facilities. If exempt facilities become subject to additional standards due to a subsequent redesignation of their district from attainment to nonattainment, the facilities will have four years to comply.

D. Other Impacts and Benefits

The annual review and update of the area designations gives the public, businesses, and the government an indication of whether the health-based standards are being met. This information allows the public to make more educated decisions regarding personal health and residency, as well as participation in outdoor activities. This information also allows businesses and the government the opportunity to make better-informed decisions regarding worker health and safety.

V. Air Quality

The proposed amendments to the area designations do not contain any requirements for action, and, therefore, would not result in any direct air quality or environmental impacts. However, the area designations do label areas with respect to whether the health-based air quality standards are being met.

VI. Environmental Analysis

This chapter provides the basis for CARB's determination that the proposed regulation is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A brief explanation of this determination is provided below. CARB's regulatory program, which involves the adoption, approval, amendment, or repeal of standards, rules, regulations, or plans for the protection and enhancement of the State's ambient air quality, has been certified by the California Secretary for Natural Resources under Public Resources Code section 21080.5 of CEQA (CCR, title 14, § 15251(d)). Public agencies with certified regulatory programs are exempt from certain CEQA requirements, including but not limited to, preparing environmental impact reports, negative declarations, and initial studies. CARB, as a lead agency, prepares a substitute environmental document (referred to as an "Environmental Analysis" or "EA") as part of the Staff Report prepared for a proposed action to comply with CEQA (CCR, title 17, §§ 60000-60008). If the regulation is finalized, a Notice of Exemption will be filed with the Office of the Secretary for the Natural Resources Agency for public inspection.

CARB staff has determined that the proposed regulation is exempt from CEQA under the "general rule" or "common sense" exemption (CCR, title 14, § 15061(b)(3)). The common sense exemption states a project is exempt from CEQA if "[t]he activity is covered by the common sense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects, which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA."

The proposed regulation includes the following changes: Proposed Changes to Ozone Area Designations (CCR, title 17, § 60201), Proposed Changes to PM₁₀ Area Designations (CCR, title 17, § 60205), and Proposed Changes to PM_{2.5} Area Designations (CCR, title 17, § 60210). These changes are to the labels that indicate whether the air quality standards are being met throughout the State. These proposed changes do not contain any requirements for action, and, therefore, they would not result in any direct air quality or environmental impacts. Any potential future actions that may be pursued in response to the designations are speculative and unknown at this time. Therefore, they are appropriately not considered as compliance responses for this proposed regulation. If future actions were to be pursued, the appropriate lead agency under CEQA would be responsible for analyzing any potential impacts associated with those actions and making the appropriate CEQA determinations at that time.

Based on CARB staff's review, there is no possibility that the proposed regulation may result in a significant adverse impact on the environment; therefore, this activity is exempt from CEQA.

VII. Environmental Justice

State law defines environmental justice as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins, with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies (Gov. Code, § 65040.12, subd. (e)(1)). Environmental justice includes, but is not limited to, all of the following: (A) The availability of a healthy environment for all people. (B) The deterrence, reduction, and elimination of pollution burdens for populations and communities experiencing the adverse effects of that pollution, so that the effects of the pollution are not disproportionately borne by those populations and communities. (C) Governmental entities engaging and providing technical assistance to populations and communities most impacted by pollution to promote their meaningful participation in all phases of the environmental and land use decision making process. (D) At a minimum, the meaningful consideration of recommendations from populations and communities most impacted by pollution into environmental and land use decisions (Gov. Code, § 65040.12, subd. (e)(2)). The Board approved its Environmental Justice Policies and Actions (Policies) on December 13, 2001, to establish a framework for incorporating environmental justice into CARB's programs consistent with the directives of State law. These policies apply to all communities in California, but are intended to address the disproportionate environmental exposure burden borne by low-income communities and communities of color. Environmental justice is one of CARB's core values and fundamental to achieving its mission.

Because some communities experience higher exposures to air pollutants, it is a priority of CARB to ensure that full protection is afforded to all Californians. The area designations are designed to identify areas with unhealthful air quality, based on the most recently available complete data. Though the proposed amendments to the area designations do not contain any requirements for action, the area designations can help better inform actions to improve air quality. In addition, during the designation process, CARB staff works closely with the districts and communities to make sure all environmental justice related issues are taken into consideration.

VIII. Economic Impacts Assessment

The proposed amendments are not anticipated to impose any costs or savings on businesses and individuals and therefore have no statewide adverse economic impacts, including impacts on California employment, business status, or competitiveness.

A. Legal Requirement

Government Code sections 11346.2(b)(2) and 11346.3(b) require the preparation of an economic impact assessment. Specifically, section 11346.3 of the Government Code requires California agencies, in proposing to adopt or amend any administrative regulation, to:

- assess the potential for adverse economic impacts on California business enterprises and individuals, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states;

- include the potential impact of the regulation on California jobs, business expansion, and business elimination or creation;
- estimate the costs or savings to any State or local agency and school district in accordance with instructions adopted by the Department of Finance; and
- include any non-discretionary cost or savings to local agencies, and the cost or savings in federal funding to the State.

The proposed regulatory amendments are not projected to exceed either major regulation threshold because they do not have potential costs exceeding ten million dollars in any single year or fifty million dollars in any 12-month period.

B. Potential Impact on Businesses, Business Competitiveness, Employment, and Business Creation, Elimination, or Expansion

The proposed amendments do not contain any requirements for action on individuals and businesses. Although districts may use new area designations in planning for future actions, any potential future actions that may be pursued in response to the designations are speculative and unknown at this time. Because districts are local government agencies, any impacts to air districts are described in the fiscal impact section. Therefore, the proposed amendments will have no statewide economic impact directly affecting individuals and businesses, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states, 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, or on representative private persons.

Pursuant to CCR, title 1, section 4, the proposed amendments would not affect small businesses because no action is required by them.

Before taking final action on the proposed amendments, CARB must determine that no reasonable alternative considered by the agency, or that has otherwise been identified and brought to the attention of the agency, would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the action is proposed, or would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the proposed action. CARB staff found no reasonable alternative to the proposed amendments that would be more effective and less burdensome to affected businesses or private persons.

C. Potential Cost to Local and State Agencies

1. Fiscal Effect on Local Government

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, CO, NO₂, and SO₂. The nonattainment districts must submit these attainment plans to CARB for approval (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 (reporting) (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 reporting, 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 reporting (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 reporting, 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 and still subject to reporting requirements.

d) Fiscal Impact on Calaveras County APCD

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 and still subject to report requirements.

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 reporting 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 a report to the Board of its plan to achieve the air quality standards every three years (triennial report), or an annual update to this plan (annual update). The air district would have been required to submit a triennial report in the 2027/2028 fiscal year and annual reports in 2028/2029 and 2029/2030 fiscal years. According to air district staff, the triennial report 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 report 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 reporting. Therefore, the total impact to these districts would result in costs of approximately \$0 because updating the required reports 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).

Pursuant to Government Code section 11346.9(a)(2), the costs to local agencies would be non-reimbursable because the proposed amendments would not constitute a new obligation. The proposed amendments would trigger reporting requirements under HSC sections 40910-40930 and potentially create costs to local air districts; costs would not be reimbursable pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution and Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of the Government Code. As such, the proposed amendments neither require local agencies to undertake a new program nor to provide an increased level of service in an existing program. (See Gov. Code § 17514.)

2. 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 report or annual updates as described previously. This could reduce CARB staff review time resulting in minor cost savings. The triennial report 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 report. The change in designation status for Yuba County and most of Sutter County will, therefore, relieve the Board of the requirement to review and track the reports 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).

D. The Benefits of the Regulation to the Health and Welfare of California Residents, Worker Safety, and the State's Environment

As stated in the rationale, attainment of these health-based standards is necessary to protect public health and welfare, particularly of children, the elderly, and those with respiratory diseases. It is therefore in the public interest that these standards be attained and maintained. Toward this end, the proposed amendments are necessary for determining what, if any, further regulations may be needed to attain and maintain the State standards.

The annual review and update of the area designations also gives businesses and government an indication of whether the health-based standards are met. This information allows businesses and governments the opportunity to make better-informed decisions regarding worker health and safety.

IX. Evaluation of Regulatory 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 this 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 Board has not identified any reasonable alternatives that would lessen any adverse impact on small business.

A. No Reasonable Alternatives to the Amendments

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.

B. Small Business Alternative

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.

C. Performance Standards in Place of Prescriptive Standards

The proposed amendments do not specify the sole means of compliance with a performance standard by specific actions, measurements, or other quantifiable means; therefore, prescriptive standards are not present.

X. Justification for Adoption of Regulations Different from Federal Regulations Contained in the Code of Federal Regulations

There are no comparable federal regulations that address area designations for the State standards.

XI. Public Process for Development of the Proposed Action (Pre-Regulatory Information)

Consistent with Government Code sections 11346, subdivision (b), and 11346.45, subdivision (a), and with the Board's long-standing practice, CARB staff held a public workshop and had other meetings with interested persons during the development of the proposed regulation. These informal pre-rulemaking discussions provided staff with useful information that was considered during development of the regulation that is now being proposed for formal public comment.

To facilitate public comment during the designation review process, CARB staff requested public input in several ways. After CARB staff's initial review of 2022 through 2024 air quality data, CARB staff noted potential changes to the existing area designations for ozone, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5}. CARB staff contacted the affected districts to discuss the results of the review and provide an opportunity for district input. CARB staff also maintained a web-based subscriber notification process. For those who subscribe, the system provides electronic updates related to area designation issues.

On September 17, 2025, CARB staff announced a public workshop scheduled for October 1, 2025. This workshop was held in the form of an online webinar. CARB staff posted the workshop notice on the CARB website and notified the affected districts, as well as subscribers to the designation subscriber notification system. The workshop announcement included a discussion of CARB staff's proposed amendments to the area designations based on 2022 through 2024 air quality data. Approximately 58 stakeholders participated in the workshop.

XII. Documents Relied Upon

The following is a list of documents, websites, and other resources used in developing the proposed amendments to the area designations for State standards documented in this staff report:

1. Air Quality Data

California Air Resources Board, Aerometric Data Analysis and Management (ADAM) Data. Board Administration and Regulatory Coordination Unit staff will make data available to any member of the public who asks to inspect the rulemaking file.

2. Expected Peak Day Concentrations (EPDC)

California Air Resources Board (1993). Guidance for Using Air Quality-Related Indicators in Reporting Progress in Attaining the State Ambient Air Quality Standards.

<https://ww3.arb.ca.gov/research/apr/past/93-49.pdf>

XIII. Appendices

Appendix A 2025 Amendments to the State Area Designations

Appendix B Area Designation Criteria

Appendix C Maps and Tables of Area Designations for State and National Ambient Air Quality Standards

Appendix D Convention for Rounding Ambient Air Quality Data

Appendix E Designation Values and Expected Peak Day Concentrations

Appendix F Data Tables for Pollutants with Nonattainment Areas