

**PROPOSED DESIGNATION
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE
2024 PRIMARY ANNUAL
FINE PARTICULATE
MATTER (PM2.5)
NATIONAL AMBIENT AIR
QUALITY STANDARD;
PUBLIC HEARING**

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP or Department) is seeking public comment on its proposed recommendations to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the designation of areas not meeting the revised annual health-based National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for fine particulates (PM2.5). Reducing concentrations of this pollutant is important because levels above the health-based standard are a serious human health threat and can cause or contribute to other negative environmental impacts. EPA established a revised NAAQS for PM2.5 in February 2024. The annual standard for PM2.5 was made more protective and changed from 12 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) of air to 9 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. An area does not attain the annual standard if the annual concentration, averaged over 3 years, is more than 9 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Following promulgation of new or revised air standards, states are given the opportunity to submit recommendations for attainment/nonattainment areas, supported by most recent quality-assured and quality-controlled monitoring data. The proposed designation recommendations are based primarily on air quality ambient monitoring (2021–2023), as well as emissions data, meteorology, geography/topography and jurisdictional boundaries. Based on this information, PADEP is seeking comment on recommending that EPA designate as nonattainment areas in Greater Pittsburgh; Harrisburg-Carlisle-York; Lancaster County and Greater Philadelphia. PADEP is also seeking comment on recommending that EPA designate the areas monitoring below the standard as attainment areas and the remaining areas in Pennsylvania as unclassifiable/attainment. PADEP will be submitting recommendations by March 2025. EPA is expected to make final designations in February 2026. PADEP would then have 18 months to develop a plan for any areas designated as nonattainment to meet 2024 Primary PM2.5 NAAQS. This proposal is available on the DEP Website at <http://www.ahs.dep.pa.gov/eComment>. The Department will provide the opportunity to hold three (3) public hearings if requested, to receive comments on the proposals. The first hearing will be held from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM on January 21, 2025, in the Delaware River room at the Department's Southeast Regional Office, 2 East Main Street, Norristown, PA. The second hearing will be held from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM on January 21, 2025, in the Waterfront room at the Department's Southwest Regional Office, 400 Waterfront Drive, Pittsburgh, PA. The third hearing will be held from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM on January 23, 2025, in the Susquehanna Room at the Department's Southcentral Regional Office, 909 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA. Persons wishing to present testimony should contact Amanda Rodriguez at P. O. Box 8468, Harrisburg, PA 17105, (717) 787-7677 or amarodrigu@pa.gov no less than 24 hours in advance of the public hearing to reserve a time. Witnesses will be limited to 10 minutes and should provide two written copies of their comments. If by noon on Monday, January 20, 2025, no person has expressed an interest in testifying at the hearings, the hearings will be cancelled. The Department will provide public notice on the Bureau of Air Quality webpage at <http://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Air/BAQ/Pages/default.aspx> if the hearing is cancelled at any of the above locations. Persons may also contact the Department to find out if the hearing is cancelled by contacting Amanda Rodriguez at (717) 787-7677 or amarodrigu@pa.gov. Persons with a disability who wish to attend a hearing and require an auxiliary aid, service or other accommodation to participate in the proceeding should contact Amanda Rodriguez at amarodrigu@pa.gov or (717) 787-7677. TDD users may contact the Pennsylvania Hamilton Relay Service at (800) 654-5984 to discuss how the Department can best accommodate their needs. The Department must receive comments no later than January 24, 2025. Commentators are encouraged to submit comments using the Department's eComment system at www.ahs.dep.pa.gov/eComment or by email to ecomment@pa.gov. Written comments can be submitted to The Policy Office, Department of Environmental Protection, Rachel Carson State Office Building, P.O. Box 2063, Harrisburg, PA 171052063. Use PA PM2.5 Designations' as the subject line in written communication. Jessica Shirley, Acting Secretary