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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 7, 2024

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Air District supports EPA's more stringent health standard for particulate matter

SAN FRANCISCO – The Air District is announcing its support for the revisions to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, or NAAQS, for particulate matter pollution adopted today by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The Clean Air Act requires the EPA to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards for pollutants considered harmful to public health and the environment. Air quality standards define the maximum amount of these pollutants that can be present in ambient air for it to be considered healthy to breathe. The EPA has tightened the annual standard for particulate matter from the current 12 micrograms per cubic meter of air to a more health protective level of 9.

“The Air District fully supports the adoption of the more stringent National Ambient Air Quality Standards for particulate matter,” said Dr. Philip Fine, executive officer of the Air District. “The stronger standard will drive additional health protections for Bay Area residents, particularly those living in communities disproportionately impacted by air pollution.”

In 2019, the Air District and its Advisory Council convened the Particulate Matter Symposium Series to facilitate a discussion among nationally recognized scientists and stakeholders to consider the current state of particulate matter science. A major finding was that while the Bay Area has made significant progress at reducing levels of particulate matter, more stringent standards are needed to protect public health.

Particulate matter is the most significant driver of health risks from air pollution in the Bay Area. Exposure to particulate matter has been linked to serious respiratory illnesses and increased risk of heart attacks and is especially harmful for children, the elderly and those with respiratory conditions.

The [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](http://www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency responsible for protecting air quality in the nine-county Bay Area. Connect with the Air District via [X/Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

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