AAPCA

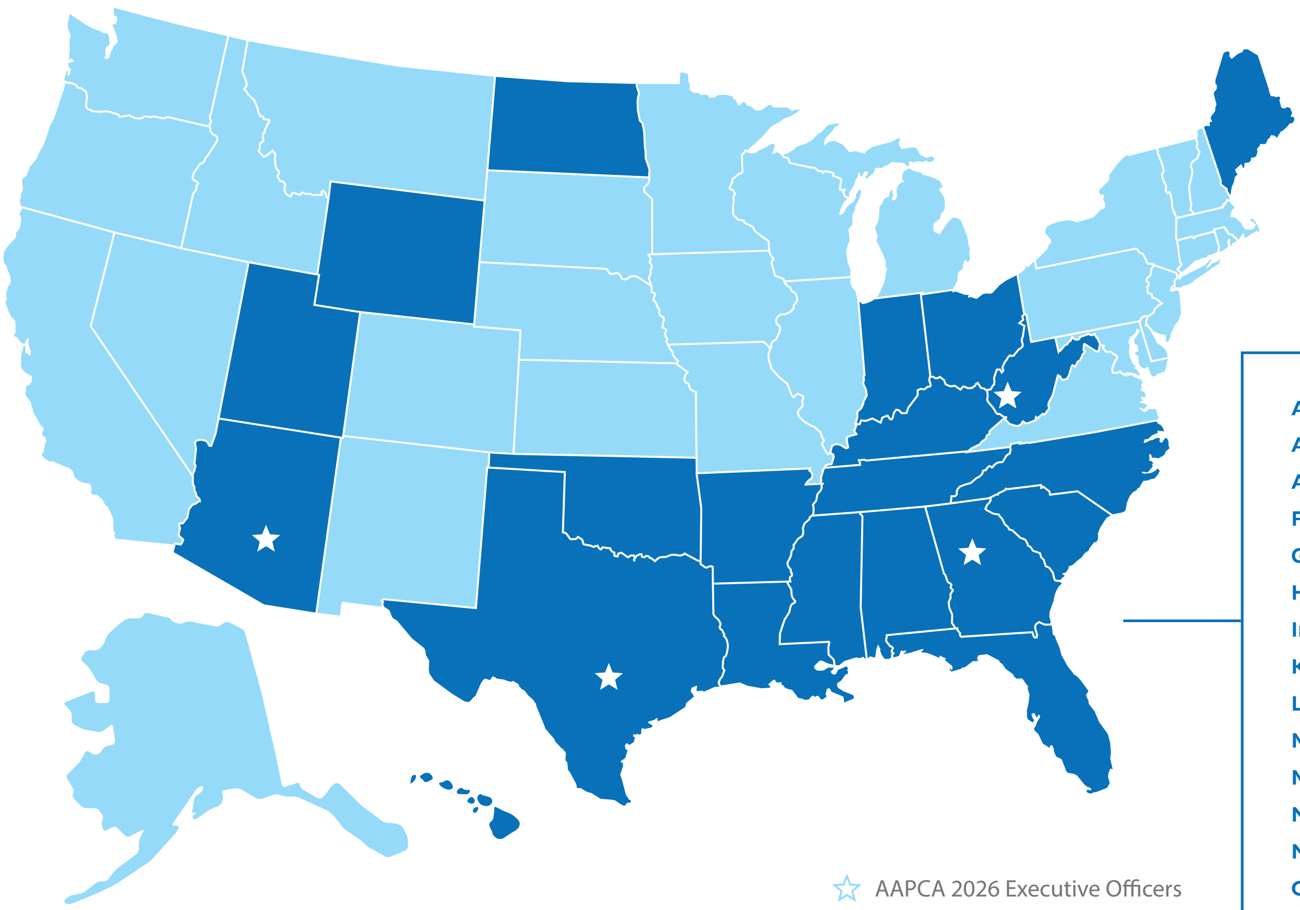
THE ASSOCIATION OF AIR POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCIES

10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

State Air Trends & Successes

THE StATS REPORT · 2026 EDITION

State Air Pollution Control Agencies Currently Represented on the AAPCA Board of Directors



- Alabama
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Mississippi
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Utah
- West Virginia
- Wyoming

Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies (AAPCA)

AAPCA is a national, non-profit, consensus-driven organization focused on assisting state and local air quality agencies and personnel with implementation and technical issues associated with the federal Clean Air Act.

Created in 2012, AAPCA represents 53 state and local air pollution control agencies, and senior officials from 21 state environmental agencies currently sit on the AAPCA Board of Directors. AAPCA is housed in Lexington, Kentucky as an affiliate of The Council of State Governments. More information about AAPCA can be found on the Association's website: **www.cleanairact.org**.

Foreword

Dear Readers,

Air pollution is considered the world's greatest environmental health threat since the majority of the global population is breathing unhealthy air. However, here in the U.S., the majority of the population is breathing healthy air due to the great work being done across the Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies (AAPCA) states. In fact, the air quality is the best it has even been since we started measuring it more than 50 years ago.

On March 12, 2025, EPA announced a list of 31 significant deregulatory actions, most of which impacted air quality regulations. Key actions include the 2009 Endangerment Finding, Oil & Gas Methane Rules, Mercury and Air Toxics Standards (MATS), Vehicle Emissions Standards, Risk Management Plan (RMP) Rule, $PM_{2.5}$ National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), multiple National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAPs), Regional Haze Program, and Good Neighbor Interstate Transport Plans. At the same time, AAPCA member states and local agencies have continued to protect public health and the environment through the implementation of sound environmental policies based on the best available science.

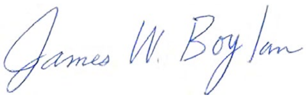
AAPCA is a consensus-driven organization of 53 state and local air agencies focused on assisting members with implementation of technical issues associated with the federal Clean Air Act. Comprised of senior officials from 21 state environmental agencies, AAPCA's Board of Directors is geographically diverse, providing a unique forum of perspectives to engage as we work to improve air quality for the more than 151 million Americans we represent. AAPCA's Member States also guide the Association on a consensus-basis, seeking to engage our federal co-regulator partners on common principles as we implement the federal Clean Air Act.

As AAPCA's President, I am pleased to present the Association's 2026 edition of its annual publication, *State Air Trends & Successes: The StATS Report*. Highlights from this year's report include:

- From 2000 to 2024, AAPCA member states have achieved a 44 percent decrease in the combined emissions of the pollutants (or pollutant precursors) for which there are national ambient air quality standards, or NAAQS.
- Since 1970 when the Clean Air Act was enacted, the United States has reduced aggregate emissions of the six criteria air pollutants by 79 percent.
- The United States has seen at least a 29 percent decline in the ambient levels of carbon monoxide (CO), lead (Pb), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), ozone (O_3), and sulfur dioxide (SO_2) since 1980.
- From 2000 to 2024, visibility in 156 national parks and wilderness areas across the United States has improved by 38 percent on the clearest days and 29 percent on the most impaired days.
- From 2000 to 2023, the United States reduced energy-related carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions by 19 percent while experiencing a 44 percent increase in total energy production.
- In 2025, AAPCA Member States were the permitting agencies for 28,752 facilities, or 48 percent of the state agency total, and the lead agencies for 6,483 Full Compliance Evaluations, approximately 46 percent of the state lead agency total.

Although we have made great progress, there is still additional work to be done. New challenges such as data centers, new power generation, and newly identified sources of hazardous air pollutants will keep us busy for the foreseeable future. Luckily, we have built strong relationships with our communities, federal partners, regulated entities, and other stakeholders so that we can continue to improve the quality of the air we breathe every day.

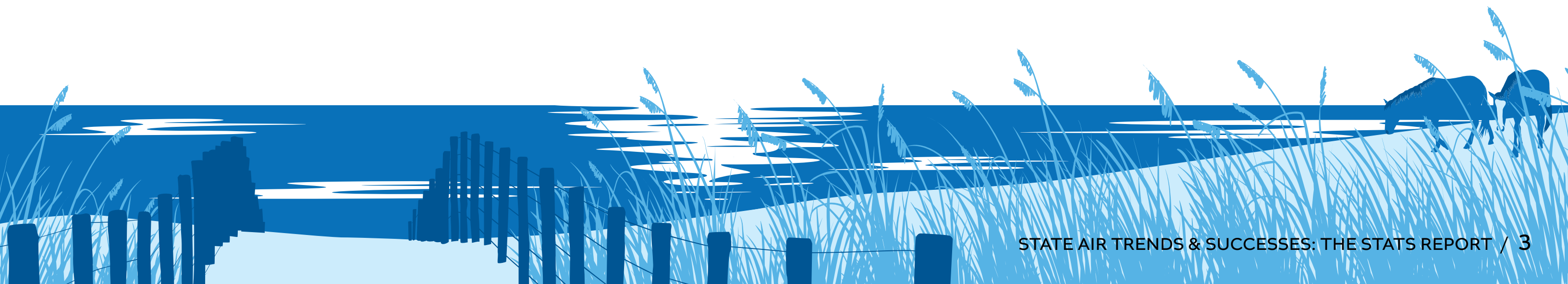
Thank you for reading.



James W. Boylan

Chief, Georgia Air Protection Branch

2026 President, AAPCA



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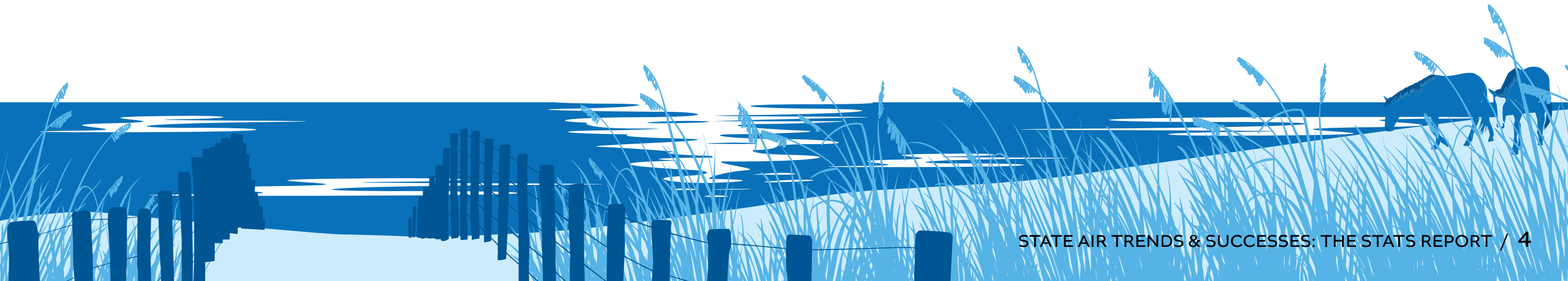

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Footprint of AAPCA Member States

State members of the AAPCA Board of Directors have primary responsibility for protecting air quality for a significant portion of the country, as reflected in the following statistics:

An estimated **151.2 million** Americans, more than **44%** of the total U.S. population in 2025.

A population growth of **10.2%** vs. a national population growth of **6.2%** from 2015 to 2025.

10.2% MEMBERS

6.2% NATIONAL

2,587 million metric tons of total CO_2 emissions in 2023.

39% of U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2025.

42% of U.S. total manufacturing output and **5.5 million manufacturing jobs** in 2023.

1.6 trillion vehicle miles traveled in 2024.

68% of U.S. operable petroleum refining capacity in 2025.

Total energy production growth of **63%** vs. a national growth of **44%** since 2000.

62% of total U.S. energy production in 2023, as well as:

55% of total net electricity generation in 2025.

47% of wind generation in 2025.

56% of solar generation in 2025.

62% of natural gas production in 2025.

64% of net generation from coal in 2025.

71% of crude oil production in 2023.

AAPCA STATE MEMBER 10-YEAR TRENDS

TOTAL POPULATION

137.2 million people | 33% of total U.S. population (2015)

151.2 million people | 44% of total U.S. population (2025)

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP)

6,550,919 millions of chained 2017 dollars (2015)

9,324,084 millions of chained 2017 dollars (2025)

VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED (VMT)

1.4 trillion vehicle miles traveled (2014)

1.6 trillion vehicle miles traveled (2024)

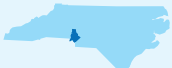
TOTAL CO_2 EMISSIONS

2,850.1 million metric tons (2013)

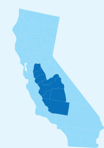
2,587.4 million metric tons (2023)

AAPCA STATE AND LOCAL AGENCY MEMBER RECENT SUCCESSES

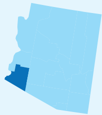
Ventura County records best air quality in history
FEBRUARY 11, 2026



Mecklenburg County 365 Days of Clean Air
JANUARY 5, 2026



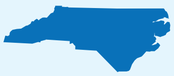
San Joaquin Valley Air District Earns Best Practice Award for Implementing Air Monitoring Operations
DECEMBER 3, 2025



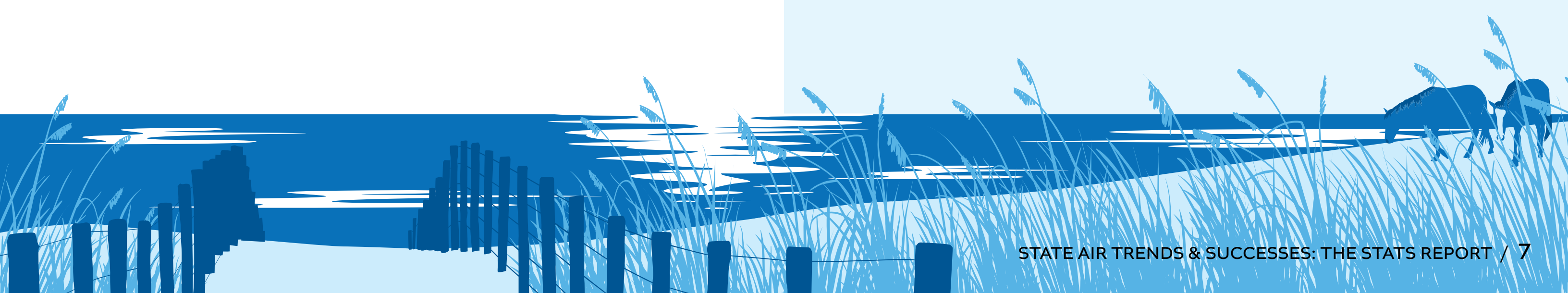
Collaborative Effort Leads to Ozone Attainment for Northwest Yuma County
NOVEMBER 24, 2025

Santa Barbara County APCD's Permitted Facilities Map Wins National Award
OCTOBER 16, 2025

Florida Marks Fifth Straight Year of Clean Air
SEPTEMBER 8, 2025



North Carolina celebrates 10 years of clean air
AUGUST 26, 2025



Introduction

In its tenth year of publication, *State Air Trends & Successes: The StATS Report* showcases state and local air agencies as essential to the significant improvement in air quality that has been achieved in the United States since the enactment of the Clean Air Act (CAA) in 1970. Under the CAA's framework of cooperative federalism, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets national standards for air pollution control while state, local, and tribal governments work directly with businesses, communities, and other stakeholders to develop and execute implementation strategies to protect air quality and public health. State, local, and tribal agencies are uniquely situated to take an informed approach when combining environmental, economic, and social priorities to meet the distinct needs within their jurisdictions. This approach has been remarkably successful and air pollution control efforts have vastly improved air quality while the nation has experienced substantial economic and social growth.

In support of state and local air quality agencies, *The StATS Report* by the Association of Air Pollution Control Agencies (AAPCA) catalogues key trends and metrics that are publicly available from federal, state, and local agencies (see page 6 of this report, "Types of Air Quality Data and Metrics"), and includes data for criteria air pollutant concentrations and emissions, hazardous air pollutants (or air toxics), energy-related carbon dioxide, and visibility in national parks. Where applicable, trends for economic and social indicators like Gross Domestic Product (GDP), energy production, and population are included to offer important context. *The StATS Report* provides these metrics and trends in three sections:

- First, "AAPCA Member State Air Trends & Successes," focuses on the 21 AAPCA Member States, which are responsible for protecting air quality for more than 151 million Americans, representing 44 percent of the total U.S. population. AAPCA Member States have experienced above-average population growth, are responsible for 42 percent of the nation's manufacturing output, and produce 62 percent of the nation's total energy.
- Second, "American Air Quality in an International Context," examines United States air quality improvement and economic indicators alongside other nations. The United States is the clear leader in air quality internationally while ranking first in GDP, second in total electricity generation, and third in total population.
- Third, "Air Quality Trends in the United States," presents national trends for ambient concentrations and emissions of pollutants under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) program, toxic air releases, visibility in national parks, and energy-related carbon dioxide.

State agencies are the primary implementers of environmental statutes and programs, such that today, states have assumed more than 96 percent of the delegable authorities under federal law.[1] As primary implementers of the CAA, state and local air agencies are responsible for a broad range of core air pollution control efforts, including developing plans to meet air quality standards and improve visibility, permitting, implementing federal air toxics rules, monitoring, modeling, managing emissions inventories, public outreach, and overseeing enforcement and compliance. States perform more than 90 percent of the enforcement and compliance actions and collection of the environmental quality data currently held by U.S. EPA.[2] Air agencies are responsible for ensuring the availability of quality data used to form regulatory decisions, science-based policies, and best practices. Air agencies are increasingly involved in advanced efforts utilizing emerging technologies like sensors, satellites, and artificial intelligence to meet demands for real-time data and forecasting. State and local technical staff contribute deeply to the development of national, regulatory tools and resources. State and local governments hold critical institutional knowledge and a proven record of informed, successful environmental outcomes.

Often the first contact for citizens, air agencies serve as important checkpoints for emerging issues in air quality. Agencies on the ground are responsible for timely, informed, and reasoned responses that are transparent, understandable by the public, and meet stakeholder expectations. In this capacity, air agencies have built the necessary relationships, credibility, and trust for interfacing with the public and regulated industries on environmental challenges. Confronted in recent years by resource and staffing constraints,[3] state and local agencies require strategic budgeting and efficient programming to meet new and existing responsibilities under the CAA. Nonetheless, state and local air agencies are led by dedicated public servants determined to meet the challenges of administering progressively complicated and demanding operations.

The StATS Report underscores that environmental protection and economic development can be simultaneously achieved through the leadership of state and local air agencies and collaborative efforts amongst co-regulators. Air quality trends show consistent and prolonged improvement, with drastic reductions in the emissions and ambient concentrations of pollutants, while the United States has seen tremendous growth in economic and social factors.

By virtually any metric, the nation's air is cleaner and healthier than when the CAA was first enacted. Yet despite the available data, Gallup's annual **Environment poll** suggests that public perception in 2026 considers the quality of the environment in the country as a whole to be getting worse. Public polling also positions protection of the environment as mutually exclusive with economic growth and energy production. This gap in understanding indicates that there is more work to be done. Looking to the next ten years and beyond, increased efforts to exact further gains in air pollution reductions and modernize regulatory policies and technologies will necessitate continued state and local agency excellence.

State and local agencies are key players to achieving our nation's environmental and public health goals and mandated responsibilities in an effective way. The successes presented in *The StATS Report* result from longstanding partnerships between state, local, and tribal entities, U.S. EPA, and the communities they serve. State and local agency leadership under the tenets of cooperative federalism remains a proven framework for achieving successful environmental outcomes – and is critical to achieving the next 10 years of clean air.

1 The Environmental Council of the States (ECOS), *Cooperative Federalism 2.0: Achieving and Maintaining a Clean Environment and Protecting Public Health*, June 2017

2 The Environmental Council of the States (ECOS), *Resolution 00-1: On Environmental Federalism*, Revised March 27, 2024

3 AAPCA, Report: *Staffing at State & Local Air Pollution Control Agencies*, November 2023

Types of Air Quality Data and Metrics

This report primarily relies on data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other federal agencies, such as the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), to evaluate air quality trends. These trends include metrics for criteria air pollutants, air toxics and hazardous air pollutants, visibility progress in National Parks and wilderness areas, and greenhouse gases, with sources provided below each chart or graph and in the reference notes. Also included in this report are case studies and short excerpts from other relevant analyses, which include links to their source and data.

Criteria Air Pollutant Data

Trends and indicators of air quality can be measured in a variety of ways, but an important group of data to analyze is that of the air pollutants that are regulated under the federal Clean Air Act. Section 109 of the Clean Air Act requires U.S. EPA to establish both primary and secondary national ambient air quality standards, or NAAQS. Primary NAAQS are "standards the attainment and maintenance of which in the judgment of the Administrator, based on such criteria and allowing an adequate margin of safety, are requisite to protect the public health," while secondary NAAQS "specify a level of air quality the attainment and maintenance of which…is requisite to protect the public welfare from any known or anticipated adverse effects associated with the presence of such air pollutant in the ambient air."[1]

NAAQS have been set for six "criteria" pollutants: carbon monoxide (CO), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), ground-level ozone (O_3), fine and course particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10}), lead (Pb), and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2). Individual NAAQS may differ in form (for example, annual fourth highest daily maximum 8-hour concentration average over three years, for ozone), level[2] (often measured in parts per billion or micrograms per cubic meter), and averaging time (from one hour up to one year).[3] U.S. EPA and the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee review the adequacy of the NAAQS according to the statute.[4]

Nationally, ambient air pollution data from thousands of monitors across the United States are collected by U.S. EPA and State, Local, and Tribal air pollution control agencies and provided to the Air Quality System, or AQS. These data are used to "assess air quality, assist in attainment/non-attainment designations, evaluate State Implementation Plans [SIPs] for non-attainment areas, perform modeling for permit review analysis, and prepare reports for Congress as mandated by the Clean Air Act."[5]

U.S. EPA reports on long-term air quality trends by preparing data analyses that show the overall trend lines for pollutant concentrations and emissions. Primary sources that inform this report include:

- Criteria air pollutant concentration data from U.S. EPA's analysis of the AQS that looks at long-term trends in air quality.[6]
- Data showing emissions trends of the criteria pollutants from U.S. EPA's Air Pollutant Emissions Trends Data,[7] which relies on the National Emissions Inventory (NEI). The NEI is "a comprehensive and detailed estimate of air emissions of criteria pollutants, criteria precursors, and hazardous air pollutants from air emissions sources… released every three years based primarily upon data provided [to the Emissions Inventory System (EIS)] by State, Local, and Tribal air agencies for sources in their jurisdictions and supplemented by data developed by the US EPA."[8]
- Design values that are computed and published annually by U.S. EPA and defined as "a statistic that describes the air quality status of a given location relative to the level of the NAAQS… typically used to designate and classify nonattainment areas, as well as to assess progress towards meeting the NAAQS."[9]

Other Air Quality Data

In addition to tracking criteria air pollutants, U.S. EPA also maintains data and develops analyses on multiple other federal air quality programs used to inform this report, including:

- The Toxic Release Inventory (TRI), which provides a consistent set of data over time for hazardous air pollutants (or air toxics) from source reporting.[10]
- Visibility progress tracked as part of the Regional Haze Program, with long-term trends available in U.S. EPA's annual air quality trends report.[11]
- Power sector emissions data for SO_2, nitrogen oxides (NO_X), and hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), as published in U.S. EPA's annual progress report.[12]

Additionally, greenhouse gas data in this report are primarily from U.S. EIA reports, such as the Annual Energy Outlook, which includes CO_2 emissions data from energy sources.[13] Historically, greenhouse gas data in this report was also from U.S. EPA's annual *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks*.[14]

1 42 U.S.C. §7409(b).

2 U.S. EPA states: "Units of measure for the standards are parts per million (ppm) by volume, parts per billion (ppb) by volume, and micrograms per cubic meter of air (µg/m_3)."

3 A chart of the primary and secondary NAAQS by pollutant, which includes averaging time, level, and form, can be found here.

4 42 U.S.C. §7409(d).

5 U.S. EPA, Air Quality System. U.S. EPA notes that the AQS "also contains meteorological data, descriptive information about each monitoring station (including its geographic location and its operator), and data quality assurance/quality control information."

6 Links to data summary files for national criteria pollutant trends can be found here.

7 Data can be found here. U.S. EPA notes: "The latest version of the 1970 – 2024 data show the trends for Tier 1 categories which distinguish pollutant emission contributions among major source types. Improvements to the methods used to estimate emissions for the years 2002-2019 were introduced for the trends summaries released in 2023, and are retained for the current February 2025 update of these data."

8 More information on the NEI can be found here. U.S. EPA states: "The NEI is built using the Emissions Inventory System (EIS) first to collect the data from State, Local, and Tribal air agencies and then to blend that data with other data sources."

9 U.S. EPA, Air Quality Design Values.

10 U.S. EPA, Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) Program. Annual TRI National Analysis here. U.S. EPA notes that the TRI "is a resource for learning about toxic chemical releases and pollution prevention activities reported by industrial and federal facilities. TRI data support informed decision-making by communities, government agencies, companies, and others. Section 313 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) created the TRI Program."

11 U.S. EPA, Air Quality – National Summary. See also: U.S. EPA, Our Nation's Air: Trends Through 2024 (Section: "Visibility Improves in Scenic Areas").

12 U.S. EPA, Power Sector Programs – Progress Report.

13 U.S. EIA, Annual Energy Outlook 2026, April 2026.

14 U.S. EPA releases the *Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks* annually on April 15. On January 7, 2026, President Trump issued a presidential memoranda withdrawing the United States from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The last complete Inventory report was published April 11, 2024. See also: U.S. EPA, Greenhouse Gas Inventory Data Explorer..

AAPCA Member State Air Trends & Successes

"The success of environmental protection and public health in the United States begins on the front lines at the state, tribal and local levels....Collaboration and teamwork with state and territorial environmental and health agencies in particular have made it possible to better achieve the mission of protecting human health and the environment."

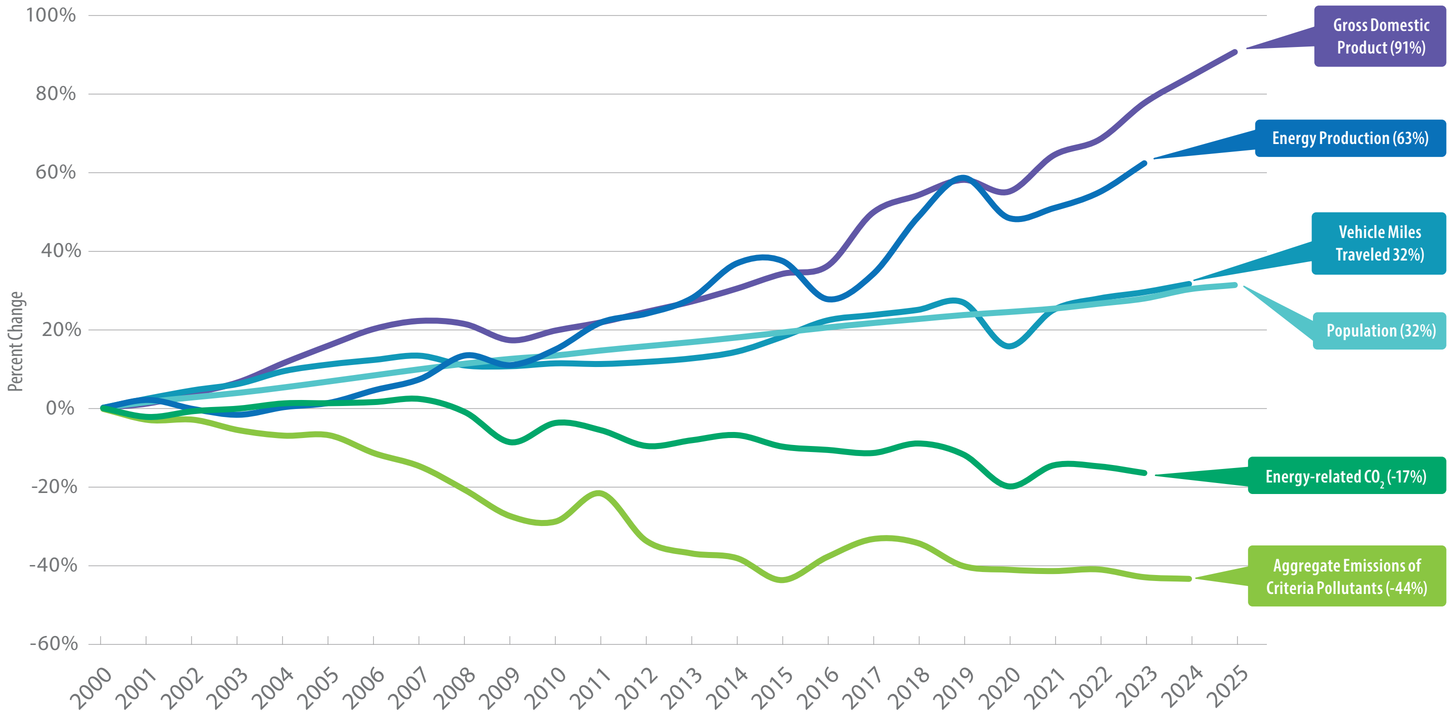
U.S. EPA, ***EPA Research Partner Support Stories***, February 2025 Update.

Economic Growth and Air Quality in AAPCA Member States

Since the turn of the century, AAPCA Member States have overseen significant improvements in air quality from emissions reductions, decreasing the combined emissions of the pollutants (or pollutant precursors) for which there are national ambient air quality standards, or NAAQS,[1] by 44 percent from 2000 to 2024. Simultaneously, AAPCA Member States have experienced demonstrable economic and social growth:

- A 91 percent increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from 2000 to 2025, including accounting for nearly 39 percent of the total U.S. GDP in 2025.[2]
- A 63 percent increase in energy production from 2000 to 2023, contributing 62 percent of total U.S. energy production in 2023.[3]
- A 32 percent increase in population from 2000 to 2025, representing over 151 million people, 44 percent of the total U.S. population.[4]
- A 32 percent increase in vehicle miles traveled from 2000 to 2024.[5]
- A 17 percent decrease in energy-related carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions from 2000 to 2023.[6]

Figure 1. AAPCA Member States | Comparison of Growth Indicators and Emissions Since 2000



Sources: U.S. EPA, **Air Pollutant Emissions Trends Data**, State Tier 1 CAPS Trends, Criteria pollutants State Tier 1 for 1990–2024; U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, data available **here**; U.S. Census Bureau, data available **here**; U.S. Federal Highway Administration Office of Highway Policy Information, data available **here**; U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), **State Energy Data System (SEDS): 1960-2023**, Table PT2. *Primary energy production estimates in trillion Btu, 2023*; U.S. EIA, **Energy-Related CO_2 Emission Data Tables**, Table CO_2.7. Total CO_2 emissions estimates from energy consumption, per capita CO_2 emissions, and carbon intensities, ranked by state, 2023.

State Clean Air Act Deadlines

The timeline below lays out important dates for developing State Implementation Plans (SIPs)[1] for several recent U.S. EPA Office of Air & Radiation rulemakings, including National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).[2]

2026

- JANUARY — Serious Nonattainment Area SIPs Due
- MAY — EG State Plans for Electric Generating Units (EGUs) UUUUb Due
- AUGUST — U.S. EPA Notifies States of any Intended Modifications to Their Recommendations
- OCTOBER — States Submit Additional Information to Respond to U.S. EPA's Intended Modifications
- DECEMBER — U.S. EPA Promulgates Final Area Designations

2027

- JANUARY — EG State Plans for OOOOc Due
- FEBRUARY — "Infrastructure" SIPs Due
- AUGUST — Serious Nonattainment Area Attainment Date

2028 AND BEYOND

- MARCH 2029 — EG State Plan Compliance Deadline for OOOOc
- JANUARY 2030 — EG State Plan Compliance Deadline for EGUs (based on subcategory)
- JULY 2030 — Ambient Air Monitoring 5-Year Network Assessments Due
- JULY 2031 — Due Date for Third Implementation Period SIPs
- JANUARY 2032 — EG State Plan Compliance Deadline for EGUs (based on subcategory)
- DECEMBER 2032 — Moderate Area Attainment Date
- JULY 2033 — Third Implementation Period Progress Reports Due
- AUGUST 2033 — Serious Nonattainment Area SIPs Due
- JULY 2038 — Fourth Implementation Period SIPs Due
- DECEMBER 2036 — Serious Area Attainment Date
- JULY 2038 — Extreme Nonattainment Area SIPs Due

Legend

- 2024 Fine Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$) NAAQS (89 FR 16202)
- 2015 Ozone NAAQS (80 FR 65292)
- NSPS and EG for the Oil & Natural Gas Sector / Methane Rule (89 FR 16820, 90 FR 55671)
- NSPS and EG for Existing Fossil Fuel-Fired Electric Generating Units (89 FR 39798, 90 FR 25752)
- Monitoring Network
- Regional Haze (91 FR 331)
- 2024 Secondary Annual Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2) NAAQS (89 FR 105692)

[1] A State Implementation Plan (SIP) is a collection of regulations and documents used by a state, territory, or local air district to implement, maintain, and enforce the NAAQS, and to fulfill other requirements of the Clean Air Act. More information from U.S. EPA is available here.

[2] On March 12, 2025, U.S. EPA Administrator Zeldin announced the Agency will undertake actions to reconsider at least 27 U.S. EPA Office of Air & Radiation regulations from previous administrations, including several of the recent rulemakings included in this timeline. Rulemakings with planned deregulatory actions are denoted with

Air Quality | Fine Particulate Matter

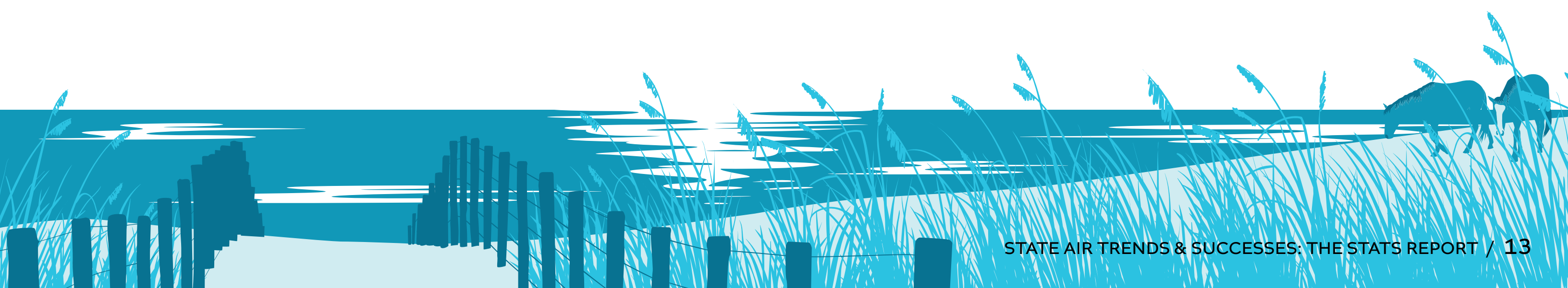
U.S. EPA's online Green Book "provides detailed information about area National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) designations, classifications, and nonattainment status."[7] According to the online database, a total of 39 areas were initially designated nonattainment for the 1997 fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) annual NAAQS of 15.0 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu g/m^3$), measured by the three-year average annual mean concentration.[8]

U.S. EPA develops design values[9] based on monitoring data from the Agency's Air Quality System (AQS).[10] Of the previously designated nonattainment areas for the 1997 annual $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS, 23 are located partially or completely within AAPCA Member States. The table below lists the percent change in design values from 2004 to 2024, a period in which AAPCA Member States averaged a 43 percent reduction in $PM_{2.5}$ ambient air concentrations.[11] Furthermore, all the designated areas within AAPCA Member States have since been classified as attainment or maintenance for the 2012 $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS of 12.0 $\mu g/m^3$.[12]

Table 1

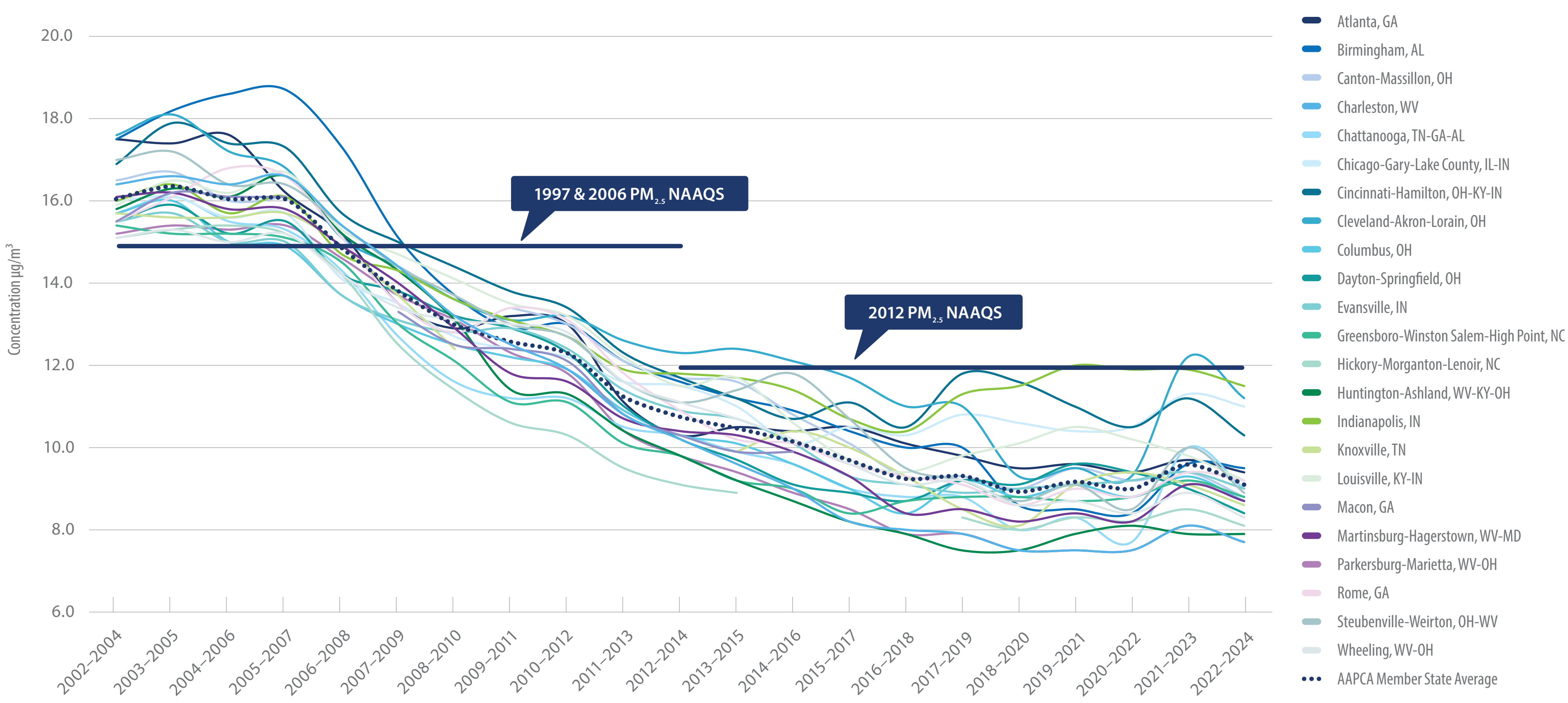
Designated Area	2002–2004 Design Value	2022–2024 Design Value	Percent Change in $PM_{2.5}$ Concentrations
Atlanta, GA	17.5	9.1**	-48%
Birmingham, AL	17.5	9.5	-46%
Canton-Massillon, OH	16.5	8.8	-47%
Charleston, WV	16.4	7.7	-53%
Chattanooga, TN-GA-AL	15.7	9.0	-43%
Chicago-Gary-Lake County, IL-IN	16.0	11.0	-31%
Cincinnati-Hamilton, OH-KY-IN	16.9	10.3	-39%
Cleveland-Akron-Lorain, OH	17.6	11.2	-36%
Columbus, OH	15.7	8.7	-45%
Dayton-Springfield, OH	15.5	8.4	-46%
Evansville, IN	15.5	9.0	-42%
Greensboro-Winston Salem-High Point, NC	15.4	8.8	-43%
Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir, NC	15.1	8.1	-46%
Huntington-Ashland, WV-KY-OH	15.8	7.9	-50%
Indianapolis, IN	16.0	11.5	-28%
Knoxville, TN	15.7	8.6	-45%
Louisville, KY-IN	15.9	9.2	-42%
Macon, GA	15.5	9.2	-41%
Martinsburg-Hagerstown, WV-MD	16.1	8.7	-46%
Parkersburg-Marietta, WV-OH	15.2	7.7	-49%
Rome, GA*	15.5		-38%
Steubenville-Weirton, OH-WV	17.0	8.9	-48%
Wheeling, WV-OH	15.1	8.3	-45%

*Data ends in designation year 2014–2016
**9.4 DV not used due to monitor being microscale and not representative of area-wide exposure
Source: U.S. EPA, **Air Quality Design Values**, $PM_{2.5}$ Design Values, 2024.



Air Quality | Fine Particulate Matter

Figure 2. AAPCA Member States | Design Value History for Areas Previously Designated Nonattainment or Maintenance for the 1997 $PM_{2.5}$ Annual NAAQS, 2004–2024



Source: U.S. EPA, **Air Quality Design Values**, $PM_{2.5}$ Design Values, 2024.

Air Quality | Ozone

According to U.S. EPA's Green Book, 47 areas in the United States were previously designated as nonattainment for the 2008 ozone annual National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) of 0.075 parts per million (ppm), determined using the annual fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hour concentration, averaged over three years.[13]

Table 2 lists the percent change in design values from 2004 to 2024 for the 13 previously designated nonattainment areas for the 2008 ozone annual NAAQS that are partially or fully within AAPCA Member States, which averaged a 19 percent reduction in ambient concentrations of ozone.[14]

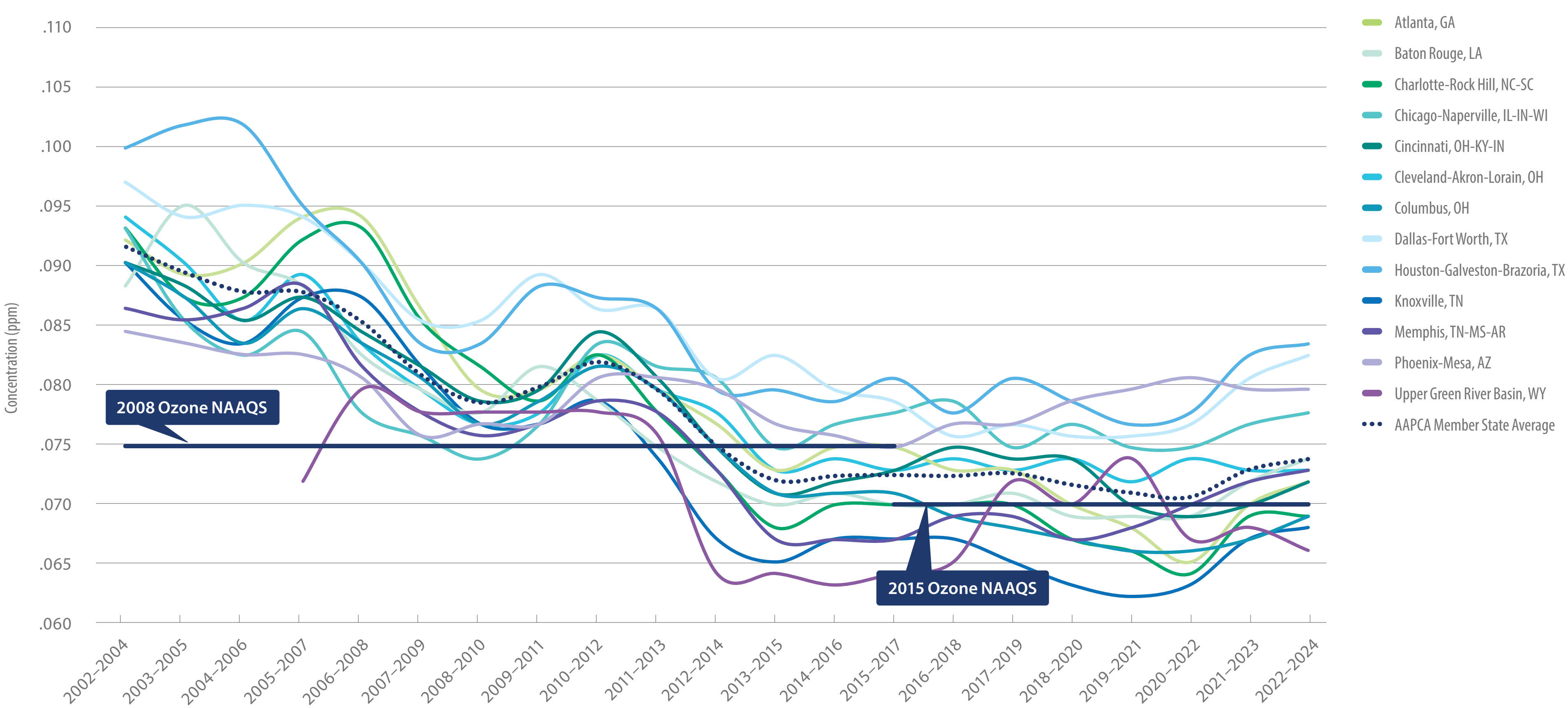
Table 2

Designated Area	2002–2004 Design Value	2022–2024 Design Value	Percent Change in Ozone Concentrations
Atlanta, GA	0.093	0.072	-23%
Baton Rouge, LA	0.089	0.074	-17%
Charlotte-Rock Hill, NC-SC	0.094	0.069	-27%
Chicago-Naperville, IL-IN-WI	0.094	0.078	-17%
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	0.091	0.072	-21%
Cleveland-Akron-Lorain, OH	0.095	0.073	-23%
Columbus, OH	0.091	0.069	-24%
Dallas-Fort Worth, TX	0.098	0.083	-15%
Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, TX	0.101	0.084	-17%
Knoxville, TN	0.091	0.068	-25%
Memphis, TN-MS-AR	0.087	0.073	-16%
Phoenix-Mesa, AZ	0.085	0.080	-6%
Upper Green River Basin, WY*	0.072	0.066	-8%

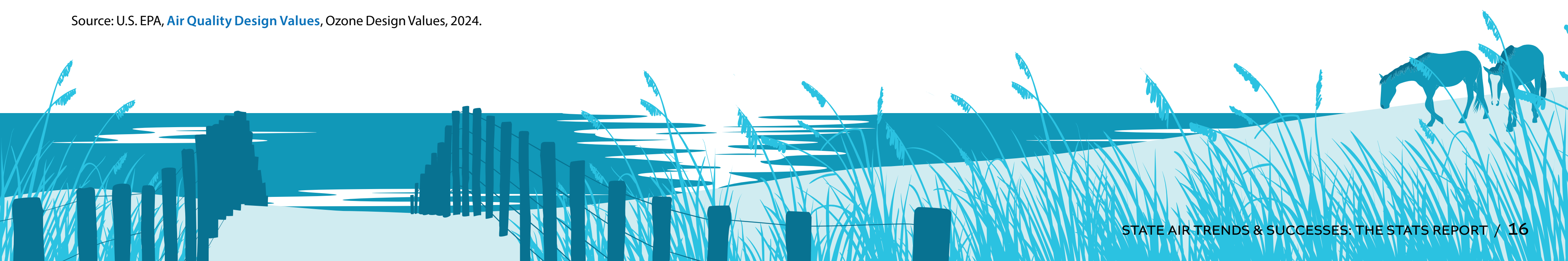
*Upper Green River Basin, WY is calculated from the first year that data was available, design value year 2005–2007. This area is excluded from average calculations.

Source: U.S. EPA, **Air Quality Design Values**, Ozone Design Values, 2024.

Figure 3. AAPCA Member States | Design Value History for Areas Previously Designated Nonattainment or Maintenance for the 2008 Ozone Annual NAAQS, 2004–2024



Source: U.S. EPA, Air Quality Design Values, Ozone Design Values, 2024.



Local Program Case Study | San Luis Obispo County, California

Dune Restoration Reduces PM_{10} on California Coast

The Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area ("Oceano Dunes") is an off-road vehicle park situated along the Pacific coast in San Luis Obispo County, California. The 5.5 square mile park draws over a million visitors per year, who drive dune buggies and ATVs as well as street legal vehicles up and down the beach and across sand dunes. The area is also prone to strong onshore winds, particularly in the spring and fall.

Nearly a century of intense use has destroyed natural beach vegetation and destabilized dune structures, resulting in enhanced dust generation during high wind events. Much higher PM_{10} levels and more frequent violations of PM_{10} standards are observed downwind of the Oceano Dunes than elsewhere in the county or along the California Coast. For example, the CDF monitoring station, located about 2.5 miles downwind, recorded 62 to 97 exceedances per year of the California PM_{10} standard (50 µg/m^3 over 24 hours) between 2010 when monitoring began and 2017 (the year before mitigation projects began in earnest). Over this same period, a total of 9 exceedances of the federal PM_{10} standard (150 µg/m^3 over 24 hours) were also observed.

In 2018, the San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District entered into an agreement with the park operator to reduce dust emissions. As the high downwind PM_{10} levels are caused by the wind blowing over disturbed sand rather than by vehicle rooster tails or tailpipe emissions, mitigation measures have focused on reducing the extent of the source area, rather than on limiting the number, type, or speed of the vehicles in the park. Restoring dune vegetation and excluding vehicular access to certain areas of the park are the main dust control strategies; as of 2025, 740 acres of the Oceano Dunes are being managed to provide dust control benefits.

These efforts have resulted in a dramatic decrease in PM_{10} levels downwind. In 2025, only 26 exceedances of the California PM_{10} were observed at the CDF monitoring site. While this was more than recorded the previous year (14 exceedances), it was also much windier this year than last. At the Mesa2 monitoring site, located about 3.5 miles downwind on the edge of large neighborhood, exceedances dropped from 30 to 55 per year prior to 2018, to just 15 last year. Annual average concentrations show similar decreases. These improvements are also corroborated by more sophisticated analyses that account for annual differences in the frequency of high wind events.

Thank you to the San Luis Obispo County APCD for the contribution of this case study. More on the SLOAPCD can be found at ***https://www.slocleanair.org/air-quality/oceano-dunes-efforts.php.***

Figure 4: Acres of Dust Control Within the Oceano Dunes

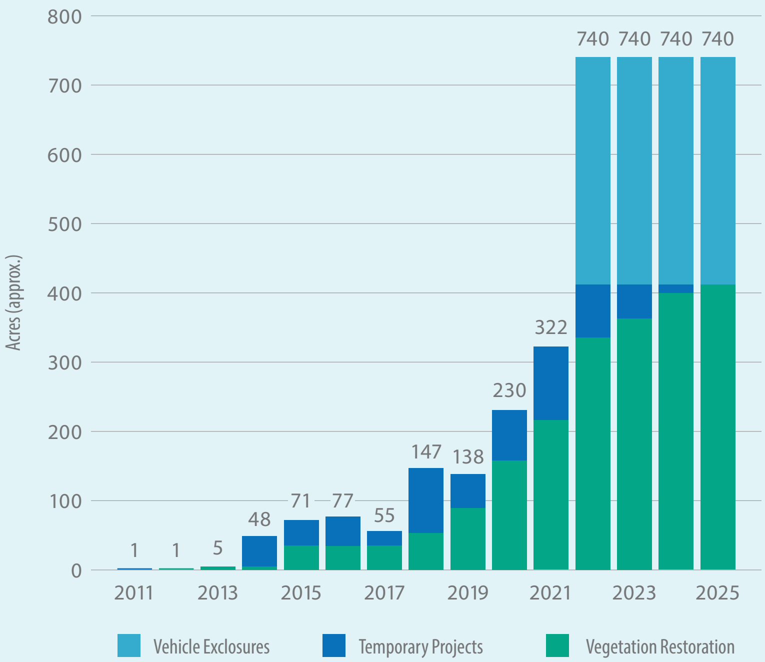
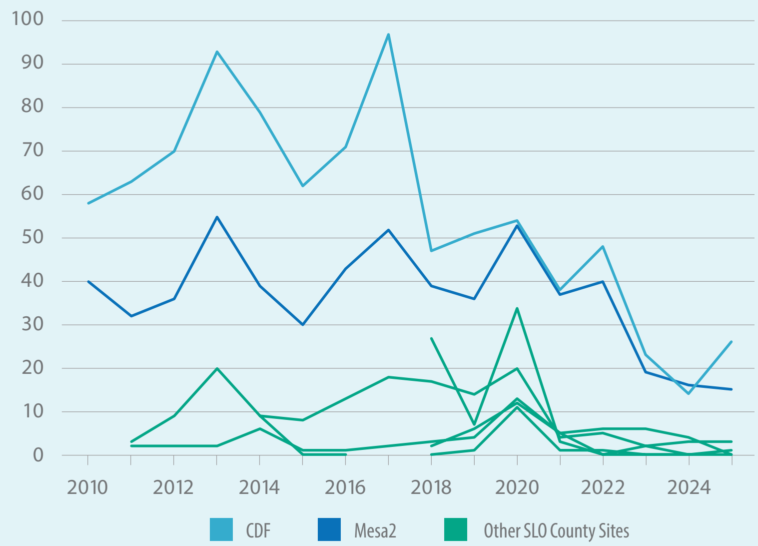


Figure 5: Annual Exceedances of California PM_{10} Standard Downwind of Oceano Dunes



Regional Haze Case Study | Big Bend National Park, Texas

Big Bend National Park was authorized by Congress on June 20, 1935, and on June 12, 1944, it was signed into law as the nation's 27th national park. The park gets its name from the course of the Rio Grande, which makes a distinctive bend that gives the southwestern boundary of Texas its characteristic shape. The park is part of the roughly 200,000 square-mile expanse of the Chihuahuan Desert and contains the largest protected portion of that desert in the U.S. As one of four designated biosphere reserves within the Chihuahuan Desert, Big Bend is biologically diverse, geologically complex, and culturally rich.

Big Bend ranges from an altitude of 1,700 feet at the river to 7,800 feet in the Chisos Mountains, and this range provides for climatological extremes. The variations in temperature and precipitation influence the great variety of flora and fauna supported within the park's riparian, desert, and mountain ecological habitats. The desert vegetation and erosion make obvious Big Bend's geological history. Evidence of sedimentation, tectonics, volcanism, and fossilization is apparent throughout the park. In fact, within the National Park System, Big Bend has one of the most diverse fossil records. In addition to the park's geologic features, the remains of previous human settlement are scattered across the landscape, with an estimated 26,000 archeological sites. There is evidence of humans at Big Bend as long ago as 9,000 years, and the oldest archeological site in the park is almost that old at 8,800 years.

With more than 800,000 acres of parkland, Big Bend showcases stunning panoramic vistas and mountain views. On clear days, one can see large objects in detail more than 100 miles away, with views limited only by the horizon. Those views are why the Regional Haze Program is so important. Both the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and the National Park Service monitor air quality conditions in the park. TCEQ's Bravo Big Bend monitor collects data on fine particulate matter pollution, and Big Bend's IMPROVE monitor, BIBE1, collects aerosol samples to help establish and track trends for the clearest and haziest days in the park. BIBE1 was one of the first IMPROVE monitors. It was installed in 1987 along with 19 others at Class I areas around the country to collect information on the components of haze.

Source: https://www.nps.gov/bibe/planyourvisit/directions.htm

Figure 6: View from the South Rim, NPS Photo/Mark Schuler

Regional Haze Case Study | Big Bend National Park, Texas

Work in Texas to lower emissions and improve air quality, including implementation of control measures to meet federal Clean Air Act National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) requirements, is helping to continually improve visibility at Big Bend. Most of Texas' NAAQS-related state rules are part of the State Implementation Plan (SIP) and federally enforceable, including permitting programs for both major and minor sources. Additionally, the state realizes significant emissions benefits from state-implemented programs like the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP) as well as energy-efficiency and renewable energy programs. Anthropogenic nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and sulfur dioxide (SO_2) emissions, the pollutants that primarily affect visibility at Class I areas in Texas and surrounding states, have declined significantly since 2011, with a 35 percent reduction in NO_x and a 62 percent reduction in SO_2.

Even with significant emissions reductions in Texas, emissions emanating from outside the U.S. contribute greatly to visibility impairment at Big Bend. SIP modeling completed for the second planning period shows that 53 percent of the particulate nitrate and 73 percent of the particulate sulfate—primarily formed from anthropogenic emissions of NO_x and SO_2—that contribute to visibility impairment on Big Bend's haziest days originates mostly from sources in Mexico and Central America. Texas' SIP modeling also shows that the primary organic carbon and black carbon that contribute to haze at Big Bend comes overwhelmingly from southern Mexico, the Yucatan, and Central America. These areas see extensive annual agricultural burning and periodic wildfire emissions.

Despite considerable influence from international sources, Texas' 2021 SIP revision for the second planning period as well as its 2025 progress report demonstrate that visibility at Big Bend is already meeting its 2028 reasonable progress goal of 14.4 deciviews. U.S. EPA recognized the state's progress when, effective January 5, 2025, it approved the reasonable progress portions of Texas' regional haze SIP for the first planning period and the entire second planning period SIP revision.

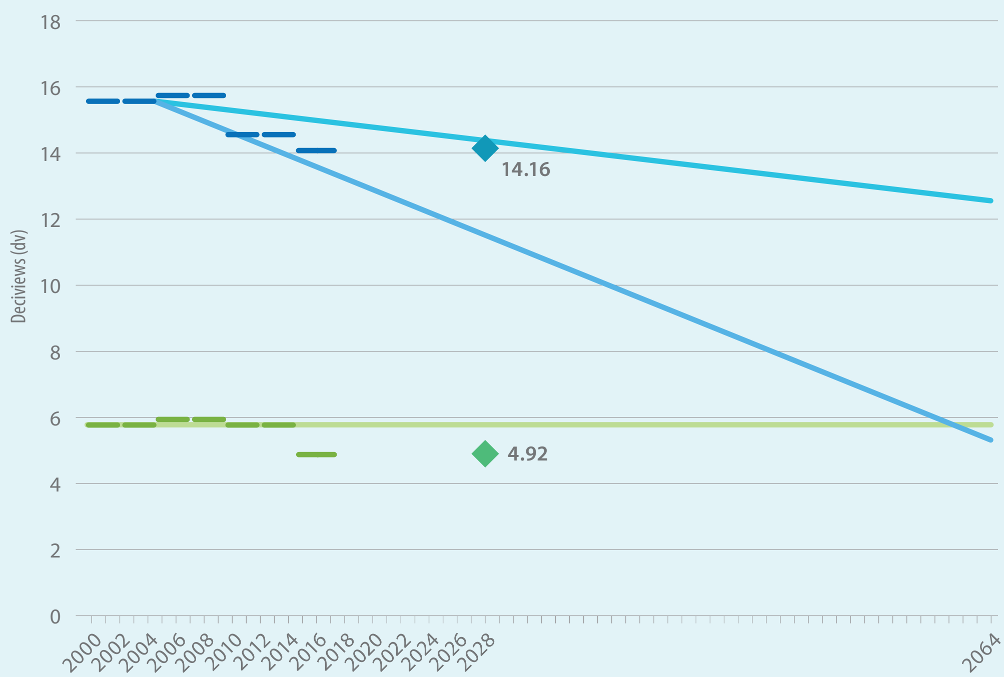
Figure 7: Santa Elena Canyon from the Rio Grande, NPS Photo/Ann Wildermuth

Figure 8: BIBE1 IMPROVE

BIBE1 IMPROVE monitoring data showing continued visibility improvement that meets Big Bend's reasonable progress goal for 2028

Source: https://www.tceq.texas.gov/downloads/air-quality/sip/archive/19112_second-planning_regionalhaze_archive.pdf

- 20% Clearest Days
- Clearest Days — 5-Year Obs Average
- 2028 Clearest Day Projection
- 20% Most Impaired — Non Adj
- Most Impaired — 5-Year Obs Average
- 20% Most Impaired — Adj
- 2028 MID Projection



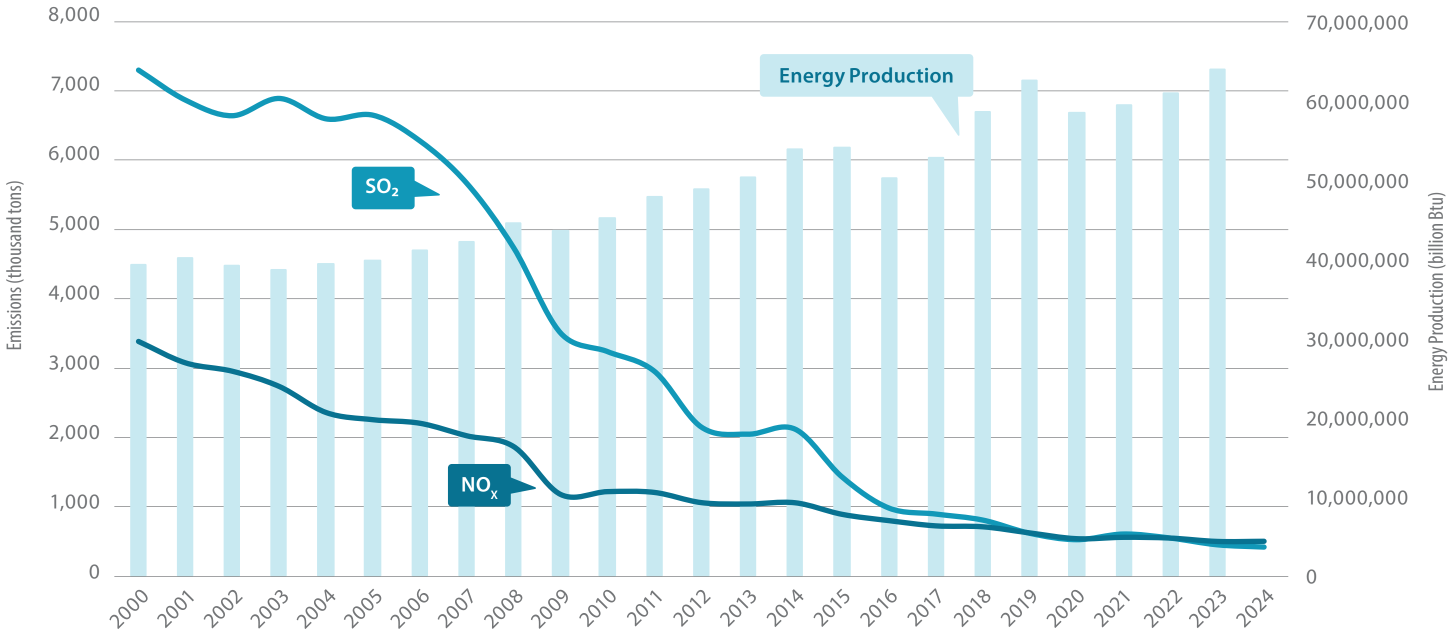
Emissions Reductions in the Electricity Sector

Since 2000, AAPCA Member States have overseen significant reductions in the emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO_2) and oxides of nitrogen (NO_X) from the electricity sector:

- SO_2 emissions decreased 94 percent, from 7,322,232 tons in 2000 reduced to 405,862 tons in 2024; and
- NO_X emissions decreased 86 percent, from 3,405,187 tons in 2000 down to 485,394 tons in 2024.[15]

AAPCA Member States produced approximately 64,000,000 billion British thermal units (billion Btu) of energy in 2023, experiencing a 63 percent increase in energy production from 2000 levels.[16]

Figure 9. AAPCA Member States | Energy Production Compared to SO_2 and NO_X Emissions from the Electricity Sector, Since 2000



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, **State Energy Data System (SEDS): 1960-2023**; U.S. EPA, **Air Pollutant Emissions Trends Data**, State Tier 1 CAPS Trends, Criteria pollutants State Tier 1 for 1990–2024.

Emissions Reductions in the Electricity Sector

In February 2026, U.S. EPA updated the 2023 annual emissions data for power plants across the United States. Compared to 2022, the 2023 annual emissions data from power plants in the lower 48 states show:

- 24 percent decrease in SO_2 emissions
- 15 percent decrease in NO_x emissions
- 7 percent decrease in CO_2 emissions
- 17 percent decrease in Hg emissions

From 1995 to 2023, annual total U.S. emissions of SO_2 from power plants fell by 95 percent and annual total of U.S. emissions of NO_x from power plants fell by 89 percent.

In 2023, SO_2 emissions of sources in the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule (CSAPR) SO_2 Program and the Acid Rain Program (ARP) were 11.2 million tons lower than 1995 levels. In 2022, NO_x emissions of sources in the CSAPR NOx annual program and the ARP were 5.2 million tons lower than 1995 levels.[17]

Figure 10. State-by-State SO_2 Emissions from CSAPR and ARP Sources, 1990-2023

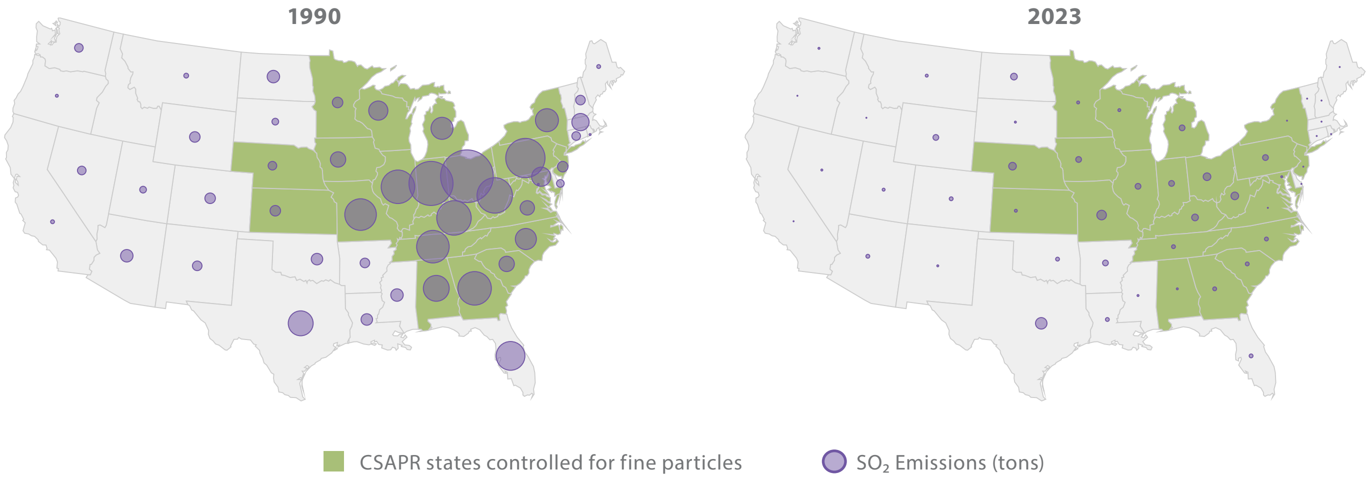
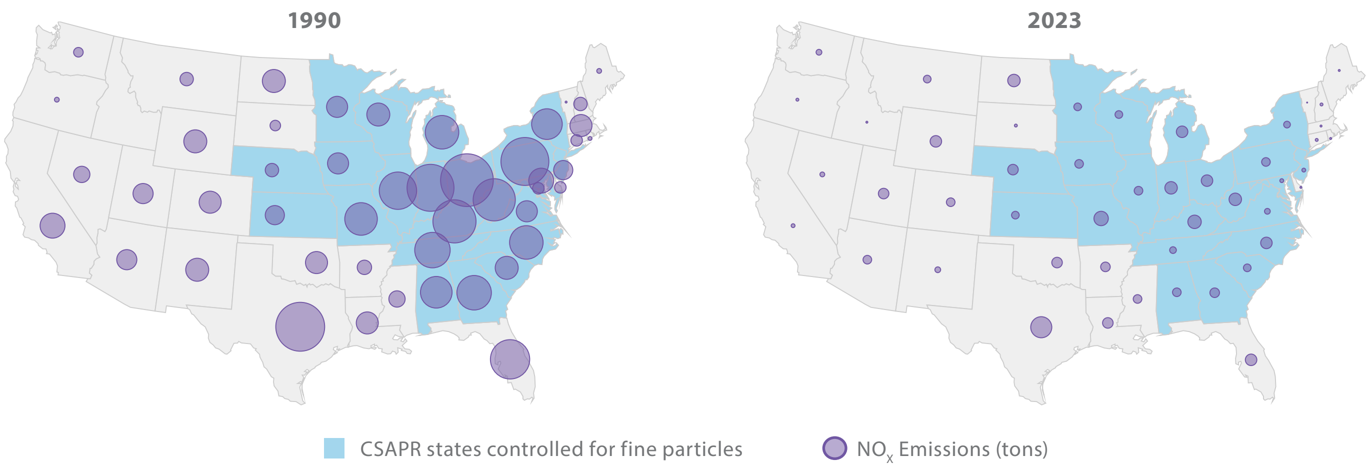
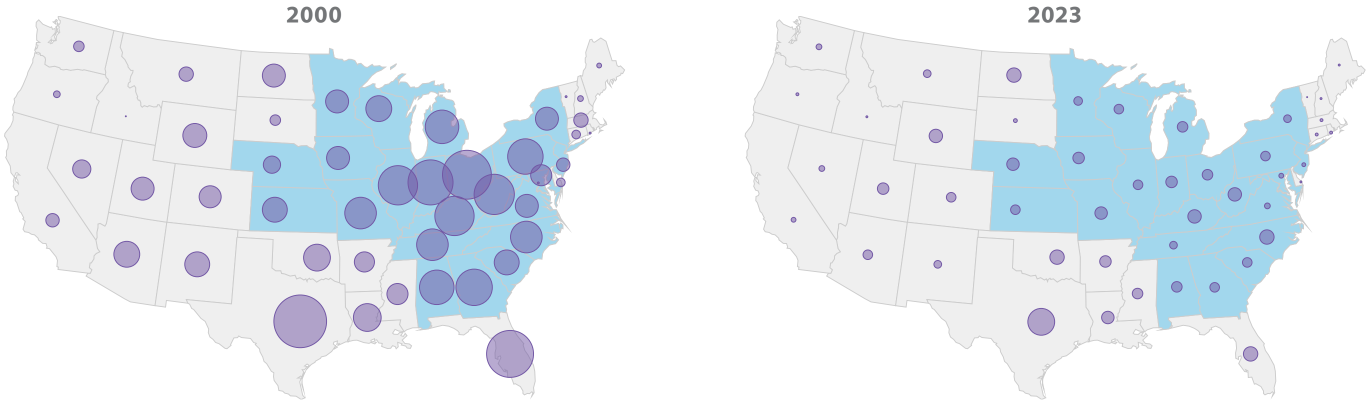


Figure 11. State-by-State NO_x Emissions from CSAPR and ARP Sources, 1990-2023



Emissions Reductions in the Electricity Sector

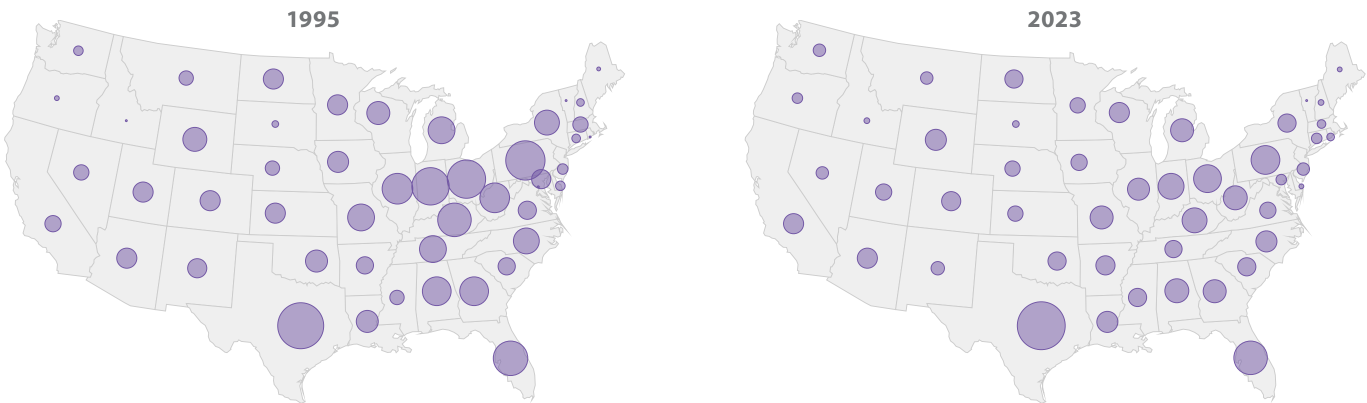
Figure 12. State-by-State Ozone Season NO_x Emissions from CSAPR and ARP Sources, 2000–2023



CSAPR states controlled for fine particles

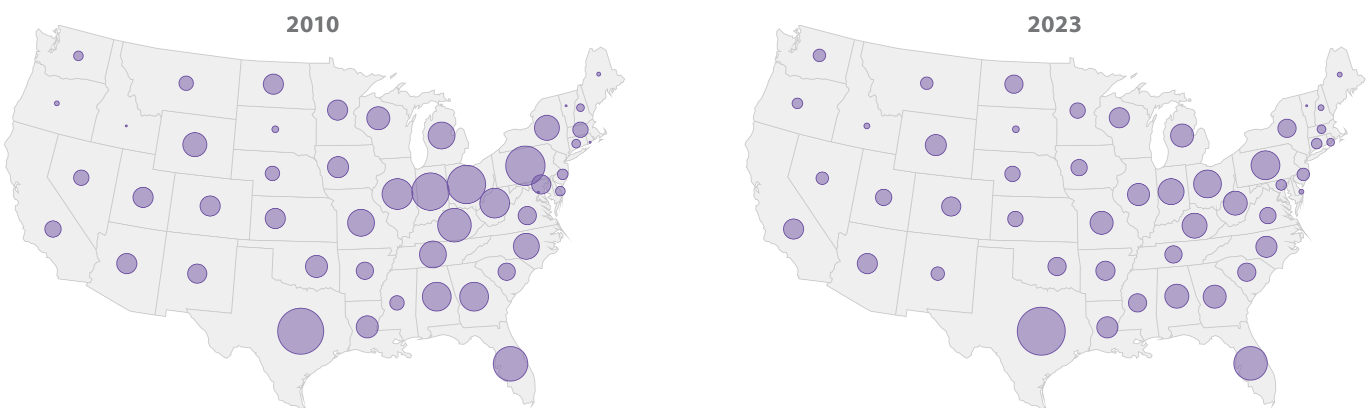
Ozone Season NO_x Emissions (tons)

Figure 13. State-by-State CO_2 Emissions from CSAPR and ARP Sources, 1995–2023



CO_2 Emissions (tons)

Figure 14. State-by-State Mercury Emissions from MATS, 2010–2023



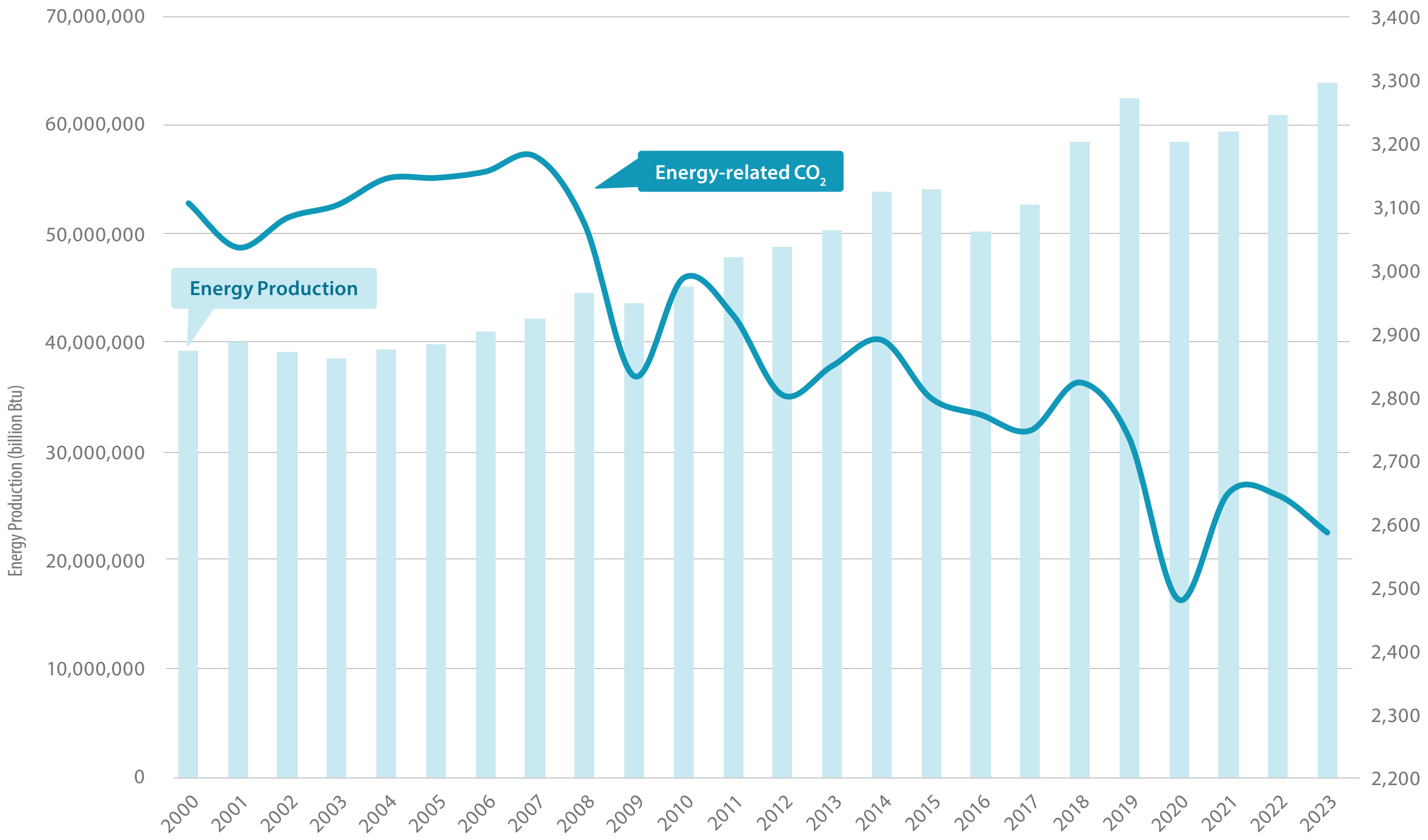
Mercury Emissions (lbs)

Source: U.S. EPA, Progress Report - Emissions Reductions, last updated on September 12, 2024. Data available here. See also, U.S. EPA 2023 Power Sector Programs Progress Report Story Map, last updated March 6, 2026: https://www.epa.gov/power-sector/progress-report-story-map

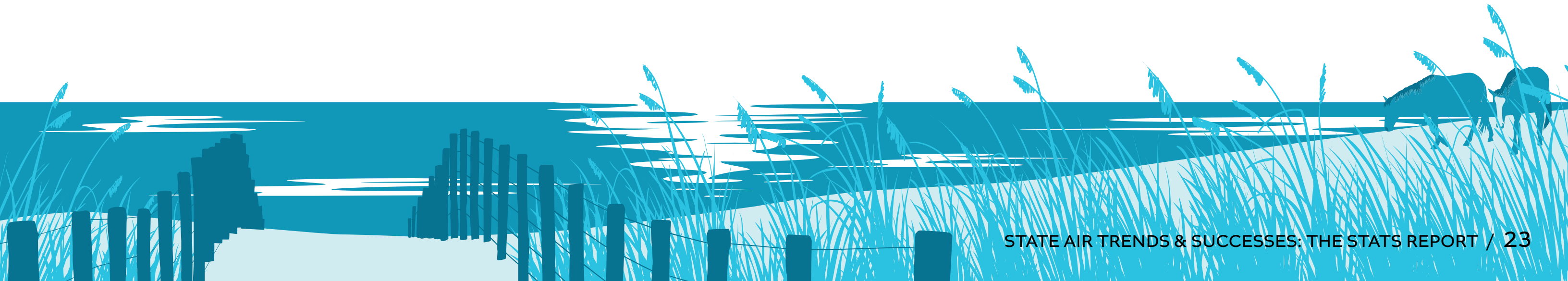
Energy-Related Carbon Dioxide

Data for 2023 from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) show that AAPCA Member States reduced energy-related carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions by 17 percent compared to 2000 levels, from 3,107 million metric tons of CO_2 in 2000 to 2,587 million metric tons in 2023. Over the same period, energy production in AAPCA Member States increased by 63 percent. In 2023, total energy production in AAPCA Member States was more than 24,000,000 billion British thermal units (Btu) higher than in 2000.[18]

Figure 15. AAPCA Member States | Total Energy Production Compared to Energy-Related CO_2 Emissions, 2000—2023



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), **State Energy Data System (SEDS): 1960-2023**; U.S. EIA, **Energy-Related CO_2 Emission Data Tables**, Table CO_2.7. Total CO_2 emissions estimates from energy consumption, per capita CO_2 emissions, and carbon intensities, ranked by state.



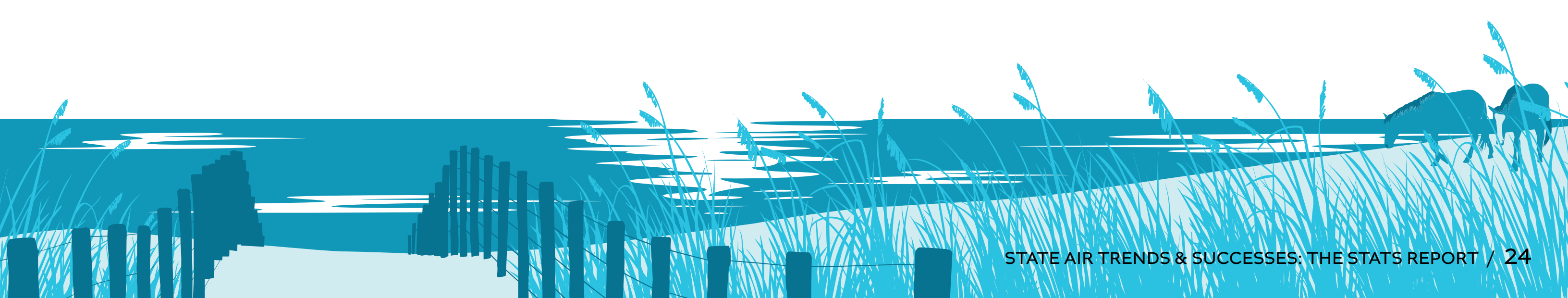
Carbon Intensity of the Economy

U.S. EIA also calculates carbon intensity of the economy by state as metric tons of energy-related CO_2 per chained 2017 million dollars of gross domestic product. The table below lists the percent reduction in carbon intensity of the economy for AAPCA Member States from 2000 to 2023. AAPCA's membership oversaw an average reduction in carbon intensity of the economy of 48 percent.[19]

Table 3

AAPCA Member State	2000 (metric tons CO2 per million chained 2017 dollars GDP)	2023 (metric tons CO2 per million chained 2017 dollars GDP)	Percent Change in Carbon Intensity of the Economy
Alabama	843.9	411.8	-51.2%
Arizona	385.6	196.4	-49.1%
Arkansas	662.3	422.8	-36.2%
Florida	344.5	177.5	-48.5%
Georgia	406.0	185.4	-54.3%
Hawaii	305.6	203.6	-33.4%
Indiana	857.5	380.6	-55.6%
Kentucky	911.1	467.1	-48.7%
Louisiana	1,075.7	739.5	-31.3%
Maine	420.2	207.5	-50.6%
Mississippi	652.8	533.6	-18.3%
North Carolina	387.6	174.7	-54.9%
North Dakota	2,040.6	899.6	-55.9%
Ohio	493.1	259.5	-47.4%
Oklahoma	826.5	418.0	-49.4%
South Carolina	506.0	262.4	-48.1%
Tennessee	512.7	209.7	-59.1%
Texas	686.7	319.5	-53.5%
Utah	662.7	243.9	-63.2%
West Virginia	1,826.5	923.5	-49.4%
Wyoming	2,384.9	1,351.6	-43.3%

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, **Energy-Related CO_2 Emission Data Tables**, Table CO_2.7. Total CO_2 emissions estimates from energy consumption, per capita CO_2 emissions, and carbon intensities, ranked by state, *Carbon intensity of economy (CO_2 emissions divided by real GDP), metric tons CO_2 per million chained (2017) dollars*.



Air Toxics

Data from U.S. EPA's *2024 Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) National Analysis* shows a national reduction in reported toxic air releases of 30 percent over the last decade, down from 762,195,549 pounds in 2014 to 530,322,131 pounds in 2024.[20]

Of the 231,873,418-pound decrease in reported toxic air releases from 2014 to 2024, AAPCA Member States were responsible for 151,203,459 pounds, or about 65 percent.[21]

Figure 16. AAPCA Member States | Share of Total Reduction of Reported Toxic Air Releases, 2014–2024 (pounds reduced)

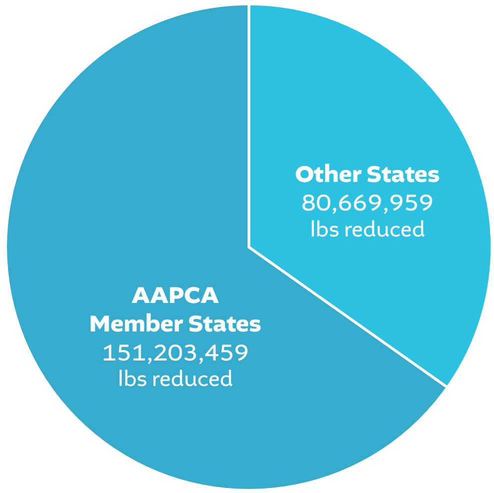
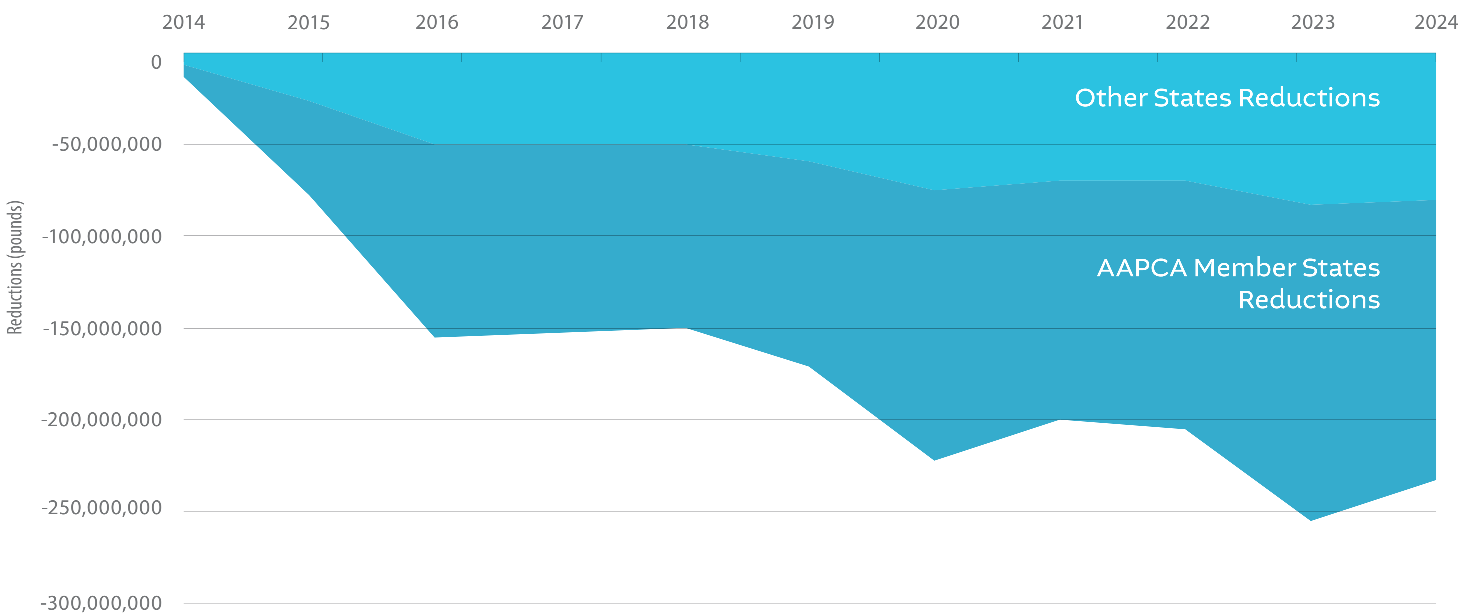


Figure 17. AAPCA Member States | Annual Share of National Reduction in Reported Toxic Air Releases, 2014–2024



Source: U.S. EPA Toxics Release Inventory Explorer, **2024 TRI Factsheets**.

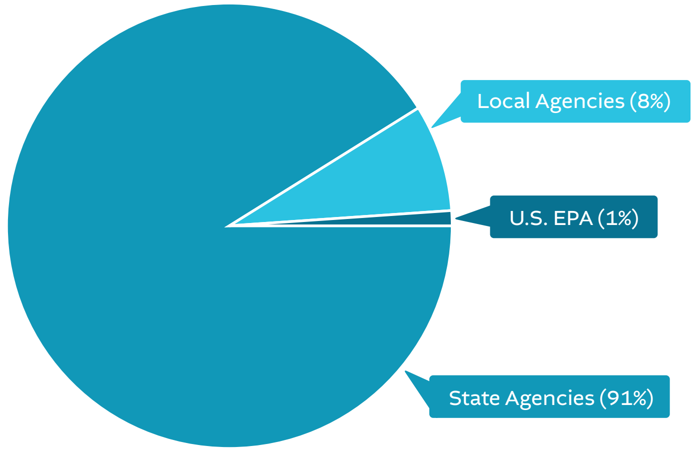
Compliance and Enforcement Activity

U.S. EPA's Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) Air Dashboard notes that "EPA delegates much of its [Clean Air Act] authority to state, local, and tribal agencies" to regulate air pollution from stationary sources.[22] ECHO documents compliance monitoring activities that are undertaken by state and local air agencies and U.S. EPA, such as compliance evaluations, compliance determinations, and enforcement actions.

The ECHO Air Dashboard shows that of the 65,476 facilities permitted under the Clean Air Act in federal fiscal year (FY) 2025, states were the permitting agency for 59,662 facilities, local agencies for 5,098, and U.S. EPA for 716 facilities. AAPCA Member States were the permitting agency for 28,752 facilities, or 48 percent of the state agency total in 2025. [23]

Figure 18. Facilities Permitted under Clean Air Act by Lead Agency, 2025

Source: U.S. EPA, Analyze Trends: **EPA/State Air Dashboard**.

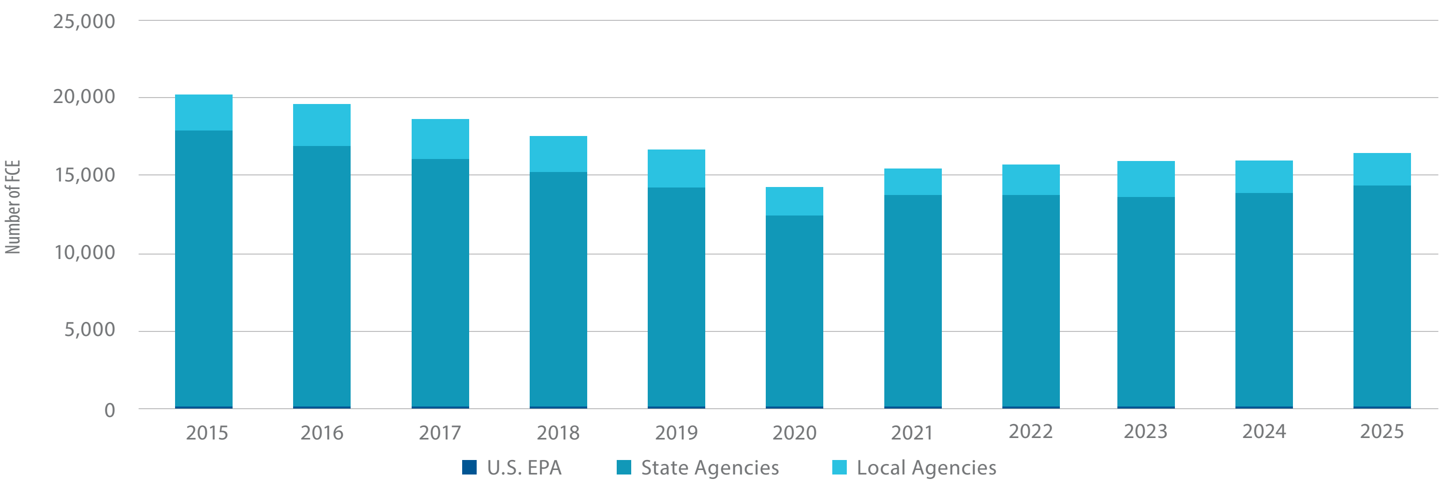


The ECHO Air Dashboard also provides data on Full Compliance Evaluations (FCE) performed by U.S. EPA and state and local agencies. U.S. EPA defines an FCE as "a comprehensive evaluation of the compliance status of the facility. It looks for all regulated pollutants at all regulated emission units, and it addresses the compliance status of each unit, as well as the facility's continuing ability to maintain compliance at each emission unit."[24]

In 2025, AAPCA Member States were the lead agencies for 6,483 FCE, approximately 46 percent of the state lead agency total. In federal FY 2025, ECHO details the following FCE lead agency distribution:

- States were the lead agency for 14,287 FCE, averaging more than 14,500 FCE annually since 2015;
- Local programs were the lead agency for 2,042 FCE, averaging more than 2,200 FCE annually since 2015; and,
- U.S. EPA was the lead agency for 176 FCE, averaging about 165 FCE annually since 2015.[25]

Figure 19. Full Compliance Evaluations under Clean Air Act by Lead Agency, 2015–2025



Source: U.S. EPA ECHO, Analyze Trends: **EPA/State Air Dashboard**.

AAPCA **Best Practices** in Air Pollution Control

Each year, AAPCA designates Best Practices that identify ground-breaking technology, innovative approaches, and exemplary operations in the field of air pollution control, with particular focus on activities that are directly transferable to the operation of an air pollution control agency. Below are recipients of AAPCA's Best Practices in Air Pollution Control for the last five years:

2025

$PM_{2.5}$ Background for PSD Modeling
Georgia Environmental Protection Division

Implementation of an Inventory Tracking System for Air Monitoring Operations
San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

Permitted Facilities Map
Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District

Air Quality Best Practices for Crematories
Mid Atlantic Regional Air Management Association

2024

Oklahoma's Air Quality Health Advisory Program
Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality

Enhance Exceptional Event Demonstrations for Wildfire Events using a New Modeling Approach
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Comprehensive Wildfire Prevention and Smoke Impact Response Program
San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District

2023

Streamlined Response to Comments Approach for State Implementation Plans
Georgia Environmental Protection Division

Representative Sampling Guidance Document
Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality

Wyoming Pond Emissions Calculator
Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality

Healthy Air Living Schools Program
San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (Local Government Best Practice)

2022

Open Burn Permit Program
Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

2022 Air Quality Workshop
Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality

Environmental Trainee Mentoring Program
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Wyoming Environmental Audit Process
Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality

Air Quality Action Partners Program
Louisville Metro Air Pollution Control District (Local Government Best Practice)

Streamlined Communication and Collaboration for Air Monitoring Programs via Microsoft Teams
Mecklenburg County Air Quality (Local Government Best Practice)

Residential Woodsmoke Reduction Strategy
San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (Local Government Best Practice)

2021

COVID-19 Air Quality Inspection/Compliance Determinations
Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

Efficiencies in the Data Quality Review of Ambient Air Monitoring Data
Georgia Environmental Protection Division

NESHAP 6H Reg Nav Tool
North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality

Shiny Dashboard for Remote Monitoring of Air Quality Data
Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation

Presentations from all past recipients can be found on AAPCA's website at www.cleanairact.org.

American Air Quality in an International Context

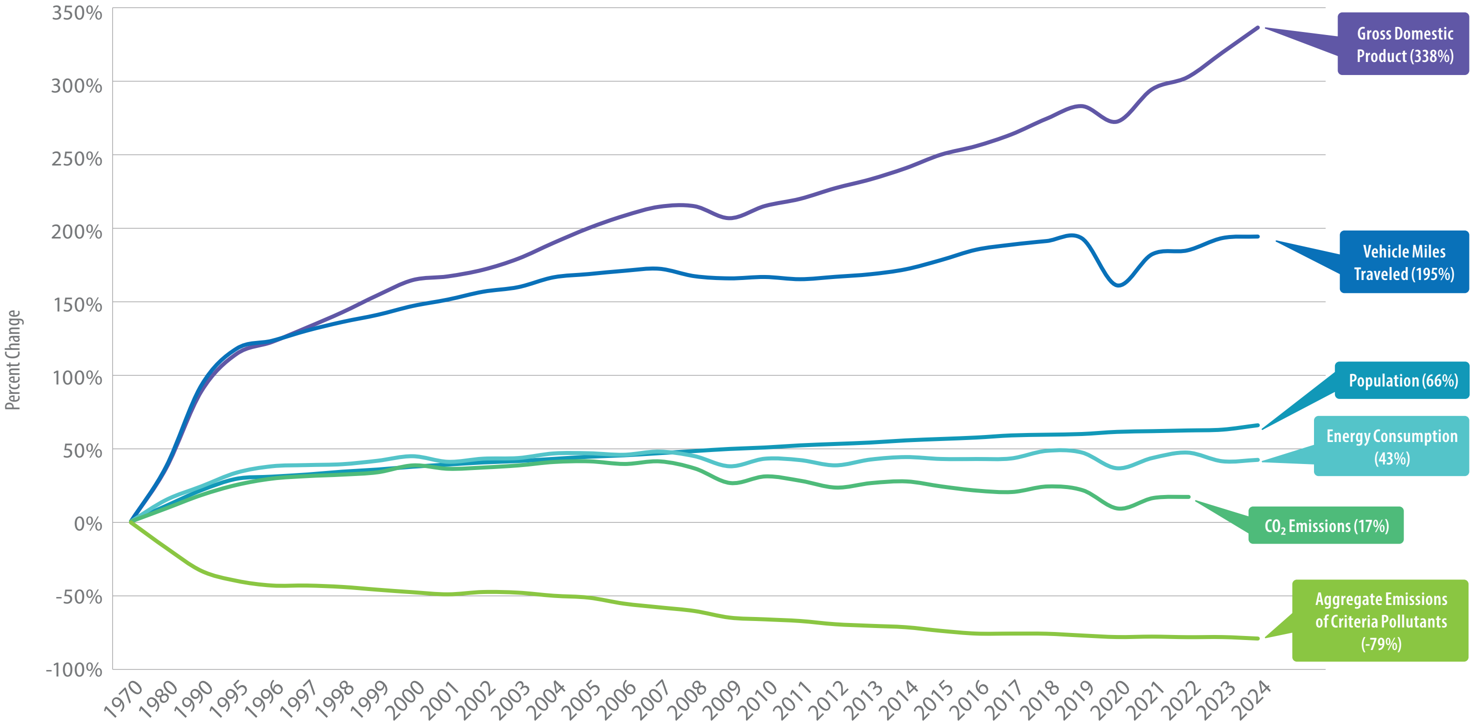
“The Clean Air Act directs EPA to periodically review the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Together with our Tribal, state, and local air agency partners, we have successfully implemented those standards to bring Americans cleaner air and lower risks of adverse health effects.”

U.S. EPA, ***Our Nation’s Air: Trends Through 2024*** (Section: “National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)”), February 2026.

Economic Growth and Air Quality in the United States

Since 1970 when the Clean Air Act was enacted, the United States has reduced aggregate emissions of the six criteria air pollutants by 79 percent.[26] U.S. EPA's 2025 report, *Our Nation's Air: Trends Through 2024*, indicates that the substantial progress in emissions reductions and air quality improvements have occurred while economic indicators in the United States remain strong. Between 1970 and 2024, national gross domestic product grew by 338 percent, vehicle miles traveled increased by 195 percent, population grew by 66 percent, and energy consumption rose by 43 percent.[27]

Figure 20. Growth Indicators and Emissions Reductions in the United States, 1970–2024



Source: U.S. EPA, ***Our Nation's Air: Trends through 2024***, Section: "Economic Strength with Cleaner Air," February 2026.

Internationally, the United States ranks:

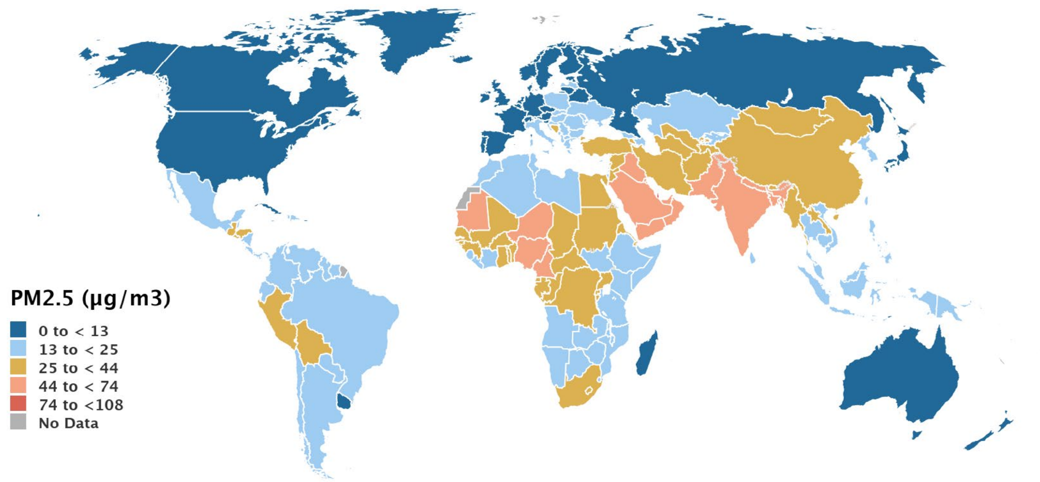
- First in gross domestic product, at 28.75 trillion in 2024, representing approximately 26 percent of gross world product.[28]
- Second in both total energy supply, at 89,734,282 terajoules (TJ), and total electricity generation, at 4,452,539 gigawatt hours (GWh), representing approximately 14 percent of the world total in 2023 for both categories. From 2000 to 2023, the total global energy supply increased by 52 percent.[29]
- Third in population, at more than 342 million people in 2026, representing approximately 4 percent of the world population.[30]

International Air Quality | Fine Particulate Matter

The *2025 State of Global Air* report, a research and outreach initiative led by the Health Effects Institute and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation's Global Burden of Disease (GBD) project, reports on global exposure to air pollution and associated adverse health impacts. The report includes information on global health impacts of fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), and ozone (O_3), from 1990 to 2023. The 2025 report also includes quantitative information about the impact of air pollution on dementia.[31]

The 2025 report recognizes that ambient particulate matter is the largest contributor to the burden of disease globally – accounting for over 60 percent of all global deaths attributed to air pollution. The report specifies that, "Among the air pollutants that are currently measured, long-term exposure to $PM_{2.5}$ is the most consistent and accurate predictor of poor health outcomes across populations." The global regions with the highest exposures to ambient $PM_{2.5}$ pollution were reported to be in South Asia; North Africa and the Middle East; and East, West, Central, and Southern Africa.

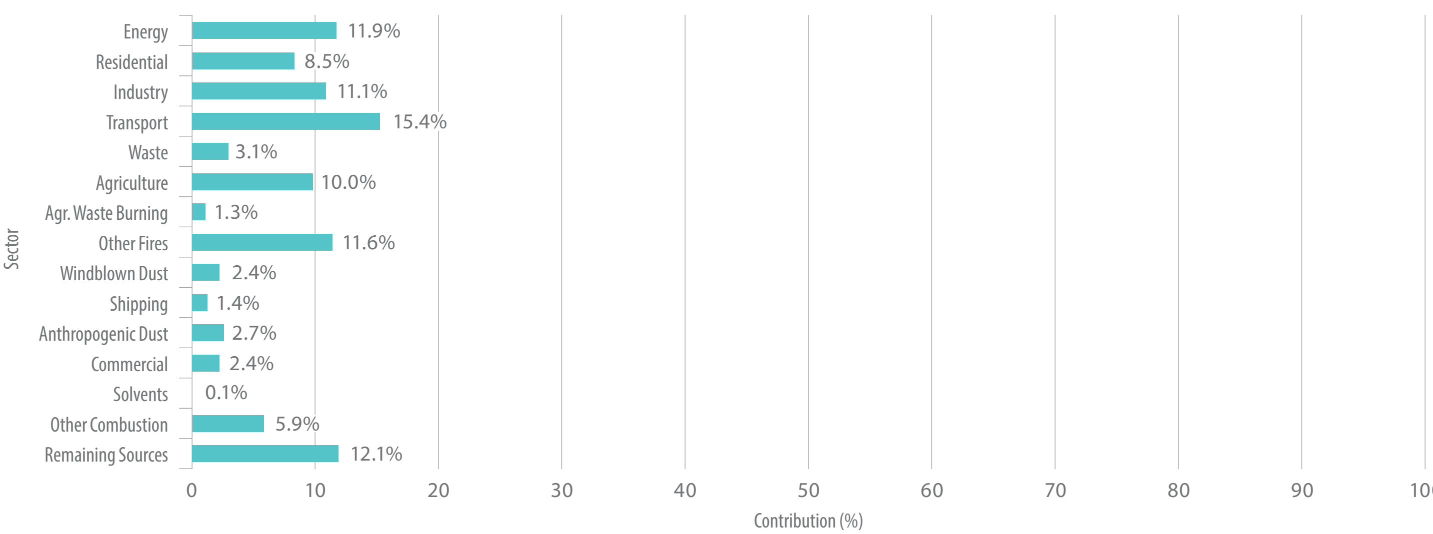
Figure 21. Global Map of Annual Population—Weighted $PM_{2.5}$ Concentrations in 2023



Source: Health Effects Institute. 2025. *State of Global Air 2025*. Available: **www.stateofglobalair.org**. Global Burden of Disease Study 2023. IMHE, 2025.
Note: The State of Global Air calculates population-weighted annual average concentrations for a given country or region by combining the number of people living within the area, and the $PM_{2.5}$ concentration to which they are exposed. Population-weighted annual average concentrations are better estimates of population exposures, because they give proportionately greater weight to the air pollution experienced where most people live.

The *2025 State of Global Air* report indicates that the highest concentrations of $PM_{2.5}$ "can be attributed to a combination of factors, including windblown mineral dust and sources such as transport and industries.[32]

Figure 22. Source Contributions to Ambient $PM_{2.5}$ in the United States in 2019

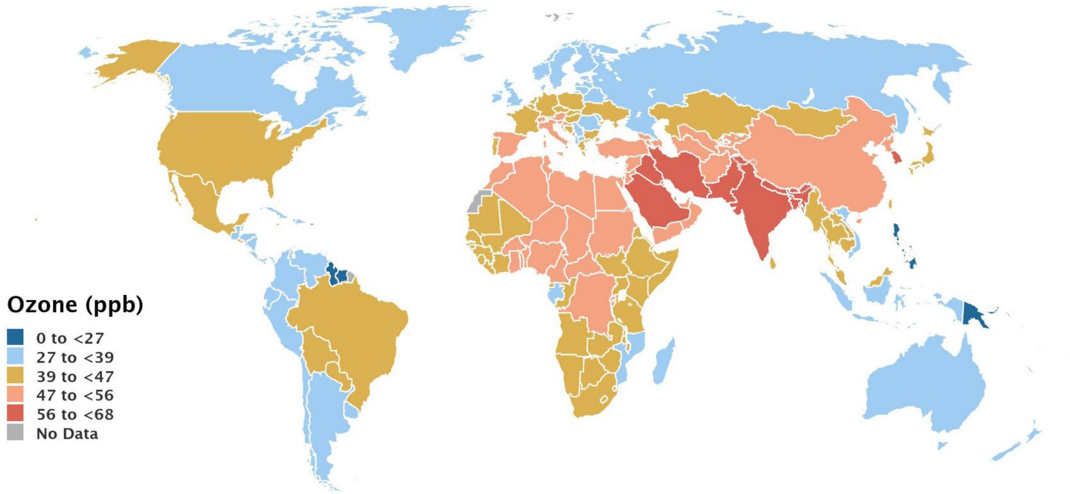


Source: Health Effects Institute. 2025. *State of Global Air 2025*. Available: **www.stateofglobalair.org**.
Data source: Global Burden of Disease Study 2023. IHME, 2025.

International Air Quality | Ozone and Nitrogen Dioxide

The *2025 State of Global Air* report states that global ozone levels are estimated to have increased 30–70 percent in the past one hundred years, with the global average exposure to ozone steadily increasing since 1990. Increases in ozone levels reflect both rising emissions of the chemicals that form ozone, as well as rising temperatures. In 2020, the global regions with the highest levels of average seasonal population-weighted ozone concentrations were South Asia; North Africa; the Middle East, East, West, Central, and Southern Africa; and Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Oceania.

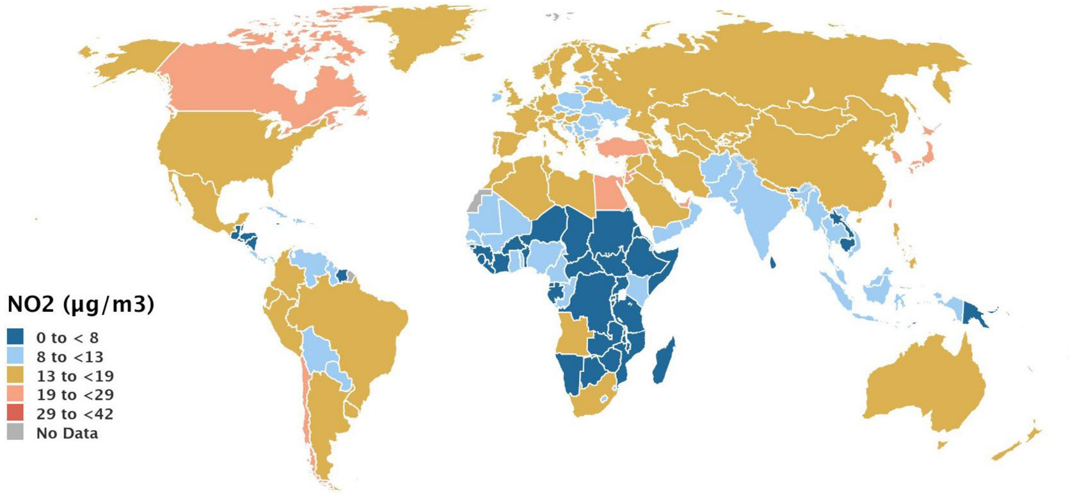
Figure 23. Average Seasonal Population-Weighted Ozone Concentrations in 2020



Source: Health Effects Institute. 2025. *State of Global Air 2025*. Available: **www.stateofglobalair.org** [accessed 3/26/2026]. Data source: Global Burden of Disease Study 2023. IHME, 2025.

The *2025 State of Global Air* report also discusses nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) pollution and notes that the largest sources of NO_2 are transportation, power generation, and industrial activities. In 2023, the global regions with the highest NO_2 exposures were the High-income region (i.e. North America and Western Europe); North Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, East Asia, and Oceania.

Figure 24. Average Annual Population-Weighted NO_2 Concentrations in 2023

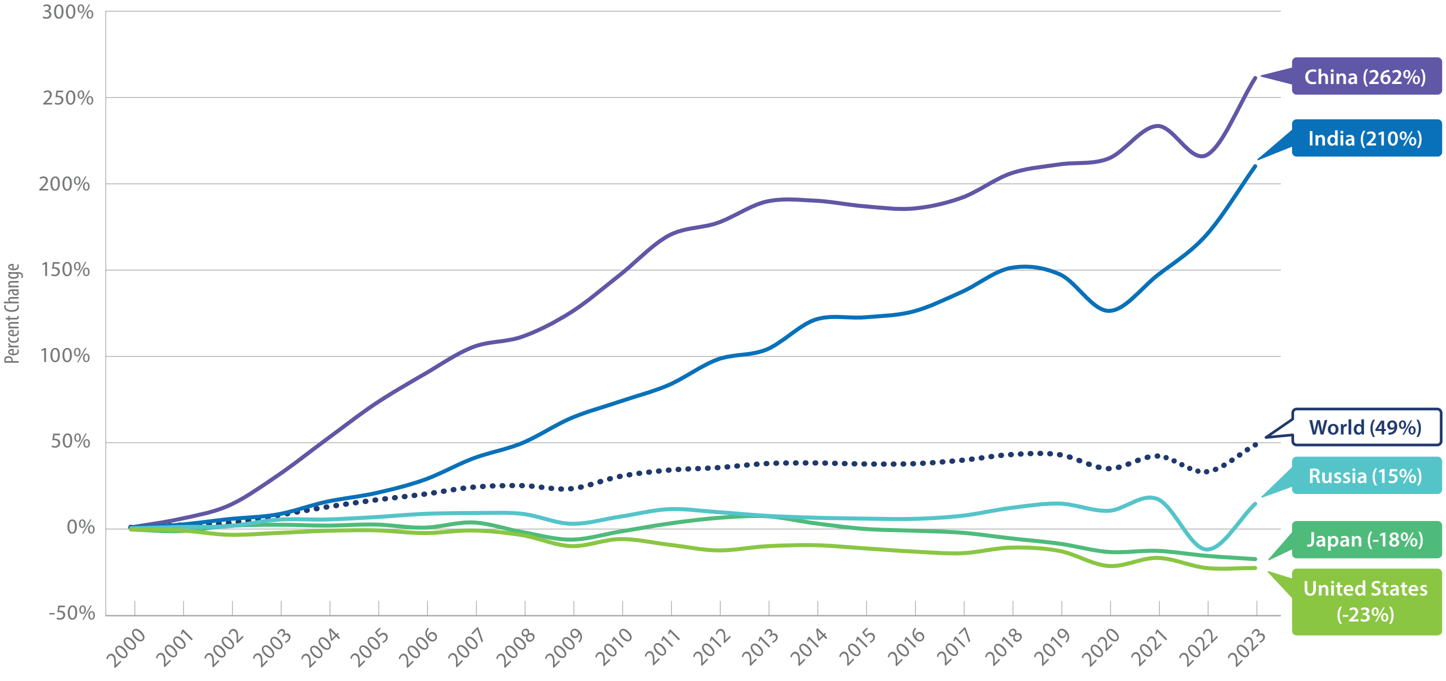


Source: Health Effects Institute. 2025. *State of Global Air 2025*. Available: **www.stateofglobalair.org** [accessed 3/26/2026]. Data source: Global Burden of Disease Study 2023. IHME, 2025.

International Air Quality | Greenhouse Gases

The International Energy Agency's (IEA) database, *Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Energy*, is designed to help understand the contributions of specific fuels and sectors to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with combustion of fuels from 1971 to 2023 for more than 205 countries and 38 regions. By 2023, GHG emissions from energy in the United States totaled 4,483.3 million tonnes of CO_2 eq., a decrease of 23 percent compared to emissions levels in 2000.[33]

Figure 25. Annual Percent Change of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Energy by Country, 2000–2023



Source: International Energy Agency, **Countries and regions** Energy-related CO_2 emissions, October 22, 2025.
*The IEA database includes estimates of total GHG emissions from energy and related indicators, covering CO_2, CH4 and N2O emissions from fuel combustion, as well as fugitive emissions.

Air Quality Trends in the United States

"States currently perform the vast majority of environmental protection tasks in America, including more than 90% of the enforcement and compliance actions and collection of the environmental quality data currently held by the U.S. EPA."

Environmental Council of the States (ECOS), *Resolution 00-1 Environmental Federalism*, March 2024.

Concentration Trends | Criteria Air Pollutants

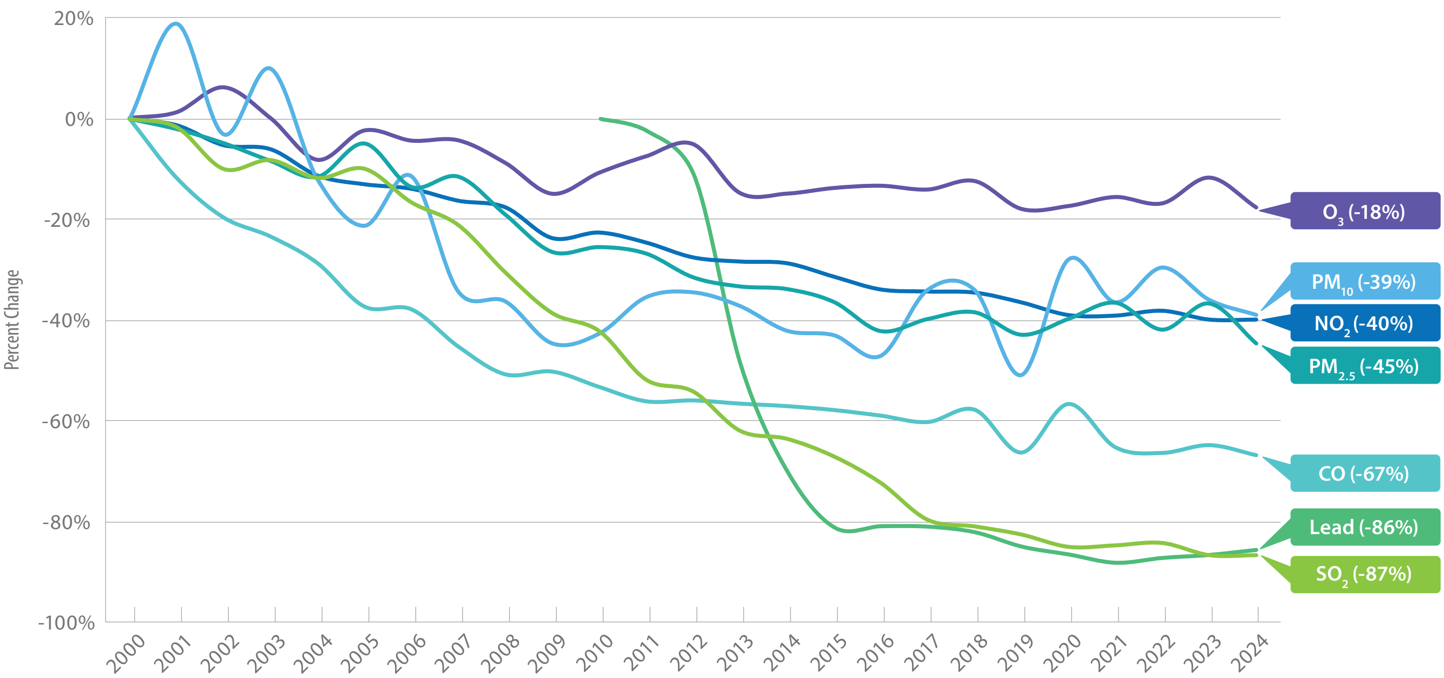
U.S. EPA's national-level analysis of 2024 monitoring data show the substantial reductions in ambient concentrations of all criteria pollutants over the past several decades. As the table below indicates, the United States has seen at least a 29 percent decline in the ambient levels of carbon monoxide (CO), lead (Pb), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), ozone (O_3), and sulfur dioxide (SO_2) since 1980. Available data show that fine and coarse particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10}) ambient concentrations have declined by at least 39 percent since 2000. And more recent data point to a sustained trend of meaningful improvements, with monitored concentrations of all criteria pollutants now below 2010 levels.[34]

Table 4

Ambient Concentrations	1980 vs 2024	1990 vs 2024	2000 vs 2024	2010 vs 2024
Carbon Monoxide	-87%	-80%	-67%	-25%
Lead	---	---	---	-86%
Nitrogen Dioxide (annual)	-69%	-63%	-54%	-31%
Nitrogen Dioxide (1-hour)	-66%	-55%	-40%	-23%
Ozone (8-hour)	-29%	-24%	-18%	-7%
PM_{10} (24-hour)	---	-36%	-39%	-7%
$PM_{2.5}$ (annual)	---	---	-46%	-27%
$PM_{2.5}$ (24-hour)	---	---	-45%	-21%
Sulfur Dioxide (1-hour)	-95%	-93%	-87%	-79%

Source: U.S. EPA, "**Air Quality—National Summary: Air Quality Trends**," Last updated February 19, 2026.

Figure 26. Percent Change in Criteria Air Pollutant Mean Ambient Concentrations, 2000–2024



Source: U.S. EPA, **Air Quality—National Summary: Air Quality Trends**, Last updated February 19, 2026.

Emissions Trends | Criteria Air Pollutants

In coordination with state and local air agencies, tribes, and industry, U.S. EPA develops annual nationwide emissions estimates, which are "based on actual monitored readings or engineering calculations of the amounts and types of pollutants emitted by vehicles, factories, and other sources."[35] In the below table, U.S. EPA's most recently published estimates show that the emissions of all criteria pollutants and precursors declined by at least 28 percent from 1990 to 2024. Recent data point to a sustained trend of meaningful reductions, with estimated emissions of all criteria pollutants and precursors below 2010 levels.[36]

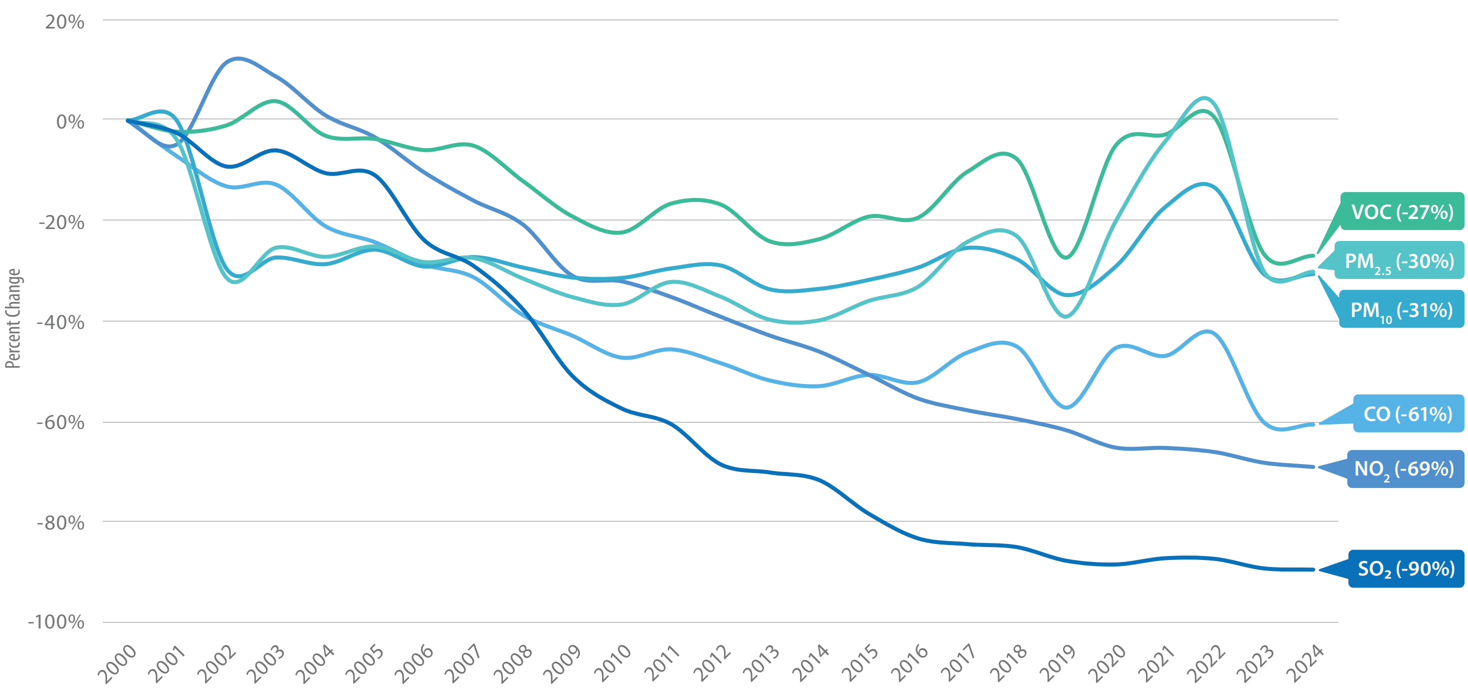
Table 5

Emissions	1980 vs 2024	1990 vs 2024	2000 vs 2024	2010 vs 2024
Carbon Monoxide	-77%	-71%	-60%	-30%
Lead*	-99%	-88%	-78%	-36%
Nitrogen Oxides	-75%	-73%	-69%	-55%
Volatile Organic Compounds	-61%	-49%	-30%	-11%
Direct PM_{10}	-63%	-28%	-26%	-16%
Direct $PM_{2.5}$	---	-29%	-36%	-13%
Sulfur Dioxide	-94%	-93%	-90%	-76%

*As a result of the permanent phase-out of leaded gasoline, controls on emissions of lead compounds through EPA's air toxics program, and other national and state regulations, airborne lead concentrations in the U.S. decreased 98 percent between 1980 and 2005. After 2005, the EPA methodology for lead changed and is not comparable to the 2005 and earlier numbers. Since 2008, emissions have continued to decrease by 30 percent from 2008 to 2017. In the 2017 NEI, the highest amounts of Pb emissions are from Piston Engine Aircrafts, and Ferrous and Non-ferrous Metals industrial sources. The 2008 and 2017 estimates were used to approximate the 2010 to 2024 percent change.

Source: U.S. EPA, **Air Quality—National Summary: Emissions Trends**, Last updated February 19, 2026.

Figure 27. Percent Change in Criteria Air Pollutant Emissions, 2000-2024

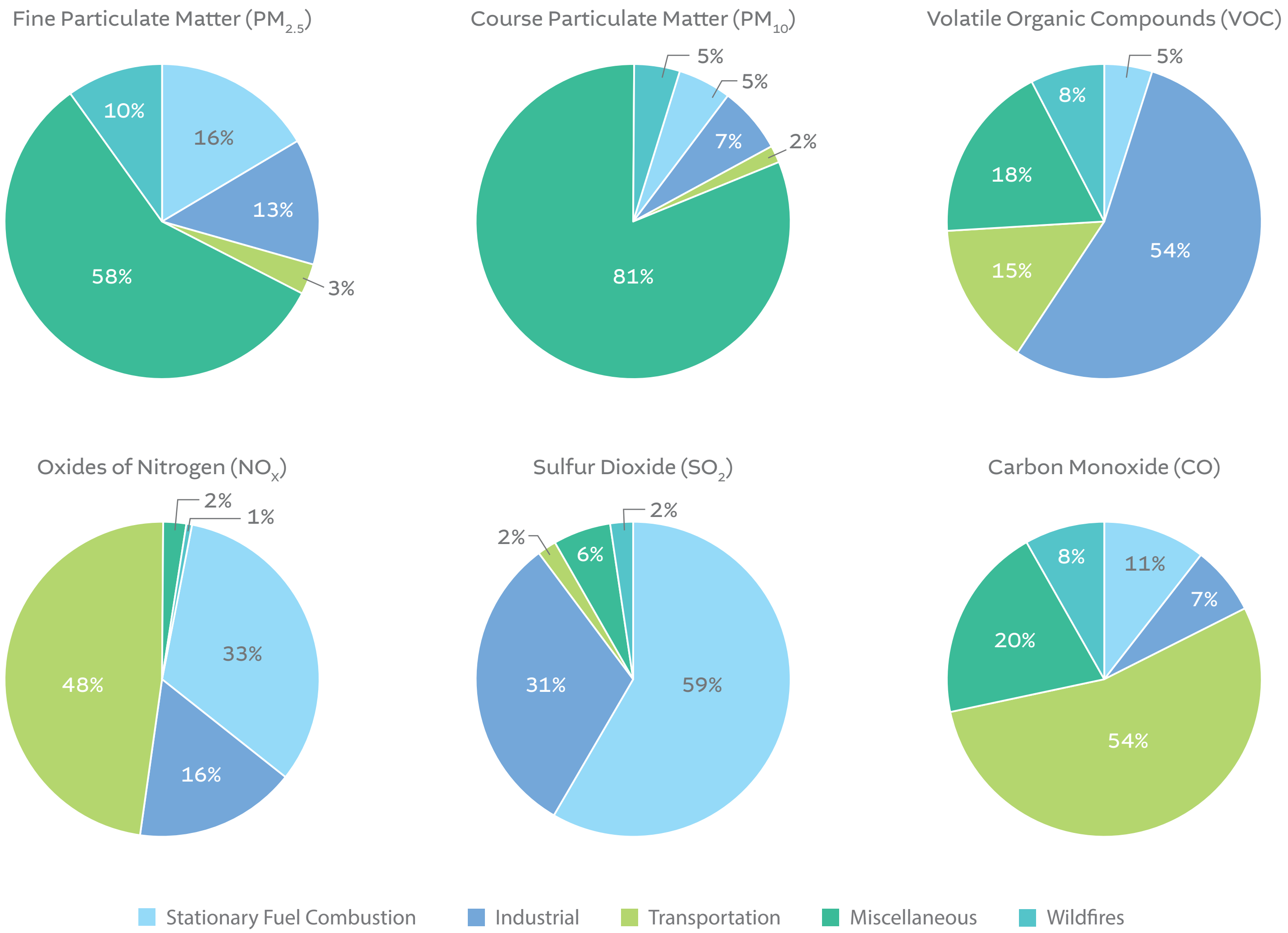


Source: U.S. EPA, **Air Pollutant Emissions Trends**, National Tier 1 CAPS Trends, Criteria pollutants National Tier 1 for 1970–2024. U.S. EPA's data for lead emissions trends can be found **here**.

Emissions Sources | Criteria Air Pollutants

U.S. EPA tracks emissions from the following source categories: Stationary Fuel Combustion, Industrial, Transportation, Wildfires, and Miscellaneous. Included below are the sources of criteria air pollutant and precursor emissions for the year 2024.

Figure 28. Criteria Air Pollutant Sources, 2024

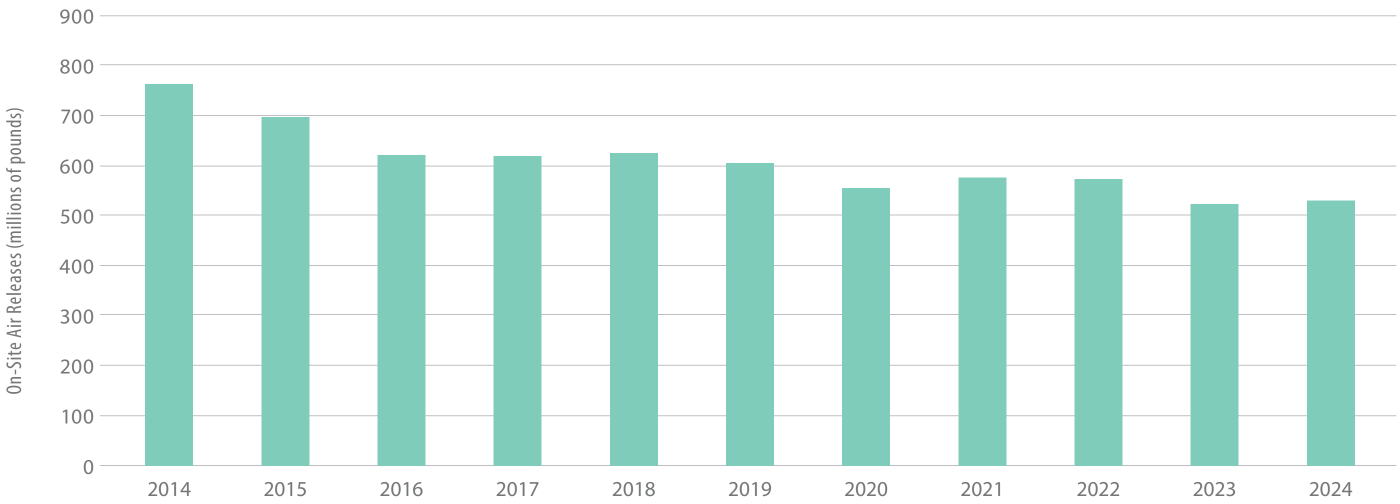


Source: U.S. EPA, **Air Pollutant Emissions Trends Data**, National Tier 1 CAPS Trends, Criteria pollutants National Tier 1 for 1970–2024.
U.S. EPA's **Current Methods Used to Estimate Emissions for the Years 2002-2024** (updated February 2025) is available **here**.

Hazardous Air Pollutants

U.S. EPA's *2024 Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) National Analysis* data show declining emissions of hazardous air pollutants, or air toxics, over the last decade. Reported on-site releases of chemicals into the air decreased by 30 percent, a total reduction of 232 million pounds from 2014 to 2024.[37]

Figure 29. National Toxic Air Releases, 2014–2024

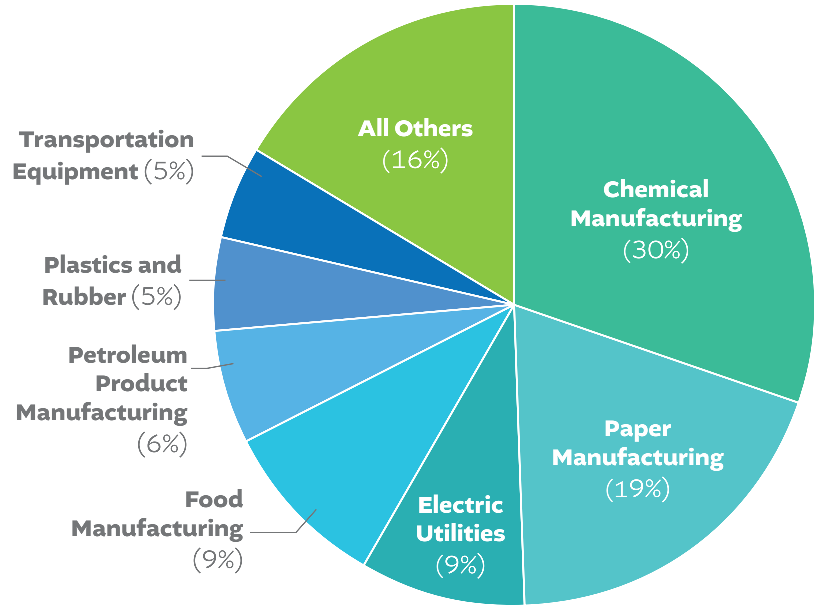


Source: U.S. EPA, *2024 Toxics Release Inventory National Analysis*, **2024 TRI Factsheet for US**, November 2025.

Figure 30. National Toxic Air Releases by Industry, 2023

Of the 521 million pounds of air releases by industry reported to U.S. EPA's Toxics Release Inventory in 2023, the top three sectors were chemical manufacturing, paper manufacturing, and electric utilities. The chemicals that were released in the largest quantities by these three sectors were ammonia and ethylene, methanol, and sulfuric acid and ammonia, respectively.[38]

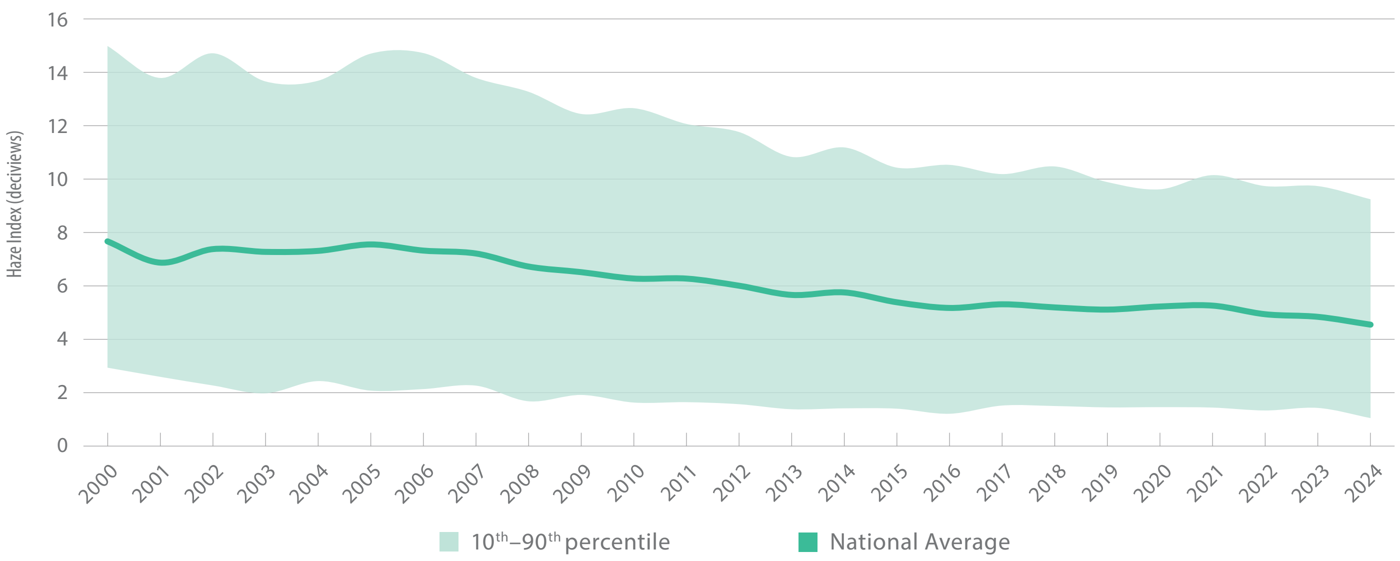
Source: U.S. EPA, *2023 Toxics Release Inventory National Analysis*, **Air Releases by Chemical & Industry**, August 2025



Visibility Improvements

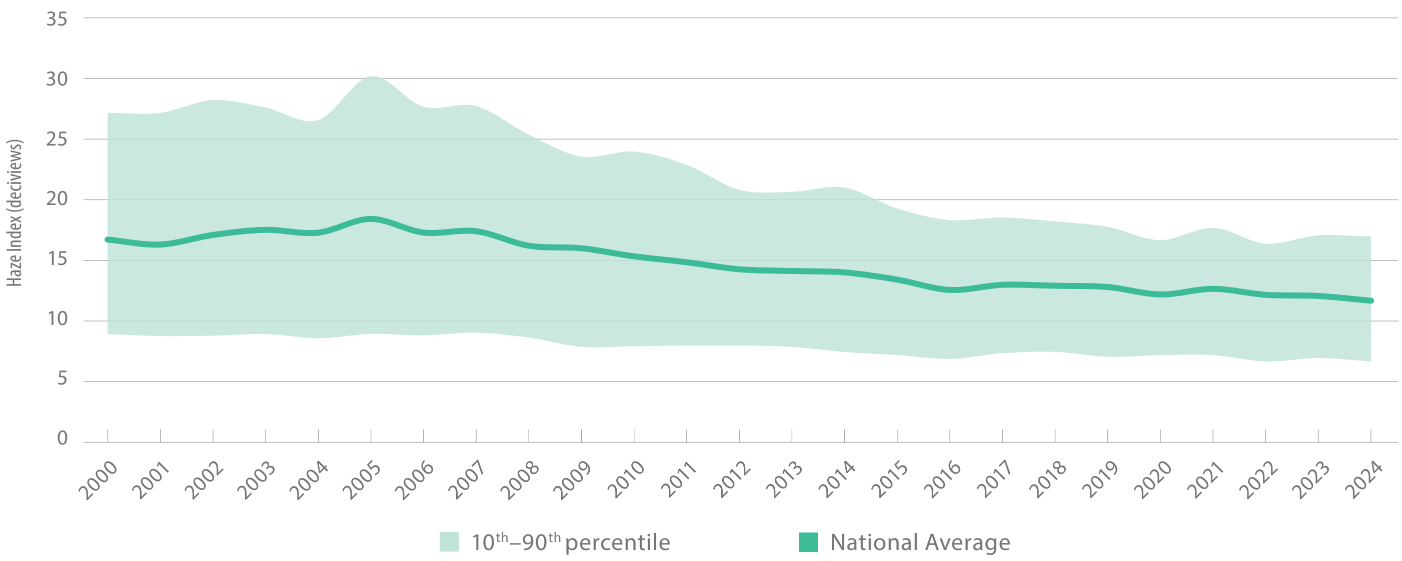
Under the national Regional Haze Program, state and federal agencies monitor visibility in 156 national parks and wilderness areas, or Class I areas.[39] U.S. EPA's latest annual air trends report, *Our Nation's Air: Trends Through 2024*, provides visibility data for Class I areas through 2024. On average from 2000 to 2024, visibility on the 20 percent clearest days improved by 38 percent, while visibility on the 20 percent most impaired days improved by 29 percent.[40]

Figure 31. National Visibility Trends on Clearest Days, 2000–2024



Source: U.S. EPA, *Our Nation's Air: Trends through 2024*, Section: "Visibility Improves in Scenic Areas," February 2026

Figure 32. National Visibility Trends on Most Impaired Days, 2000–2024

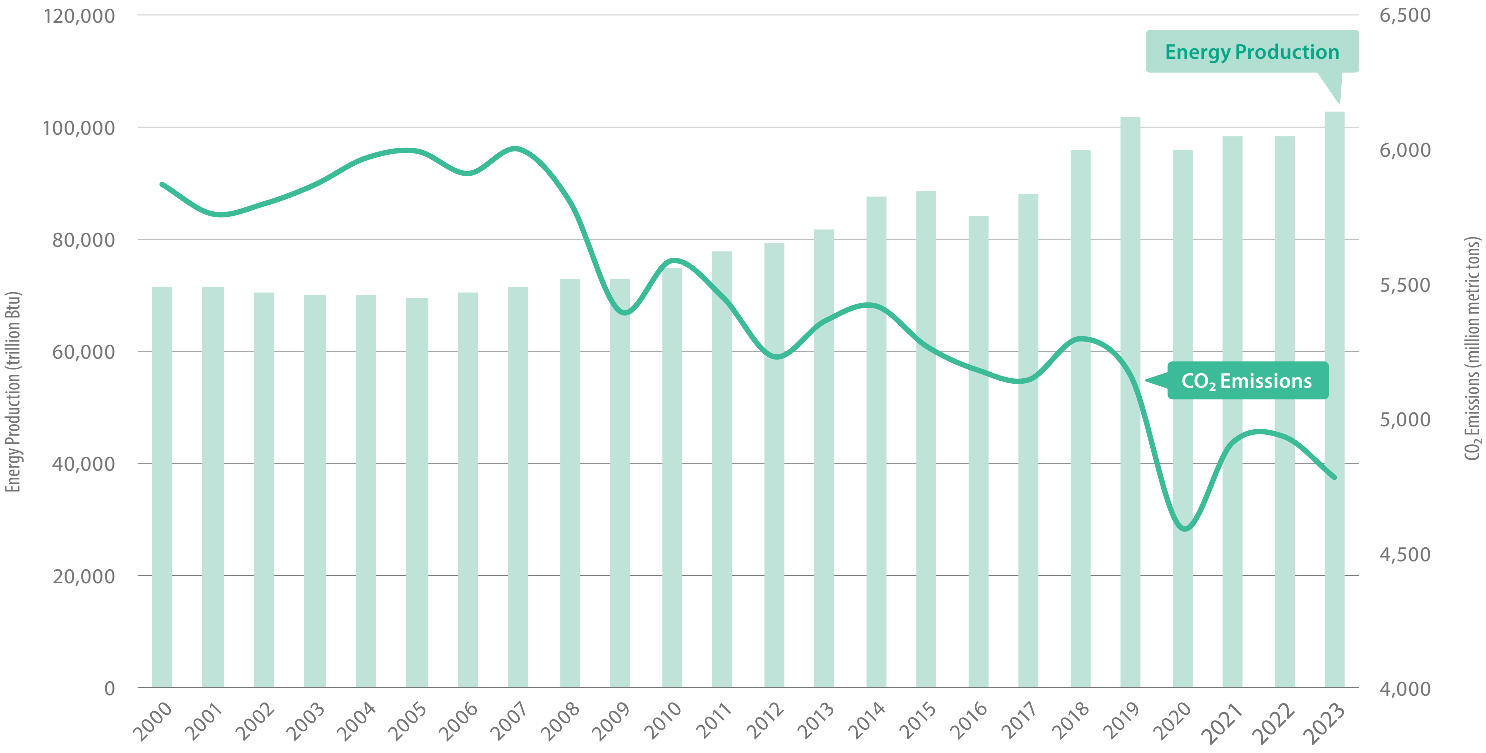


Source: U.S. EPA, *Our Nation's Air: Trends through 2024*, Section: "Visibility Improves in Scenic Areas," February 2026

Emissions Trends | Energy-Related Carbon Dioxide

From 2000 to 2023, the United States reduced energy-related carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions by 19 percent while experiencing a 44 percent increase in total energy production, according to recent data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). National energy-related CO_2 emissions fell from 5,868 million metric tons in 2000 to 4,782 million metric tons in 2023.[41] Conversely, total energy production rose from 71,238 trillion British thermal units (Btu) in 2000 to 102,670 trillion Btu in 2023.[42]

Figure 33. United States | Total Energy Production Compared to Energy-Related CO_2 Emissions, 2000–2023



Sources: U.S. Energy Information Administration, **State Energy Data System (SEDS): 1960-2023**. U.S. EIA, **Energy-Related CO_2 Emission Data Tables**, Table CO_2.1. Total CO_2 emissions estimates from energy consumption by source, 2023.

International Energy Agency | Energy System of United States

The International Energy Agency Energy Statistics Data includes the following energy and emissions trends for the United States:

- Energy-related carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions in the United States in 2023 totaled 4,413 Mt CO_2, a 23 percent decline since 2000;
- Energy intensity of the economy declined by 42 percent from 2000 to 2024;
- Crude oil production increased 137 percent from 2000 to 2024;
- Natural gas production increased 97 percent from 2000 to 2024; and
- Coal production decreased 53 percent from 2000 to 2024.

Source: International Energy Agency, **United States**, Data accessed March 19, 2026.

Sources

1. U.S. EPA, **Air Pollutant Emissions Trends Data**, State Tier 1 CAPS Trends, Criteria pollutants State Tier 1 for 1990-2024.
2. U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, "**Gross Domestic Product by State and Personal Income by State,**" released January 23, 2026.
3. U.S. EIA, **State Energy Data System (SEDS): 1960-2023**.
4. U.S. Census Bureau, data available **here**.
5. U.S. Office of Highway Policy Information, data available **here**.
6. U.S. EIA, **Energy-Related CO2 Emission Data Tables**, Table CO_2.7. Total CO_2 emissions estimates from energy consumption, per capita CO_2 emissions, and carbon intensities, ranked by state, 2023.
7. U.S. EPA's Green Book can be found **here**.
8. U.S. EPA's listing of areas designated nonattainment or maintenance for the 1997 annual $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS can be found **here**. In 2012, the NAAQS for $PM_{2.5}$ were lowered to 12.0 µg/m^3, based on an annual arithmetic mean averaged over three years (the 2006 review maintained the 1997 NAAQS). In 2020, U.S. EPA **retained** the 2012 standard of 12.0 µg/m^3. In June 2021, U.S. EPA announced the **reconsideration** of the 2020 decision to retain the 2012 $PM_{2.5}$ standards. On February 7, 2024, U.S. EPA promulgated a final rule revising the annual $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS to 9.0 µg/m^3, based on an annual arithmetic mean averaged over three years.
9. U.S. EPA defines a design value as "a statistic that describes the air quality status of a given location relative to the level of the [NAAQS]." More information is available **here**.
10. U.S. EPA's **Air Quality System** "contains ambient air pollution data collected by EPA, state, local, and tribal air pollution control agencies from over thousands of monitors."
11. U.S. EPA, **Air Quality Design Values**, $PM_{2.5}$ Design Values, 2024. Data for this chart is based on overlapping three-year averages beginning with 2000–2002 and ending with 2022–2024.
12. U.S. EPA's listing of areas designated nonattainment or maintenance for the 2012 $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS can be found **here**.
13. U.S. EPA's listing of areas designated nonattainment or maintenance for the 2008 ozone NAAQS can be found **here**. In 2015, U.S. EPA lowered the NAAQS for ozone to .070 parts per million (ppm), based on the annual fourth-highest daily maximum 8-hour average concentration, averaged over three years. In 2020, U.S. EPA **retained** the 2015 standard of .070 ppm. In August 2023, U.S. EPA **initiated a new review** of the ozone NAAQS.
14. U.S. EPA, **Air Quality Design Values**, Ozone Design Values, 2024. Data for this chart is based on overlapping three-year averages beginning with 2000–2002 and ending with 2022–2024.
15. U.S. EPA, **Air Pollutant Emissions Trends Data**, State Tier 1 CAPS Trends, Criteria pollutants State Tier 1 for 1990–2024.
16. U.S. Energy Information Administration, **State Energy Data System (SEDS): 1960–2023**.
17. U.S. EPA's Power Sector Programs Progress Report provides emissions reduction data current through 2023. Data last updated June 23, 2025.
18. U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), **State Energy Data System (SEDS): 1960-2023**; U.S. EIA, **Energy-Related CO_2 Emission Data Tables**, Table CO_2.7. Total CO_2 emissions estimates from energy consumption, per capita CO_2 emissions, and carbon intensities, ranked by state.
19. U.S. Energy Information Administration, **Energy-Related CO_2 Emission Data Tables**, Table CO_2.7. Total CO_2 emissions estimates from energy consumption, per capita CO_2 emissions, and carbon intensities, ranked by state.
20. U.S. EPA, ***2023 Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) National Analysis***, August 2025.
21. U.S. EPA Toxic Release Inventory Explorer, **2024 TRI Factsheets**.
22. See **EPA/State Air Dashboard**, part of **Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO)**. Data accessed February 21, 2026.
23. See **EPA/State Air Dashboard**, part of **Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO)**. Data accessed February 21, 2026.
24. U.S. EPA's ECHO **Air Dashboard** reports the following as Clean Air Act compliance monitoring activities: Full Compliance Evaluation (FCE), Partial Compliance Evaluation (PCE), Stack Test, and Title V Annual Compliance Certification (TVACC) Reviews.
25. See **EPA/State Air Dashboard**, part of **Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO)**. Data accessed February 24, 2026.
26. U.S. EPA, ***Our Nation's Air: Trends through 2024***, Section: "Economic Strength with Cleaner Air," 2026.
27. U.S. EPA, ***Our Nation's Air: Trends through 2024***, Section: "Economic Strength with Cleaner Air," 2026.
28. World Bank, **GDP Listings by Country**. Data accessed February 25, 2026.

[29] International Energy Agency (IEA), ***World Energy Outlook 2024***, October 2023. See IEA's **World Energy Mix**.

[30] U.S. Census Bureau, **Current Population**. Data accessed February 23, 2026.

[31] Health Effects Institute and IHME, ***State of Global Air 2025***, 2025.

[32] Data on source contributions to outdoor $PM_{2.5}$ are for the year 2019 and are based on analyses reported in HEI Report 210: Global Burden of Disease Major Air Pollution Sources (GBD MAPS). For more information, please visit **https://www.healtheffects.org/publication/global-burden-disease-major-air-pollution-sources-gbd-maps-global-approach**.

[33] International Energy Agency, **Countries and Regions**, Energy-related CO_2 emissions, 2023. See IEA's **Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Energy Data Explorer**.

[34] U.S. EPA, "**Air Quality—National Summary: Air Quality Trends**," Last updated February 19, 2026.

[35] U.S. EPA, **Air Quality—National Summary: Emissions Trends**, Last updated February 19, 2026. Note: EPA estimates nationwide emissions of ambient air pollutants and the pollutants they are formed from (their precursors). These estimates are based on actual monitored readings or engineering calculations of the amounts and types of pollutants emitted by vehicles, factories, and other sources. Emission estimates are based on many factors, including levels of industrial activity, technological developments, fuel consumption, vehicle miles traveled, and other activities that cause air pollution. See U.S. EPA's **Air Pollutant Emissions Trends Data**.

[36] U.S. EPA, **Air Quality—National Summary: Emissions Trends**, Last updated February 19, 2026.

[37] U.S. EPA, 2023 Toxics Release Inventory National Analysis, **Air Releases**, October 2024. These releases include both fugitive air emissions and stack air emissions.

[38] U.S. EPA, *2023 Toxics Release Inventory National Analysis*, **Air Releases by Chemical & Industry**, August 2025.

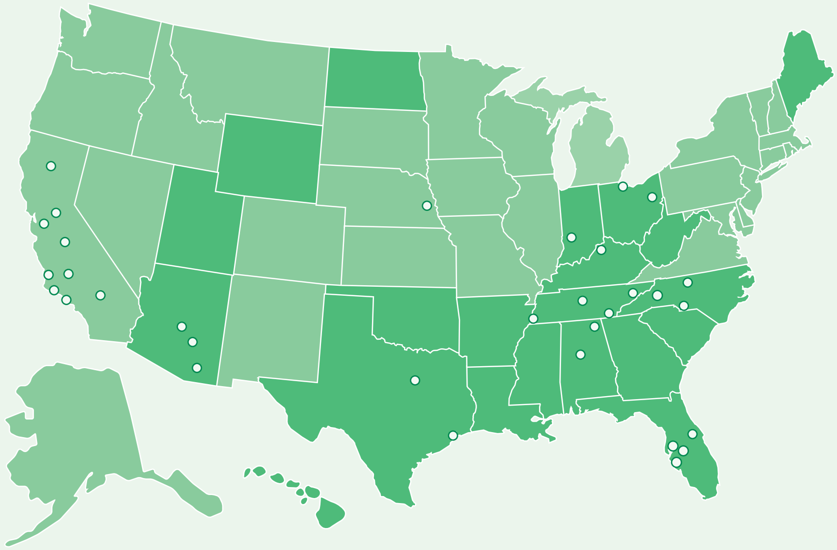
[39] A list of areas protected by the Regional Haze Program is available ***here***.

[40] U.S. EPA, ***Our Nation's Air: Trends through 2024***, Section: "Visibility Improves in Scenic Areas," 2025.

[41] U.S. Energy Information Administration, **Energy-Related CO_2 Emission Data Tables**, Table CO_2.1. Total CO_2 emissions estimates from energy consumption by source, 2023.

[42] U.S. Energy Information Administration, **State Energy Data System (SEDS): 1960-2023**.

Air Quality Resources



AAPCA STATE AGENCIES

- Alabama Department of Environmental Management
- Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
- Arkansas Division of Environmental Quality
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Georgia Environmental Protection Division
- Hawai'i Department of Health
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management
- Kentucky Division for Air Quality
- Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
- Maine Department of Environmental Protection
- Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
- North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality
- North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality
- Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
- Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality
- South Carolina Department of Environmental Services
- Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Utah Department of Environmental Quality
- West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection
- Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality

AAPCA LOCAL AGENCIES

- Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency (NC)
- Butte County Air Quality Management District (CA)
- Canton City Health Department Air Pollution Control Division (OH)
- Chattanooga-Hamilton County Air Pollution Control Bureau (TN)
- City of Fort Worth Environmental Quality Division (TX)
- City of Huntsville Natural Resources and Environmental Management (AL)
- City of Indianapolis (IN)
- El Dorado County Air Quality Management District (CA)
- Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County (FL)
- Forsyth County Office of Environmental Assistance & Protection (NC)
- Galveston County Health District, Air Pollution Services (TX)
- Jefferson County Department of Health, Air & Radiation Protection Division (AL)
- Knox County Air Quality Management (TN)
- Louisville Metro Air Pollution Control District (KY)
- Manatee County Environmental Protection Division (FL)
- Maricopa County Air Quality Department (AZ)
- Mecklenburg County Air Quality (NC)
- Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (CA)
- Nashville-Davidson Metro Public Health Department (TN)
- Omaha Air Quality Control Division (NE)
- Orange County Air Quality Management (FL)
- Pima County Department of Environmental Quality (AZ)
- Pinal County Air Quality Control District (AZ)
- Pinellas County Air Quality Program (FL)
- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (CA)
- Shelby County Health Department (TN)
- Toledo Division of Environmental Services (OH)
- Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (CA)
- Yolo-Solano Air Quality Management District (CA)

ADDITIONAL AIR QUALITY RESOURCES

- U.S. EPA Air Quality Trends Website
- U.S. EPA Nonattainment Areas for Criteria Pollutants (Green Book)
- U.S. EPA Report on the Environment (ROE) Website
- U.S. EPA Air Quality Index (AQI)
- U.S. EPA Power Plant Emissions Trends
- The Environmental Council of the States (ECOS)

AAPCA STAFF

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