

Board Adopts “Identical-in-Substance” Amendments to Ambient Air Quality Standards

On August 13, 2020, the Board adopted “identical-in-substance” amendments to the Illinois ambient air quality standards. The rule amendments incorporate changes that the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) adopted during 2019 and the second half of 2018 concerning the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

The Board’s rule amendments, which took effect on August 18, 2020, address three main areas. First, the Board incorporated new USEPA-designated reference methods for carbon monoxide and nitrogen dioxide in ambient air and a new USEPA-designated equivalent method for ozone in ambient air. Second, the Board removed the 1997 primary annual average NAAQS for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) in ambient air. USEPA’s designating areas as attainment for the 2006 NAAQS for PM_{2.5} revoked the 1997 NAAQS as to those areas. USEPA made that designation for areas in Illinois effective May 28, 2019. Third, the Board limited applicability of the 2010 NAAQS for sulfur dioxide to Macon County. USEPA’s reconsidering its prior nonattainment area designation for Williamson County and designating Williamson County as attainment for the 2010 NAAQS, effective October 15, 2019, left Macon County the only area in Illinois still subject to that standard.

During its rulemaking, the Board received public comment and held a public hearing. The rulemaking is captioned National Ambient Air Quality Standards, USEPA Amendments (July 1, 2018 through December 31, 2018), National Ambient Air Quality Standards, USEPA Amendments (January 1, 2019 through June 30, 2019), and National Ambient Air Quality Standards, USEPA Amendments (July 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019), dockets R19-14, R20-3, and R20-11 (consol.) (May 21, 2020). Here are links to (1) the Board’s [final opinion and order](#), which includes the text of the adopted rule amendments, and (2) the Board’s [addendum](#), which provides tables of information concerning the rulemaking. For more information, please contact Hearing Officer Michael McCambridge at 312-814-6924 or michael.mccambridge@illinois.gov.