

## **Board Proposes “Identical-in-Substance” Amendments to Ambient Air Quality Standards**

On February 17, 2022, the Board proposed rule amendments to Illinois’ ambient air quality standards. The amendments will keep these standards “identical in substance” to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

The Board’s rulemaking primarily responds to two actions taken by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) during the first half of 2021. First, on March 4, 2021, USEPA designated a new federal reference method for monitoring sulfur dioxide in ambient air. As USEPA’s methods are incorporated by reference in the Illinois ambient air quality rules, the Board proposes updating that incorporation by reference. Second, on March 26, 2021, USEPA issued its Round 4 area attainment status designations for the 2010 primary NAAQS for sulfur dioxide. Among the several areas across the country, USEPA designated Macon County “attainment/unclassifiable.” That was the final area designation for areas in Illinois. The effect is that the 1971 primary NAAQS for sulfur dioxide will no longer apply in Illinois as of April 30, 2022. The Board therefore proposes removing the 1971 NAAQS from the Illinois rules.

The Board will accept public comments on the proposed amendments for at least 45 days after their publication in the *Illinois Register*. The Board will also hold a public hearing on April 21, 2022, to satisfy federal requirements for the revision to the State Implementation Plan that will result after the Board adopts the amendments. The Board expects to adopt the final rules in May of this year.

The Board’s rulemaking is captioned National Ambient Air Quality Standards Update, USEPA Regulations (January 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021), docket R22-8. Here are links to (1) the Board’s [opinion and order](#), which includes the text of the proposed 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 [michael.mccambridge@illinois.gov](mailto:michael.mccambridge@illinois.gov).