

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

On September 5, 2024, the Board proposed amendments to keep Illinois’ ambient air quality standards “identical in substance” to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The amendments reflect two actions taken by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) during the first half of 2024. First, USEPA revised the primary annual NAAQS for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) from 12.0 micrograms per cubic meter of air (12.0 µg/m³) to 9.0 µg/m³. USEPA set the more stringent standard due to human health effects associated with long- and short-term exposures to PM_{2.5} in ambient air. Second, USEPA updated its *List of Designated Reference and Equivalent Methods*. This update modified existing method designations and designated a new Federal Equivalent Method (FEM) for measuring concentrations of ozone (O₃) in ambient air.

Publication of the Board’s proposed amendments in the *Illinois Register* will start a period of at least 45 days during which anyone may file a public comment with the Board. The Board will hold a public hearing on November 7, 2024. In November of this year, the Board expects to adopt final amendments.

The Board’s rulemaking is captioned National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) Update, USEPA Amendments (January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024), docket R25-7. Here are links to the Board’s (1) [opinion and order](#) and (2) [addendum](#), which includes the text of the proposed amendments. For more information, please contact Joan Hosty Beacom at 312-814-6924 or joan.beacom2@illinois.gov.