

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

On July 6, 2023, 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 action taken by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) during the second half of 2022. Specifically, USEPA updated its *List of Designated Reference and Equivalent Methods* to modify existing method designations and designated a new Federal Equivalent Method (FEM) for fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) in ambient air. In addition, although it requires no Board action, the Board noted that on October 7, 2022, USEPA redesignated the Chicago area as moderate nonattainment under the 2015 eight-hour ozone NAAQS.

The Board submitted the proposed amendments for publication in the *Illinois Register* and will receive public comments for at least 45 days after publication. The Board will also hold a public hearing on August 17, 2023, to satisfy federal requirements for revising the State Implementation Plan after the Board adopts the amendments. The Board expects to adopt the final rules in October of this year.

The Board’s rulemaking is captioned National Ambient Air Quality Standards Update, USEPA Regulations (July 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022), docket R23-15. Here is a link to the Board’s [opinion and order](#), which includes the text of the proposed amendments. For more information, please contact Vanessa Horton at vanessa.horton@illinois.gov.