

**Air Quality Management Division
Division Director Staff Report
Board Meeting Date: October 23, 2025**

DATE: September 29, 2025

TO: District Board of Health

FROM: Francisco Vega, P.E., Division Director
775-784-7211; fvega@nnph.org

SUBJECT: **Air Quality Management** – Legislation Would Designate Prescribed Burns as Exceptional Events, August 2025 EPA Small Business Newsletter, Divisional Update, Program Reports, Monitoring and Planning, Permitting and Compliance.

1. Program Update

a. Legislation Would Designate Prescribed Burns as Exceptional Events

At a recent hearing of the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, lawmakers discussed the proposed Wildfire Emissions Prevention Act (WEPA). This bill would let states exclude emissions from prescribed burns (planned, controlled fires) and other preventative wildfire management from the air quality data they report to the federal government.

Supporters, led by Chairman Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) and John Curtis (R-UT), argued that WEPA would encourage more prescribed burns, giving states a bigger role and ultimately lowering total carbon emissions by reducing the risk of large, destructive wildfires. They also noted that wildfire emissions now cause almost half of the nation's PM2.5 pollution. She explained that prescribed burns are currently underused because it's too complicated to meet Clean Air Act rules, a problem the WEPA bill is designed to fix.



WEPA, by aiming to allow states to exclude emissions from prescribed burns from federally-reported air quality data, could have several positive impacts on Washoe County,

Nevada, which faces significant wildfire risks and air quality challenges. Key potential impacts include:

- **Increased Use of Prescribed Burns:** Washoe County, like much of Northern Nevada, has a significant wildfire burden. The bill's intention to simplify Clean Air Act compliance for prescribed burns would likely encourage and empower local, state, and federal land managers in and around Washoe County to increase the pace and scale of proactive fuels reduction through controlled burning.
- **Reduced Risk of Catastrophic Wildfires:** Prescribed burns are a key tool for creating "defensible space" and reducing hazardous fuels. By making them easier to implement, WEPA would help lower the risk of large, catastrophic wildfires, which threaten communities like Reno, Sparks, and those in the Tahoe Basin.
- **Streamlined State and Local Action:** The bill aims to simplify the process for states to treat prescribed burn smoke as an "exceptional event," reducing the bureaucratic burden on the Air Quality Management Division. This would allow division to focus resources on other air quality or wildfire mitigation efforts.

For a recording of the hearing and additional information on the proposed legislation, please visit the links below.

<https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/hearings?ID=146BB473-86D7-420C-931B-EEF50962549D>

and

https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/b/f/bf4cff82-fbc6-4b03-90fc-39b9d1b1c43f/CDFA43B2B6A567DF0E886276BEF18953B2AF1F34BD8829F263E2CF104408054A.wepa-one-pager.pdf

and

https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/5/5/55297683-d1ce-4f86-aa5e-df60f3e9229f/EEF691597159BF5A8A1DA1EB23C8135F8496816988578A7E2E087F962FE8680C.wildfire-emissions-prevention-act-discussion-draft-final—maz25607.pdf

b. August 2025 EPA Small Business Newsletter

Please visit the link below to view the August 2025 EPA small business monthly newsletter which highlights environmental regulation, compliance assistance, resources, and

SMALLBIZ@EPA

EPA's Asbestos and Small Business Ombudsman Program

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE REGULATED SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

upcoming events. Contact asbo@epa.gov to subscribe to the newsletter. For more information about small business resources and Small Business Environmental Assistance

Programs (SBEAPs), visit <https://www.epa.gov/resources-small-businesses>.

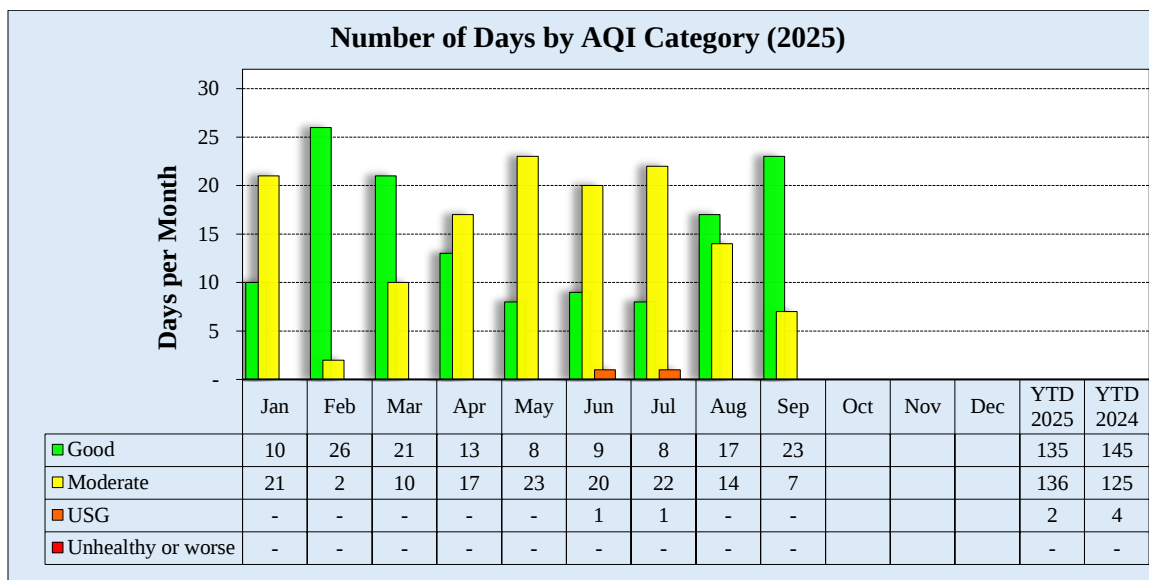
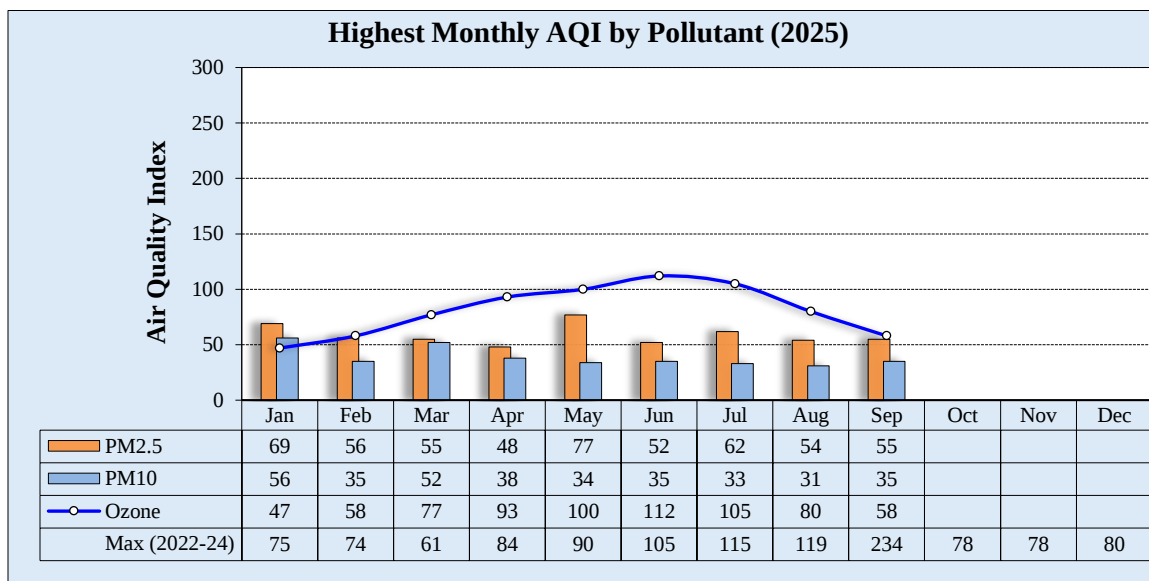
August 2025 Newsletter

<https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2025-08/asbo-august-2025-smallbiz.pdf>

Francisco Vega, P.E., MBA
Division Director

Divisional Update

- a. Below are two charts detailing the most recent ambient air monitoring data. The top chart indicates the highest AQI by pollutant and includes the highest AQI from the previous three (3) years in the data table, for comparison. The bottom chart indicates the number of days by AQI category and includes the previous year to date for comparison.



Ambient air monitoring data in these charts represent midnight to midnight concentrations to illustrate comparisons to the NAAQS. These data are neither fully verified nor validated and should be considered PRELIMINARY. As such, the data should not be used to formulate or support regulation, guidance, or any other governmental or public decision.

2. **Program Reports**

a. **Monitoring and Planning**

September Air Quality: There were no exceedances of the ozone, PM₁₀, or PM_{2.5} National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The highest ozone, PM_{2.5}, and PM₁₀ concentrations for the month are listed in the table below.

Pollutant	Concentration	Date(s)	Site(s)	Notes
Ozone (8-hour)	0.057 ppm	9/4	Reno4	-
PM _{2.5} (24-hour)	11.2 µg/m ³	9/5	Sparks	-
PM ₁₀ (24-hour)	38 µg/m ³	9/18	Sparks	-

Know the Code: The AQMD will begin issuing Burn Codes beginning November 1. This successful program has been in place for over three decades and is one of the reasons wintertime particulate matter (PM) levels meet federal air quality standards.

Each afternoon, the AQMD will issue a color-coded Burn Code. The colors are based on forecasted PM levels. Green means burning is allowed; Yellow means burning is discouraged; Red means burning is prohibited. Green and Yellow codes are voluntary. Red codes are mandatory prohibitions and enforced through DBOH rules governing Woodstoves (Section 040.051) and Emergency Episodes (050.001). Our local media are key partners and play a critical role in the success of the Know the Code program. Click the banner above to learn more about the program.



Compliance Assistance Workshop: AQMD held a public workshop on September 25, 2025, to explain asbestos rules that apply during building renovations and demolitions. The workshop focused on the notification requirements that contractors and building owners must follow before starting this type of work. Disturbing asbestos-containing materials can release harmful fibers into the air, so understanding these rules is essential to protect health.

By offering the session, AQMD helped the community better understand regulations, prevent accidental asbestos exposure, and avoid costly violations. This outreach highlighted the division's ongoing efforts to educate the public and support clean air standards. Recordings of all AQMD workshops can be found in the Public Outreach page of the AQMD website at [OurCleanAir.com](https://www.ourcleanair.com).

Craig A. Petersen
Supervisor, Monitoring and Planning

b. Permitting and Compliance

September

In September 2025, staff reviewed sixty-five (65) sets of plans submitted to the Reno, Sparks, or Washoe County Building Departments to ensure the activities complied with Air Quality requirements. Of the sixty-five (65) sets of plans assigned in September, sixty-five (65) were completed within the jurisdictional timeframes. Of the four hundred ninety-two (492) plans reviewed in calendar year 2025, four hundred eighty-eight (488) were completed within jurisdictional timeframes.

AQMD 2025 Plan Review				
Month	Plans Received	Avg. Days to Complete	Percent Timely Completions	Untimely Reviews
January	50	1.78	100%	0
February	41	1.9	100%	0
March	61	1.36	100%	0
April	69	1.43	100%	0
May	44	3.93	93%	3
June	44	3.27	100%	0
July	66	2.44	100%	0
August	52	3.55	98%	1
September	65	3.2	100	0
October	-	-	-	-
November	-	-	-	-
December	-	-	-	-
Total	492	2.65	99%	4

In September 2025, staff conducted fifty-one (51) routine inspections of stationary sources and one (1) permit to construct inspection. Staff were assigned seven (7) new asbestos abatement projects – monitoring the removal of approximately twenty-four thousand fourteen (24,014) square feet of asbestos containing materials. Staff received one (1) facility demolition project to monitor. Further, there were thirteen (13) new construction/dust projects comprising an additional one hundred fifty (150) acres of disturbance. Staff documented thirty-four (34) construction site inspections. During the month, compliance staff also responded to fifteen (15) complaints.

On January 1, 2025, newly revised District Board of Health Regulations Governing Air Quality Management Chapter 030 required stationary sources of air pollution to submit an application every five (5) years to renew their Permit to Operate. The Permitting Branch of the AQMD understood the significance of this change and completed multiple workshops from November 2024 through March of 2025 to engage with the regulated community and provide information on the process to renew a Permit to Operate. In addition, permitted stationary sources were notified at 300, 270, 210, and 180 days prior to

the expiration date of sources Permit to Operate with information on the process to renew their Permit to Operate. These notifications also provided resources for sources to use to assist with completing applications, including the option of booking appointments directly with AQMD permitting staff members to discuss the renewal process. Despite these attempts, many sources have been unsuccessful at submitting a renewal application. Of the twelve (12) stationary source permits expiring in January, February, and March of 2026, seven (7) have applied for renewal. Failure to submit a complete renewal application on time for a Permit to Operate will result in the loss of a permit shield, which may result in the issuance of a Stop Work Order to a facility when an existing Permit to Operate expires. The Permitting and Compliance Branches continue to discuss and modify the methods to reach existing stationary sources and notify them of the requirement to renew their Permit to Operate.

Permits and Registrations Processed	2025		2024	
	September	YTD	September	Annual Total
Reissuance of Existing Air Permits	51	536	85	1,069
New Stationary Source Permits	5 (New and Major Modifications)	33	3 (New and Major Modifications)	42
Dust Control Permits	13 (150 acres)	158 (2,346 acres)	18 (183 acres)	186 (2,411 acres)
Wood Stove (WS) Certificates	33	212	26	247
WS Dealers Affidavit of Sale	13 (12 replacements)	56 (31 replacements)	5 (3 replacements)	106 (46 replacements)
WS Notice of Exemptions	736 (1 stoves removed)	5,727 (34 stoves removed)	598 (6 stoves removed)	7,166 (64 stoves removed)
Asbestos Assessments	62	491	52	634
Asbestos Demo and Removal (NESHAP)	8	100	13	154

Complaints	2025		2024	
	September	YTD	September	Annual Total
Asbestos	1	9	0	11
Diesel Idling	0	0	1	2
Dust	7	62	17	121
Nuisance Odor	4	18	4	18
Permit to Operate	0	4	0	0
Burn Code	0	2	1	12
General	3	45	6	47
TOTAL	15	140	29	211
Enforcement	September	YTD	September	Annual Total
Warnings	1	28	2	41
Notice of Violations	3	18	0	24
TOTAL	4	46	2	65

Joshua C. Restori
Supervisor, Permitting & Compliance