

**Air Quality Management Division
Staff Report
Board Meeting Date: June 26, 2025**

DATE: June 13, 2025

TO: District Board of Health

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

SUBJECT: Presentation and Recommendation to accept the “Washoe County, Nevada Air Quality Trends Report (2015-2024).”

SUMMARY

The Air Quality Management Division (AQMD) operates and maintains an ambient air monitoring program to determine compliance with health-based National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). This annual report summarizes the previous year’s ambient air monitoring data and provides a long-term trend for each pollutant.

PREVIOUS ACTION

The Air Quality Trends Report is updated and presented annually to the District Board of Health (DBOH) for acceptance. The most recent action occurred on June 27, 2024, with the acceptance of the “Washoe County, Nevada Air Quality Trends (2014-2023)” report.

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) establishes health-based NAAQS for six criteria air pollutants including Ozone and Particulate Matter. Each year, the AQMD prepares this report, which summarizes the previous year’s monitoring data. Because of its usefulness of summarizing ambient air monitoring data, it’s now included as part of the recently EPA approved ambient air monitoring Quality Assurance Project Plan.

This Air Quality Trends Report summarizes 2024 and the ten-year trend for each pollutant. The full report is also available at the AQMD website (OurCleanAir.com). The following is a summary of last year’s Air Quality Index (AQI) levels and the AQI trend for the previous ten years.

A Review of 2024

January and February of 2024 began with the issuance of a Yellow Burn Code on January 1st for January 2nd. The Yellow Burn Code was rescinded on the 2nd and Green Burn Codes remained through the end of the 2023-2024 Burn Code season. The 2023-2024 Burn Code season ended with 118 Green, 3 Yellow, and 0 Red Burn Codes. The highest 24-hour PM_{2.5} concentration for the 2023-2024 season was recorded on January 1, 2024 at the Sparks SLAMS with a value of 23.5 µg/m³.

The first air quality event of the year occurred in June. The Reno-Sparks area experienced an overnight ozone exceedance on June 15. The Lemmon Valley SLAMS recorded an 8-hour ozone concentration between 8 PM and 3 AM of 72 ppb. It is not normal that ozone peaks occur overnight. Likely, the exceedance occurred due to a phenomenon called stratospheric ozone intrusion. This is when “good” ozone from the upper atmosphere mixes to the ground-level, increasing ambient concentrations of ground-level ozone.

Fire impacts were minimal during the summer of 2024. At the end of July into early August, the area saw the greatest PM_{2.5} and smoke impact of the year. Widespread smoke from the Park Fire in Northern California blanketed the Reno-Sparks area. This led to a 24-hour PM_{2.5} AQI of 81 or 25.1 µg/m³ at the Reno4 NCore site, the highest 24-hour PM_{2.5} concentration of 2024. In total, the Park Fire burned over 429,000 acres and destroyed over 700 structures.

On August 8th and through that weekend, the area experienced smoke from the Crozier Fire near Placerville, CA. The Crozier Fire burned nearly 2,000 acres. It caused Moderate PM_{2.5} AQI during its impact to the Reno-Sparks area.

The last major wildfire impact of the year came from the Davis Fire in South Reno. The Davis Fire started on September 7 and was fully contained on September 25. The fire burned a total of 5,824 acres.

Due to high winds in the area during the fire, PM_{2.5} impacts were limited to adjacent areas to the fire. The fire destroyed two commercial structures, 14 residences, and 22 outbuildings in total.¹ Fire crews were diligent and worked effectively to limit impacts from the fire.



Figure 3: Davis Fire on September 8, 2024, Inciweb

The 2024-2025 Burn Code Season began with Green Burn Codes until a Yellow Burn Code was issued on November 8th. The Yellow Burn Code was issued due to the Waddle Ranch prescribed fire by Truckee airport. The fire led to periodic Unhealthy AQIs but was a 24-hour Moderate AQI. One other Yellow Burn Code was issued in 2024 on December 19.

¹<https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/nvhtf-davis-fire>, USFS November 5, 2024, Accessed May 5, 2025

[illegible][illegible]

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the DBOH accepts the “Washoe County, Nevada Air Quality Trends (2015-2024)” report.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the DBOH concur with staff’s recommendation, a possible motion would be “Move to accept the “Washoe County, Nevada Air Quality Trends (2015-2024)” report”.