

**Air Quality Management Division
Division Director Staff Report
Board Meeting Date: November 20, 2025**

DATE: October 29, 2025

TO: District Board of Health

FROM: Francisco Vega, P.E., Division Director
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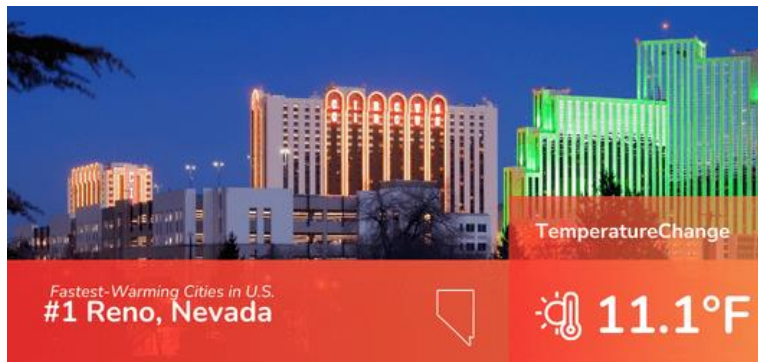
SUBJECT: **Air Quality Management** – Scientists Unveil Better Way to Predict Heat Deaths, Proposed Electric Vehicle (EV) Tax, September 2025 EPA Small Business Newsletter, Divisional Update, Program Reports, Monitoring and Planning, Permitting and Compliance.

1. Program Update

a. Scientists Unveil Better Way to Predict Heat Deaths

As has been previously presented, Reno is the fastest warming city in the country. Specifically, Reno has experienced a significant increase in summer temperatures since 1970, with the average summer temperature rising by 11.1°F and leading to sixty-six (66) more summer days above normal. For perspective, the second fastest warming city was Las Vegas at 5.8°F.

It is also well understood that high temperatures can cause serious health problems and even death, especially among young children, elderly people, and people with underlying health issues. To protect people, more reliable forecasts and effective warning systems are needed.



A new study, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), shows that it is possible to predict heat-related deaths. By analyzing daily temperature and mortality records for four hundred twenty (420) million people across sixteen (16) European countries, the team of Swedish and Spanish researchers were able to develop a statistical model. For each district included in the study, the relationship between temperature and mortality was calculated, making it possible to take into account regional differences in climate and the vulnerability of the population to heat. The statistical model was then combined with temperature forecasts, allowing the researchers to predict heat-related mortality.

"We tested it on Europe's extremely hot summers in 2022 and 2023 and were able to make forecasts about a week in advance. In the past, warning systems have generally been based on temperature alone. Our forecasting system takes both meteorological data and health statistics into account, which enables us to more accurately predict how heat may affect deaths," says Emma Holmberg, Postdoc in meteorology at the Department of Earth Sciences and the study's first author.

In most countries, the forecasts worked very well when the researcher's predicted mortality in moderate summer temperatures. This temperature range is close to the "minimum lethal temperature", the level at which the body is exposed to the least stress from heat. One thing that surprised the researchers was that the forecasts were accurate even in the very hottest regions, such as the Iberian Peninsula during the record summer of 2022.

"By including heat-related mortality in heat warnings, authorities can focus resources where they are needed, especially on the elderly, sick or other vulnerable groups," Holmberg concludes.

For additional information and to review the study, please visit the link below.
<https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2426516122>

b. Proposed Electric Vehicle (EV) Tax

Recent discussions around a growing backlog of critical road maintenance has brought to light concerns about declining gas tax revenues and equitable road funding. During these deliberations, the primary solution has centered on additional taxes or fees on electric vehicles (EVs). While it is true that Washoe County's local roads rely on gas taxes, the narrative that EV adoption is the primary cause of revenue shortfalls is not supported by data. Gas tax deficits have been growing for decades due to inflation, improved fuel economy in combustion vehicles, and the inability to adjust tax rates to match modern road maintenance and public transportation costs. In Washoe County, the gas tax is capped at 7.8% or a 10-year average of the inflation costs of construction, whichever is lower.

Over the next ten (10) years, a deficit of \$1.4 billion for critical road maintenance has been estimated. EVs make up approximately 5.5% of the total amount of registered vehicles in Washoe County as of June 2024. Under one of the solutions proposed by the study, an additional \$4.9 million would be generated in 2024 from taxing EVs. Not adjusting for inflation, this represents 3.5% of the projected deficit. While addressing the gap in revenue from EVs must be addressed, the data demonstrates that this alone is not the solution.



According to a study conducted by the Guinn Center, commissioned by the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC), it suggests more equitable and data-driven alternatives to an EV tax may be the path forward. These include:

- A vehicle miles traveled (VMT) tax that applies to all vehicles
- Electric vehicle charging station tax
- Exploring a tire-based tax that directly correlate with road impact

From the air quality perspective, gasoline and diesel motor vehicles are the number one source of NOx and VOC emissions that contribute directly to the formation of ground-level ozone. Washoe County is close to violating the ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard which is up for review and possible strengthening in 2030. Minimal solutions to this problem exist and the primary solution includes reducing emissions from the transportation sector. This is why it is critical to continue to encourage clean transportation choices.

Nevada and Washoe County can modernize its transportation funding model without discouraging the transition to cleaner vehicles. Revising the gas tax formula to reflect the true cost of inflation and motor vehicle efficiency should be a priority in future Nevada State Legislatures. Any funding strategy should balance infrastructure needs with the air quality and public health benefits of electrification. As stated in the Guinn Center study, "The decision of whether to tax EVs and HEVs and, if so, by how much must be balanced so as to avoid establishing a disincentive to increasing the use of one of the most effective means of reducing carbon emissions, the electric vehicle, must be carefully evaluated.

To read the Guinn Center study in its entirety, please visit the link below.

<https://www.guinncenter.org/research/bridging-the-gap-revenue-options-for-transportation-infrastructure-in-the-electric-vehicle-transition>

c. September 2025 EPA Small Business Newsletter

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

SMALLBIZ@EPA

EPA's Asbestos and Small Business Ombudsman Program

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE REGULATED SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

and 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>.

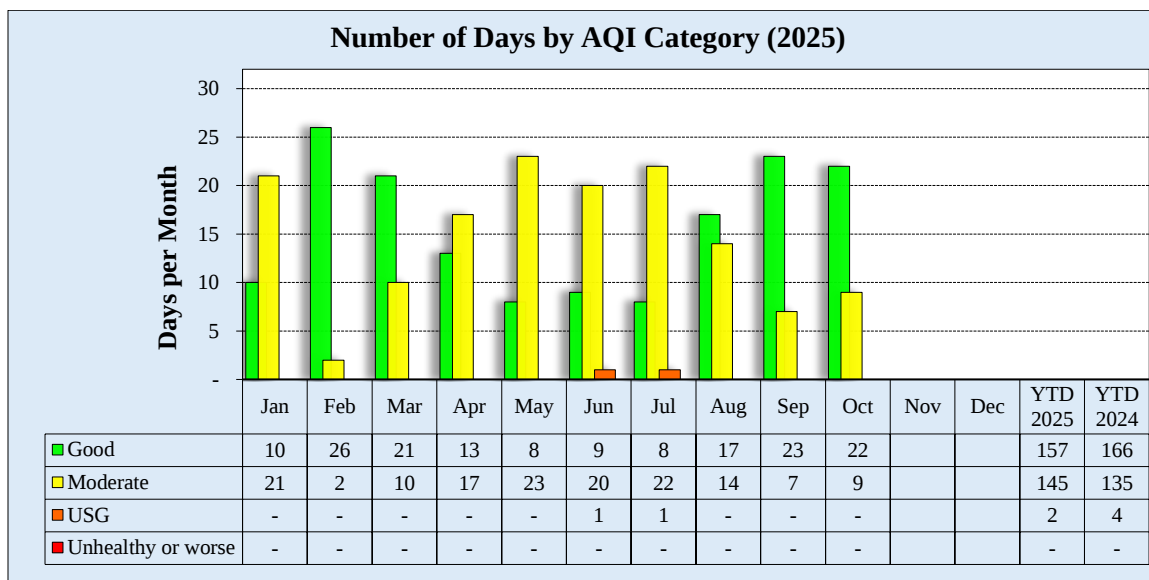
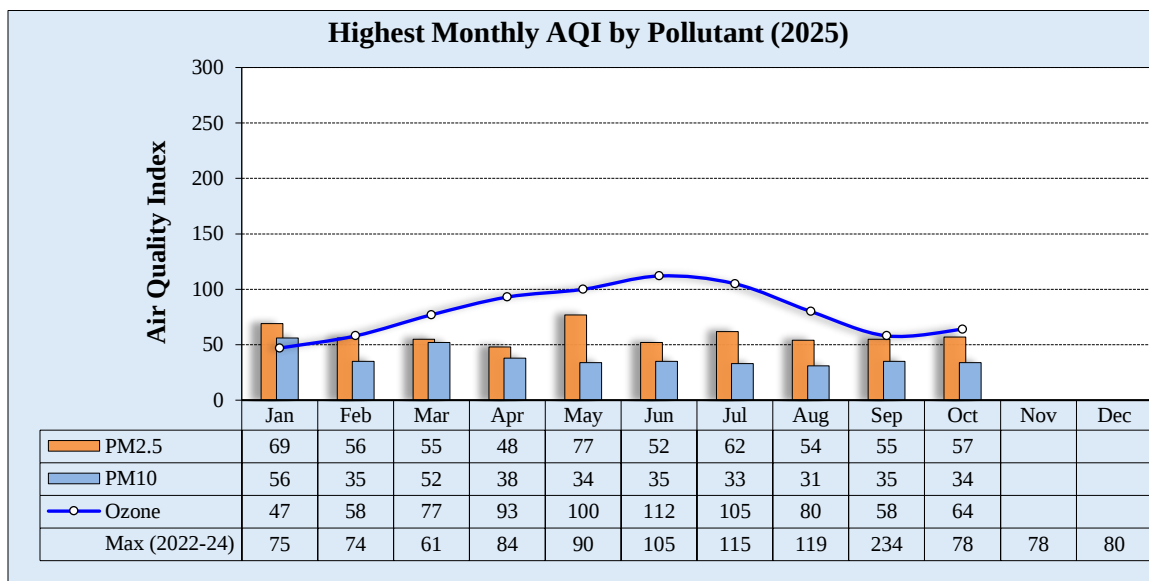
September 2025 Newsletter

<https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2025-09/smallbizepa-september-2025.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

October 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)	0.059 ppm	10/9	Lemmon Valley	-
PM _{2.5} (24-hour)	12.1 µg/m ³	10/17	Sparks	-
PM ₁₀ (24-hour)	37 µg/m ³	10/21	Sparks	-

Sunsetting of EPA's Burn Wise Program: The EPA has concluded active updates to its Burn Wise Program, which ran from 2009–2025 to promote cleaner residential wood burning and support PM_{2.5} air quality goals. While the website (epa.gov/burnwise) will remain online as a reference, beginning October 30, 2025, no new materials or updates will be added.

Burn Wise successfully increased public awareness about burning the right wood, the right way, and in the right appliance. The program supported wood-stove change-outs, developed outreach tools for air agencies, and helped reduce fine-particle emissions nationwide.



EPA's decision to sunset Burn Wise reflects a shift toward other regulatory and grant programs addressing wood-smoke emissions. Local and state agencies are encouraged to continue education and outreach using the existing resources archived on the EPA website. Residents of Washoe County can find additional information on AQMD's local wood-burning device program, including regulations, eligibility and requirements for owning a wood-burning device, permitting, and compliance requirements at OurCleanAir.com.

Craig A. Petersen
Supervisor, Monitoring and Planning

b. Permitting and Compliance

October

In October 2025, staff reviewed fifty-nine (59) sets of plans submitted to the Reno, Sparks, or Washoe County Building Departments to ensure the activities complied with Air Quality requirements. Of the fifty-nine (59) sets of plans assigned in October, fifty-seven (57) were completed within the jurisdictional timeframes. One of the untimely reviews in October was due to the plan submitted to the AQMD after the due date. Of the five hundred fifty-one (551) plans reviewed in calendar year 2025, five hundred forty-five (545) 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	59	4.22	97%	2
November	-	-	-	-
December	-	-	-	-
Total	551	2.80	99%	6

In October 2025, staff conducted thirty-seven (37) routine inspections of stationary sources and four (4) permit to construct inspections. Staff were assigned ten (10) new asbestos abatement projects – monitoring the removal of approximately ten thousand five hundred twenty-four (10,524) square feet of asbestos containing materials. Staff received ten (10) facility demolition projects to monitor. Further, there were fifteen (15) new construction/dust projects comprising an additional one hundred sixty-three (163) acres of soil disturbance. Staff documented forty-three (43) construction site inspections. During the month, compliance staff also responded to twenty-four (24) complaints.

Permits and Registrations Processed	2025		2024	
	October	YTD	October	Annual Total
Reissuance of Existing Air Permits	61	597	66	1,069
New Stationary Source Permits	5 (New and Major Modifications)	38	2 (New and Major Modifications)	42
Dust Control Permits	15 (163 acres)	158 (2,509 acres)	15 (156 acres)	186 (2,411 acres)
Wood Stove (WS) Certificates	18	230	31	247
WS Dealers Affidavit of Sale	5 (3 replacements)	61 (34 replacements)	14 (7 replacement)	106 (46 replacements)
WS Notice of Exemptions	646 (4 stoves removed)	6,373 (38 stoves removed)	788 (6 stoves removed)	7,166 (64 stoves removed)
Asbestos Assessments	69	560	41	634
Asbestos Demo and Removal (NESHAP)	20	120	17	154

Complaints	2025		2024	
	October	YTD	October	Annual Total
Asbestos	2	11	1	11
Diesel Idling	0	0	0	2
Dust	13	75	16	121
Nuisance Odor	2	20	2	18
Permit to Operate	0	4	0	0
Burn Code	0	2	3	12
General	7	52	7	47
TOTAL	24	164	29	211
Enforcement	2025		2024	
	September	YTD	September	Annual Total
Warnings	5	33	4	41
Notice of Violations	1	19	3	24
TOTAL	6	52	7	65

Joshua C. Restori
Supervisor, Permitting & Compliance