



State of Utah

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NEWS RELEASE

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EPA Declares Utah Meets Annual Particulate Standards

Salt Lake City, Utah – Utah’s air is in compliance with standards for fine particulate pollution on an annual basis, thanks to the Utah Department of Environmental Quality’s statewide efforts to improve air quality over the past decades.

In a letter to Governor Gary Herbert, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy declared all of Utah in compliance with the annual standard for particulate pollution, PM_{2.5}, after reviewing the most recent certified air quality data for Utah. In 2012, the annual standard was tightened from 15 micrograms per cubic meter (ug/m³) to 12 ug/m³.

“This is good news,” said Amanda Smith, director of DEQ. “The Division of Air Quality (DAQ) has worked with industry, stakeholders, and the public on a plan that has resulted in emission reductions and healthier air year round.”

The annual measurement however doesn’t diminish the fact that Utah still does not meet the 24 hour standard. This month, the Air Quality Board approved a State Implementation Plan (SIP) that adds controls to improve air quality with a focus on the winter season along the Wasatch Front and in Cache Valley.

“Utah still faces challenges with meeting the standard during winter inversions,” said Bryce Bird, director of DAQ. “Reductions in pollutants from industrial and transportation sources are tied to the improvements in the annual averages of fine particulate pollution. This achievement of the annual standard highlights the fact that we do have great air quality for much of the year, but we still have considerable work ahead of us to address those winter days when our air is unhealthy.”

When setting the revised annual standard in 2012, EPA noted that an extensive body of scientific evidence indicates that breathing in PM_{2.5} over the course of hours to days (short-term exposure) and months to years (long-term exposure) can cause serious public health effects that include premature death and adverse cardiovascular effects. The evidence also links PM_{2.5} exposure to harmful respiratory effects.

In the letter, McCarthy said, “I have determined that no area within Utah violates the 2012 standard or contributes to a nearby violation of the standard. As a result, the EPA is designating all of Utah ‘unclassifiable/attainment.’”

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About DEQ

Established in 1991, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality’s (DEQ) mission is to safeguard public health and quality of life by protecting and enhancing the environment. DEQ implements state and federal environmental laws and works with individuals, community groups and businesses to protect the quality of Utah’s air, land and water. For more information, visit www.deq.utah.gov, follow DEQ on Facebook ([utahdeq](https://www.facebook.com/utahdeq)) and Twitter ([UtahDEQ](https://twitter.com/UtahDEQ)), or call [1-800-458-0145](tel:1-800-458-0145).