



# Particulate Matter

## BACKGROUND

Under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) program, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets air quality standards for seven substances, including particulate matter (PM) 2.5 & 10, ozone, carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide. States then implement, maintain, and enforce the NAAQS set by the EPA by issuing State Implementation Plans (SIPs) that put regulatory measures in place, such as permitting requirements to manage air quality in their states. The cement industry must comply with SIPs and, therefore, NAAQS by utilizing environmental control technologies and equipment.

## STATUS

Statutorily EPA must review NAAQS every five years and revise the standards as needed. On February 7, 2024, the EPA finalized a [revised standard for PM](#) (EPA-HQ-OAR-2015-0072) following its reconsideration of the previous PM NAAQS standard established in 2020. The rule lowered the primary (health-based) annual fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) standard from the current level of 12 micrograms per cubic meter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) to 9  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

PCA estimates that lowering the annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard to 9  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  could require \$171.8 million in capital expenditures and \$54.6 million in additional annual operating expenses for U.S. cement producers.

The industry is not the primary source of PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions; most emissions are comprised of “background” emissions, which can be attributed to wildfires, dust from unpaved roads, and agriculture. Wildfires account for more than 30% of primary PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions. Nationally, the cement industry’s contribution to PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions is 0.1% of total PM<sub>2.5</sub> emissions. Plainly, a single wildfire event could negate the efforts of the cement industry to meet the revised standard.

Because the cement industry is already regulated for PM, EPA should focus its attention on more significant sources of PM<sub>2.5</sub> such as wildfires when reconsidering PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards outside of the congressionally mandated 5-year cycle. Further, legislation is necessary to set a predictable timeline for reviews and ensure standards do not shift the burden to manufacturers that do their part.

## ASKS

- Support the resolution overturning the PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard through the Congressional Review Act (H.J.Res.117/S.J.Res.65).
- (Co)sponsor National Ambient Air Quality Standards Implementation Act (H.R. 7650/S. 2125)
  - Improves the mandatory review of NAAQS from 5 to 10 years;
  - Permits the EPA to consider technological feasibility;
  - Provides for timely implementation of regulations and guidance;
  - Ensures that states may seek relief with respect to certain exceptional events, such as droughts, under Section 319 of the Clean Air Act.
- Continue oversight of the EPA as implementation of the standard proceeds.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**SEAN O'NEILL, PCA's Senior Vice President of Government Affairs**  
**PHONE: (202) 719.1974**  
**EMAIL: [soneill@cement.org](mailto:soneill@cement.org)**