

Washington meets federal air quality standard for fine particles

The Department of Ecology (Ecology) proposes to recommend to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that it find Washington State meets the new annual federal air quality standard for fine particles, or PM_{2.5}. PM_{2.5} is small pieces of dust, soot, and smoke in the air. These particles are microscopic, a fraction of the diameter of a single human hair. Their tiny size allows them to be inhaled deep into our lungs and circulatory system, where they can cause serious health effects. EPA sets air quality standards for PM_{2.5} to protect public health.

What is the new PM_{2.5} standard?

On December 14, 2012, EPA revised the primary annual PM_{2.5} standard ([78 FR 3086 January 15, 2013](#)). In doing so, EPA strengthened the primary annual PM_{2.5} standard by lowering it from 15.0 micrograms per cubic meter (µg/m³) to 12.0 µg/m³.

Does Washington meet the standard?

Ecology reviewed Washington’s fine particle monitoring data from 2010-2012. All areas of the state are either in attainment (meet air quality standards) or are unclassifiable (meaning there is insufficient information to determine whether they meet the standards). Table 1 summarizes Ecology’s recommended designations for Washington.

Table 1: Designation Recommendations for Washington by County

County	Design Value	Designation Recommendation
Clark	7.0	Attainment
King	5.9	Attainment
Pierce	7.5	Attainment
Snohomish	7.3	Attainment
Spokane	7.4	Attainment
Yakima	8.7	Attainment
Rest of Washington (Adams, Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Clallam, Columbia, Cowlitz, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Grant, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, Kitsap, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lewis, Lincoln, Mason, Okanogan, Pacific, Pend Oreille, San Juan, Skagit, Skamania, Stevens, Thurston, Walla Walla, Whatcom, Whitman)	Insufficient data	Unclassifiable

MORE INFORMATION

Formal Comment Period:

September 13, 2013 through October 30, 2013

Deadline to request a public hearing:

October 17, 2013

Public Hearing, if held:

October 23, 2013, 1:30 pm
Department of Ecology HQ
300 Desmond Drive SE
Lacey, WA 98503

- If Ecology does not receive a request for a hearing, as allowed by federal law, Ecology will not hold a hearing.
- If Ecology cancels the hearing, we will post this decision on Ecology’s Public Involvement calendar on October 18, 2013.
- You may also contact Ecology to find out if we canceled the hearing.

Contact information:

Richelle Perez
Air Quality Program
PO Box 17600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600
360-407-7528
richelle.perez@ecy.wa.gov

Special accommodations:

For special accommodations or documents in an alternate format, call 360-407-6800, 711 (relay service), or 877-833-6341 (TTY).

Will there be a public hearing on Ecology's proposal?

There is an opportunity to request a public hearing on recommending these designations to EPA. You can request a hearing by contacting Richelle Perez at (360) 407-7528 by October 17, 2013. If Ecology receives a request for a public hearing, Ecology will hold a hearing to receive public comments on the proposed designation recommendations as follows:

October 23, 2013 at 1:30 pm
Department of Ecology HQ
300 Desmond Drive SE
Lacey, WA 98503

If no one requests a hearing, Ecology will not hold one. To find out if Ecology cancelled the hearing, check Ecology's Public Involvement Calendar or call Richelle Perez.

How can I submit comments?

The comment period starts September 13 and ends October 30, 2013.

You can give us your official comments in the following ways:

1. Testify or submit written comments at the public hearing.
2. Email your comments to: AQComments@ecy.wa.gov
3. Mail comments to:
Department of Ecology
Richelle Perez
PO Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600
4. FAX: 360-407-7534

How will Ecology respond to comments?

All of the comments we receive will become part of the official record. We will publish responses to comments on Ecology's website when we submit our final recommendations to EPA. You will find your name listed in the document with a reference to where, in the document, Ecology responded to your comments.

What is Ecology's deadline for final recommendations?

Ecology must submit final recommendations to EPA before December 14, 2013.

