



WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

Serving the Governors of 19 States and 3 US-Flag Pacific Islands

Assess and Improve Regional Air Quality

Policies

2009

*Supporting the
Integration of Climate
Adaptation Science
in the West*

*Regional and
National Policies
Regarding Global
Climate Change*

2008

Western Air Quality

Background

Western states play a leadership role in the protection and improvement of regional air quality through the work of the Western Regional Air Partnership. The WRAP is composed of state, tribal, local, and federal officials working together to reduce regional haze and assist states with the development and implementation of strategies to meet federal health standards for air quality.

Western Governors work to improve air quality in the West began in 1991 with the creation of the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission. The success of this commission informed EPA's rules for regional haze and led to the formation of the WRAP. Since 1997, the WRAP has been working with tribes, federal agencies, industry and environmental interests to effectively reduce air pollution in the region. WGA's air quality program has contributed to the adoption of new federal standards for cars, trucks, and off-road equipment and led to substantial reductions in sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions from industrial sources and power plants in the region. The WRAP continues today as a voluntary partnership of states, tribes, federal land managers, local air agencies, and the U.S. EPA. While continuing its work to address visibility degradation in national parks and wilderness areas (regional haze), the WRAP is helping states understand and address the sources that contribute to unhealthy levels of ozone and fine particulate matter pollution in the West.



The WRAP's efforts have focused on:

1. assessing emissions and air quality impacts from all sources, natural and anthropogenic;
2. establishing emission standards for grandfathered power plants and industrial sources;
3. characterizing emissions from oil and gas development and identifying potential mitigation options;
4. supporting stronger federal emission standards for cars, trucks, and off-road equipment; and
5. improving smoke management programs to reduce air quality impacts of prescribed fires.

Summary

The Western Regional Air Partnership works to improve air quality in our national parks and wilderness areas and meet federal health standards in urban and rural areas across the West.

The WRAP adopted a new charter in December 2009 that calls for a “one-atmosphere” approach to regional air quality planning. This approach emphasizes regional and multi-pollutant assessment of air pollution from all sources and the development of integrated control options, including those needed to address transport of pollution across state lines. In the West, sources contributing to regional air pollution

include industrial sources, power plants, mobile sources, energy production, wildland fire, windblown dust, off-shore shipping, and international transport of air pollution.

The WRAP’s work on regional air quality has resulted in significant emission reductions and measurable improvements in air quality across the West over the last ten years. Nevertheless, regional air quality challenges remain and the WRAP is using its expertise to help Western states meet these challenges, including achieving compliance with EPA health standards for ozone and fine particulate matter.

Support for the WGA’s air quality program is provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, other federal agencies, and WGA member states.



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Additional Information

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