



AAFA STATEMENT – NAAQS PM Standard

February 7, 2024

Today, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released the final standard for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for Particulate Matter (PM), also known as soot pollution. We are pleased with the efforts to improve air quality reflected in the updated standard, tightening the annual standard from 12 micrograms per cubic meter to 9 micrograms per cubic meter. Children, seniors, and people with chronic conditions like asthma will benefit from today's action.

Soot pollution diminishes lung function and causes greater use of asthma medications. It also causes increased rates of emergency room visits, hospital admissions, and school absenteeism related to asthma.

Per EPA's estimates, the new standard will save 4,500 lives, avoid 5,700 cases of asthma onset, and avoid 800,000 cases of asthma symptoms.

While the annual standard will improve air quality and reduce health harms, there is more progress to be made.

The EPA did not update the 24-hour standard to limit spikes in soot pollution. The 24-hour standard informs the daily Air Quality Index (AQI), the national system that alerts sensitive groups when air quality is dangerous. It is imperative that sensitive groups, such as people with asthma, receive the best information about daily soot pollution spikes that could harm their health.

We are thankful that people with asthma will be better protected from soot pollution under this standard and we will continue to advocate for stronger limits on spikes in soot pollution.

Quote from Kenneth Mendez, president and CEO of AAFA:

"EPA rules around air quality directly impact the health and quality of life of the 27 million people in the United States with asthma," said Mendez. "I'd like to thank Administrator Regan for his leadership on this positive step forward. We still have more work to do. We look forward to working with the EPA and policymakers to make further improvements."