

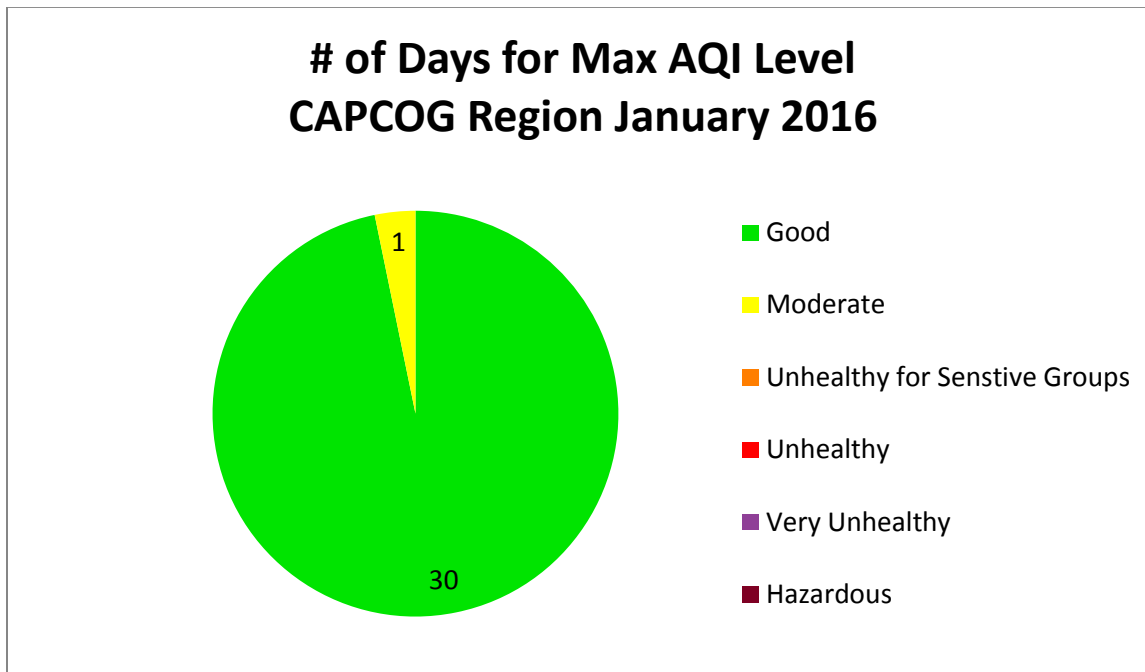
Monthly CAPCOG Air Quality Newsletter: February 2016

Prepared by the Capital Area Council of Governments

February 11, 2016

Air Monitoring

Figure 1. Air Quality Index (AQI) Summary for January 2016



- Jan 8, 2016: “Moderate” PM_{2.5} day
- Max 24-hour fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) concentration: 12.4 µg/m³ (35% of NAAQS)
- Max 8-hour ozone (O₃) concentration: 51 ppb (73% of NAAQS)
- Max 1-hour nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentration: 52.4 ppb (52% of NAAQS)
- Max 1-hour sulfur dioxide (SO₂) concentration: 4.1 ppb (5% of NAAQS)

Regulatory Updates

- Area designations for the 2015 ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS):
 - EPA expects to release the guidance by end of February 2016;
 - State recommendations will be due to EPA by Oct. 1, 2016;
 - EPA expects to propose designations by June 2017;
 - Initial designations expected to be finalized by October 1, 2017;
 - Austin-Round Rock MSA 2013-2015 design value: 68 ppb (in attainment);
 - Possibility that 1 or more counties in Austin-Round Rock MSA could be added to a San Antonio nonattainment area (current design value for San Antonio = 78 ppb);
- Cross-State Air Pollution Rule (CSAPR):
 - EPA proposed update for 2008 ozone NAAQS in Nov. 2015;
 - Proposal would reduce NO_x emissions from power plants by 2017 ozone season;
 - CAPCOG submitted comment letter from the CAC to EPA on the proposal;
 - comment period closed on February 1, 2016;
 - rule is expected to be finalized in late summer 2015;
 - EPA modeling shows ~ 7 ppb impact on 2017 Central Texas ozone levels from other states in CSAPR rulemaking; an additional 2 ppb from other states;
 - Additional update to address 2015 ozone NAAQS expected late 2016;
 - More info: <http://www.epa.gov/airmarkets/proposed-cross-state-air-pollution-update-rule>
- Exceptional Events rulemaking proposal and guidance:
 - Proposed update to the rule and guidance in November 2015;
 - Allows for data influenced by “exceptional events” (such as wildfires) to be excluded from consideration in determining if an area is complying with the NAAQS;
 - Comment period ended February 3, 2016;
 - Expected to be finalized by end of summer 2016
 - More info: <http://www.epa.gov/air-quality-analysis/treatment-data-influenced-exceptional-events>
- Regional Haze:
 - EPA recently promulgated a Federal Implementation Plan (FIP) for Texas as a result of disapproval of its Regional Haze plan to protect visibility in National Parks;
 - NO_x and SO₂ emissions contribute to fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) formation, which impairs visibility;
 - EPA’s FIP imposes new SO₂ limits on coal-fired power plants in Texas, including the nearby Sandow Power Plant in Milam County;
- Clean Power Plan:
 - Supreme Court has stayed the EPA’s Clean Power Plan (CPP) pending litigation
 - Hearing scheduled for June 2, 2016, at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit
 - First emission reductions has been planned to take place in 2022
 - EPA modeling indicated that the NO_x reductions associated with the CPP would reduce projected 2025 ozone levels in the Austin area by 0.8-0.9 ppb

Research Projects

- Projects completed in January:
 - CAPCOG completed 2015 outreach and education report for 2015 for City of Austin;
 - Draft 2016-2017 ozone monitoring quality assurance project plan (QAPP) submitted to TCEQ;
- New projects initiated in January:
 - Monitoring RFP process completed;
 - Work started on QAPP for 2014 National Emissions Inventory (NEI) review under TCEQ near-nonattainment grant;
 - Work started on QAPP for ozone source apportionment modeling under TCEQ near-nonattainment grant;
 - Work started on QAPP for ozone sonde monitoring in 2016 and 2017 under TCEQ near-nonattainment grant;

Planning and Implementation

- Meetings in January:
 - Clean Air Coalition Advisory Committee meeting on January 7, 2016
 - Clean Air Coalition Advisory Committee Idling Workgroup meeting on January 29, 2016
- Meetings scheduled for February:
 - CLEAN AIR Force Board meeting: February 3, 2016
 - Clean Air Coalition Advisory Committee meeting: February 4, 2016
 - Clean Air Coalition meeting: February 10, 2016

Outreach and Education

City of Austin has identified the following outreach and education priorities for 2016:

1. AirCentralTexas.Org website development
2. Regional Outreach and Education activities
 - a. In-person outreach (meetings, events)
 - b. Monthly air quality newsletter
 - c. Develop an Air Quality Ambassador Volunteer Corps
 - d. Promo items and other Outreach Material
3. Targeted outreach to Seniors
4. Regional Emission Reduction Awards and Recognition Program