

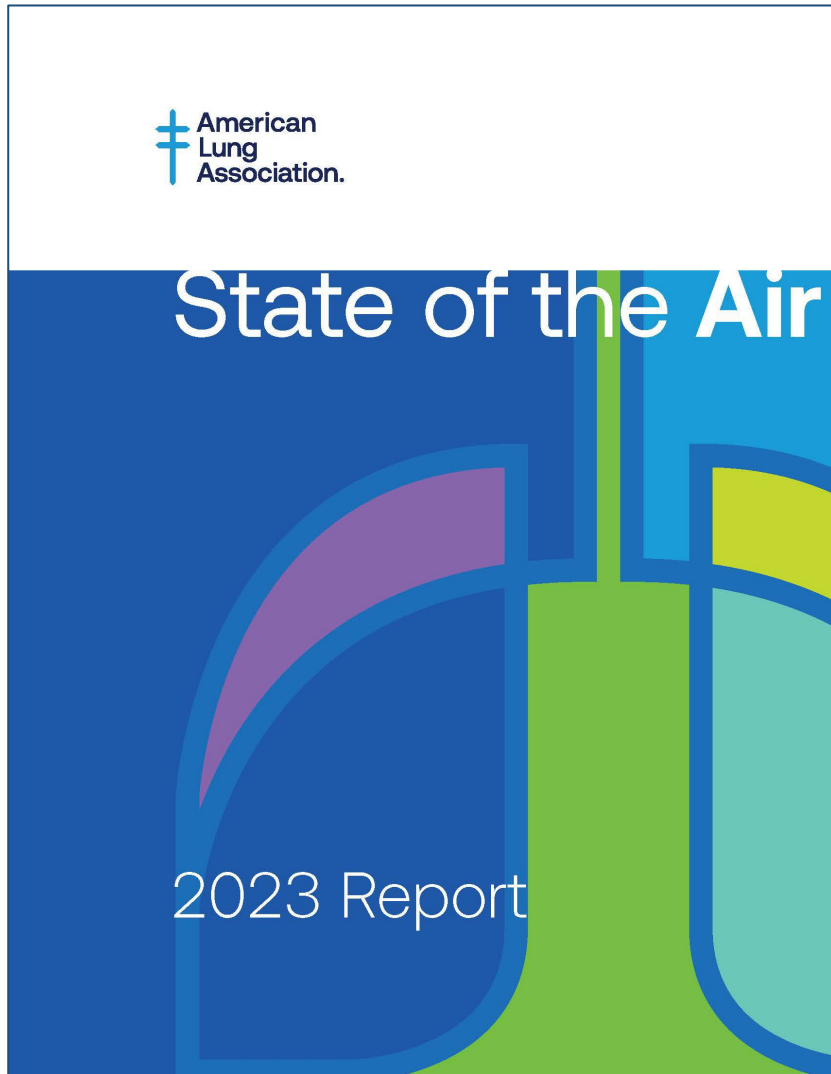


State of the Air 2024: Planning Ahead

NACAA Public Outreach Committee
September 12, 2023



Our oldest signature report



- 2023 was the 24th annual edition
- Nationally recognized and respected resource
- Quoted in the media *every day*
- Gives the public localized air quality information
- Focuses attention on ozone and particle pollution

A complex topic in everyday language

- Gives grades to 922 counties with monitors (out of 3,221 counties)*
- Ranks 25 metro areas with worst pollution (and cleanest) for each pollutant
- Key message that everyone deserves clean air

* Includes Puerto Rico

Why tell people about air quality?

- ✓ To advise individuals how to protect themselves from air pollution — millions face high risk of harm
- ✓ To give communities ways to advocate for healthy air
- ✓ To encourage and support programs to cut pollution and improve air quality

About SOTA methodology*

- Quality-assured ozone and PM_{2.5} data from EPA Air Quality System (AQS)
- Average number of bad air days over three-year period
 - SOTA 2024 will include 2020, 2021 and 2022
- County grades calculated for ozone and PM_{2.5} using weighted average number of days of unhealthy air, using AQI
- Annual PM levels given Pass/Fail based on EPA design values relative to PM NAAQS

* For detailed methodology see About this Report section of Lung.org/sota

How SOTA differs from EPA designation

- SOTA only includes counties with monitors
- The 8-hour daily maximum concentration in each county for all monitored days
- No data capture criteria are applied to eliminate monitoring sites or require a number of valid days
- Short-term PM grade uses 99th percentile, not 98th
- Weighted averages are used to communicate severity of pollution
- “Exceptional event” days are *not* excluded

Key messages for “State of the Air” 2023

- Nearly 120 million people live with unhealthy levels of air pollution.
- 17.6 million fewer people than last year, a sign of continuing progress in some areas.
- Growing disparities mean progress is not equally shared.
- Deadly particle pollution continues to rise
- Major differences in exposure to unhealthy levels of air pollution between eastern and western states and between people of color and white people.

Air pollution can harm children and adults in many ways.



Wheezing and coughing



Shortness of breath



Asthma attacks



Worsening COPD



Lung cancer



Premature death



Susceptibility to infections



Heart attacks and strokes



Impaired cognitive functioning



Metabolic disorders



Preterm birth and low birth weight

Air pollution risks not equally shared

- Children
- Older adults
- People with underlying health conditions
- Pregnant people and fetuses
- People of color
- People living in poverty



Trend Charts show progress

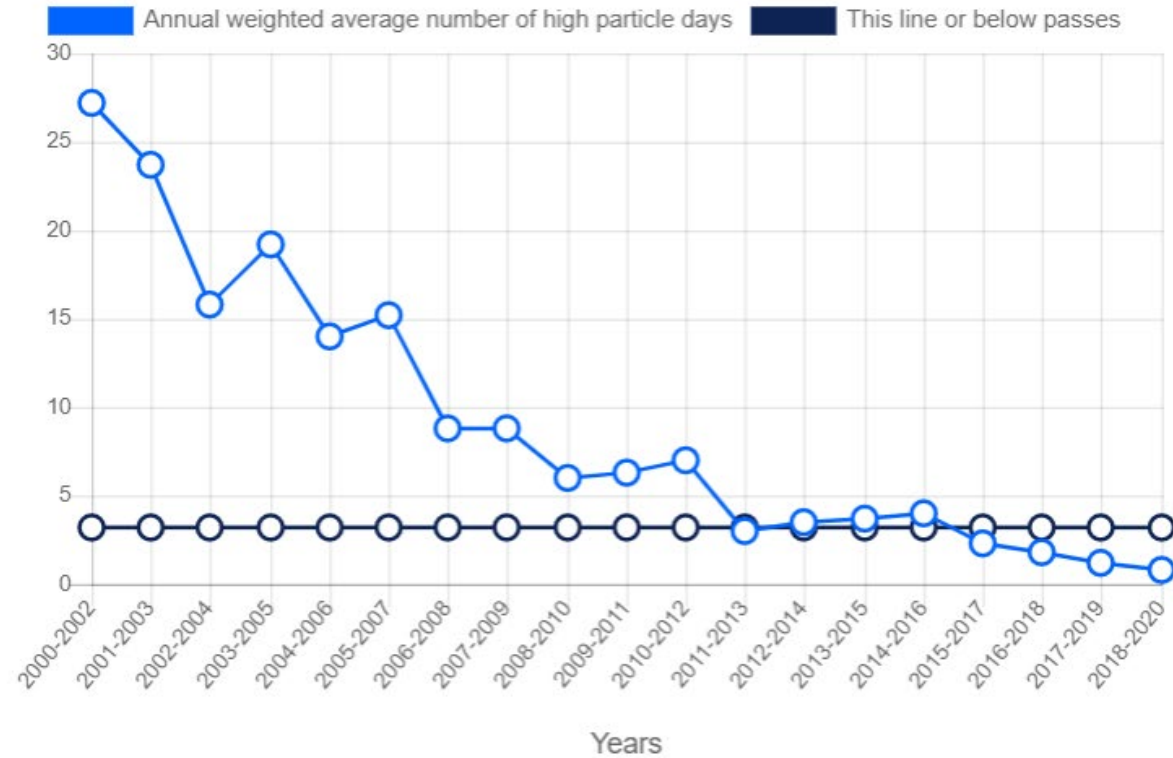
Particle Pollution - 24 Hour

[Learn More](#)



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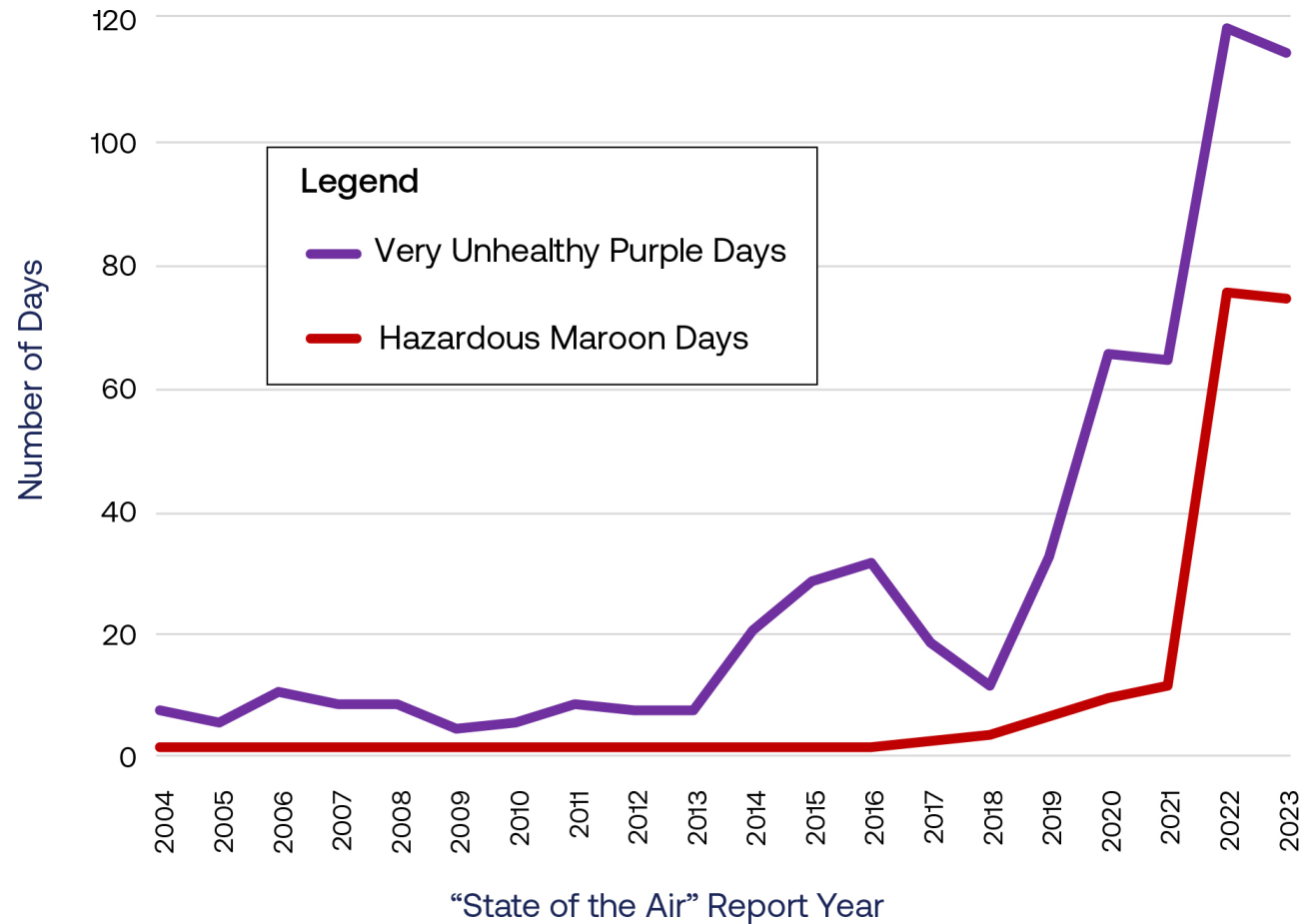
Change since 2000: 25.9 fewer days this year



The Clean Air Act is working, but...

- Over its history, this bipartisan landmark public health law has saved millions of lives and trillions of dollars
- Pollution controls on industry and power plants and retirement of old, dirty fleets have significantly reduced emissions of particle and ozone precursors
- *But* climate change-driven wildfires and droughts are outpacing progress
- Result is a growing disparity between air quality in eastern and western states

Severity of PM pollution increasing



Advocacy call to action

- Recommendations for personal action and policy change
 - What individuals can do
 - What state, territorial and tribal governments can do
 - What the federal government needs to do
 - Including funding State, Local and Tribal Air Agencies
- Petition
- Share your story

Looking ahead to 2024

- Will include years 2020, 2021 and 2022
- Will *not* include terrible, horrible no good, very bad 2023
- First report with 3 COVID years
- Plan to use revised PM NAAQS if possible
- 25th anniversary report will include a look back at progress made
- Other special sections still under discussion

Messaging in 2024

- Explain expanded number of communities failing under stricter PM standards
- Acknowledge 2023 fire season – “wildfire country” is not just western states anymore
- Continue to emphasize positive trends over 25 years of progress and policy wins

Questions and Discussion