

Status of the National Ambient Air Quality Standard as of July, 2025

In March of 2025, EPA announced the agency will “undertake thirty-one (31) historic actions” in an effort to roll back regulatory costs that are often passed on through the system to U.S. citizens. This rollback means that EPA will be reviewing and reevaluating current EPA Rules and Regulations. The National Ambient Air Quality Standards, (NAAQS) is one of the thirty-one historical actions that is to be reviewed. Last year, while leaving all other current limits, EPA lowered the NAAQS for fine particulate pollution, or the annual PM_{2.5} standard, from 12 to 9 micrograms/cubic meter. The National Cotton Ginners Association is concerned because the standard is set at such low levels that we are approaching the background levels that have the potential to put additional areas into “nonattainment.” In fact, the average background monitor reading for PM_{2.5} across the U.S. is “8.” While EPA indicates that the earliest year that states will likely need to come into compliance with this standard is 2032, it is important to note that the standard went into effect last April 2024, and that means that state agencies will use the new annual PM_{2.5} standard of 9 micrograms as the limit if you are required to submit modeling for a new or a modified facility. Gins are seasonal operations. How this new annual standard will impact the ginning industry is still being assessed, and during the Administration’s reassessment of this Standard, we will need to monitor the actions of EPA closely. Hopefully, the National Standard will revert back to the pre-April 2024 levels.