

What Is In the Air We Breathe?

November 21st, 2026



What Is In the Air We Breathe?

RECORDING

The webinar is being recorded and a link to the recording will be sent to everyone who registered within the next 24-48 hours.

Questions

Please submit your questions in the Q/A box.

Chat

Please remember to be respectful and civil in all chat interactions.

What Is In the Air We Breathe?

God whose breath gives life,
we pray for those who deal with air quality
impacted by wildfires.
Protect the people who work to end the fires;
protect the people, flora, and fauna in the way of
the fire; protect the people who deal with
smoke-filled air.
And remind us, O God.
Remind us of your beloved children, our siblings,
in places around the world who experience poor
or dangerous air quality every day,
with your air polluted, by traffic, by burning
fields, by brick kilns, by companies producing
products for our leisure and pleasure
and placing factories in locations where people
have less power, and for other reasons.

And guide us, O God.
Guide us to hold government leaders and
business leaders in this country and around the
world accountable for air quality in all places.
And inspire us, O God.
Inspire us to care for individuals who must
work outside.
Inspire us to care for our houseless siblings
who are exposed to dangerous air quality.
Inspire us as individuals, dioceses, parishes,
and organizations to take steps and support
efforts to counter climate change now.
God who gives us breath, protect us, remind us,
guide us, inspire us, we pray in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Adapted from [A prayer for air quality, by Rev. Mark Koenig](#)

What Is In the Air We Breathe?



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October 21, 2026

State of the Air 2026

Catholic Climate Covenant Briefing



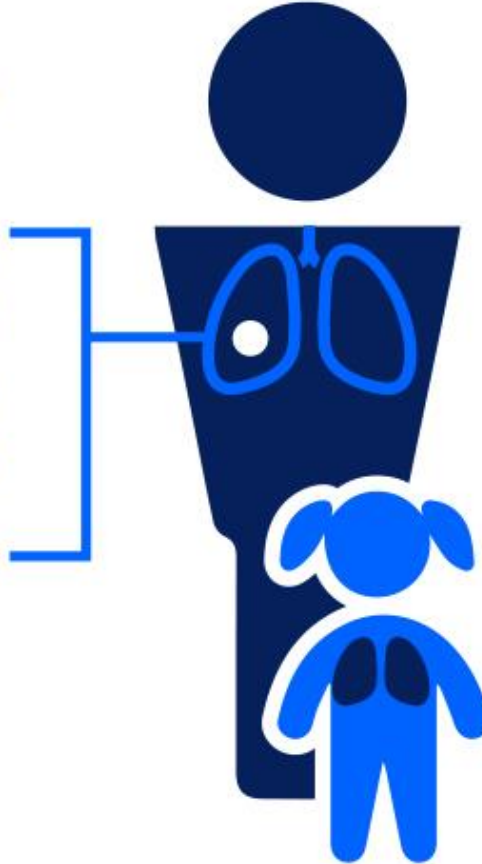


Why “State of the Air”?

Air pollution can harm children and adults in many ways

Respiratory

Wheezing and coughing
Shortness of breath
Asthma attacks
Worsening COPD
Lung cancer



Other

Premature death
Susceptibility to infections
Heart attacks and strokes
Impaired cognitive functioning
Metabolic disorders
Preterm births and low birth weight

2026 Key Findings

Key messages for “State of the Air” 2026

- **Nearly half of kids are breathing unhealthy air.**
- More than 4 in 10 people of all ages are breathing unhealthy air.
- Ozone continued to worsen, as did particle pollution in many parts of the country.
- We are urging EPA to return to their mission, and to value people’s health in their rulemaking.

Nearly half of children
in the U.S. live with
unhealthy levels
of air pollution



Why Focus on Kids?

- The Lung Association has always prioritized children's health
- Shining a light on air pollution & risk of chronic disease in children
- Infants, children and teens face greater risk
- Exposure to air pollution in childhood can cause long-term harm

Air pollution exposure in childhood can cause long-term harm, including:

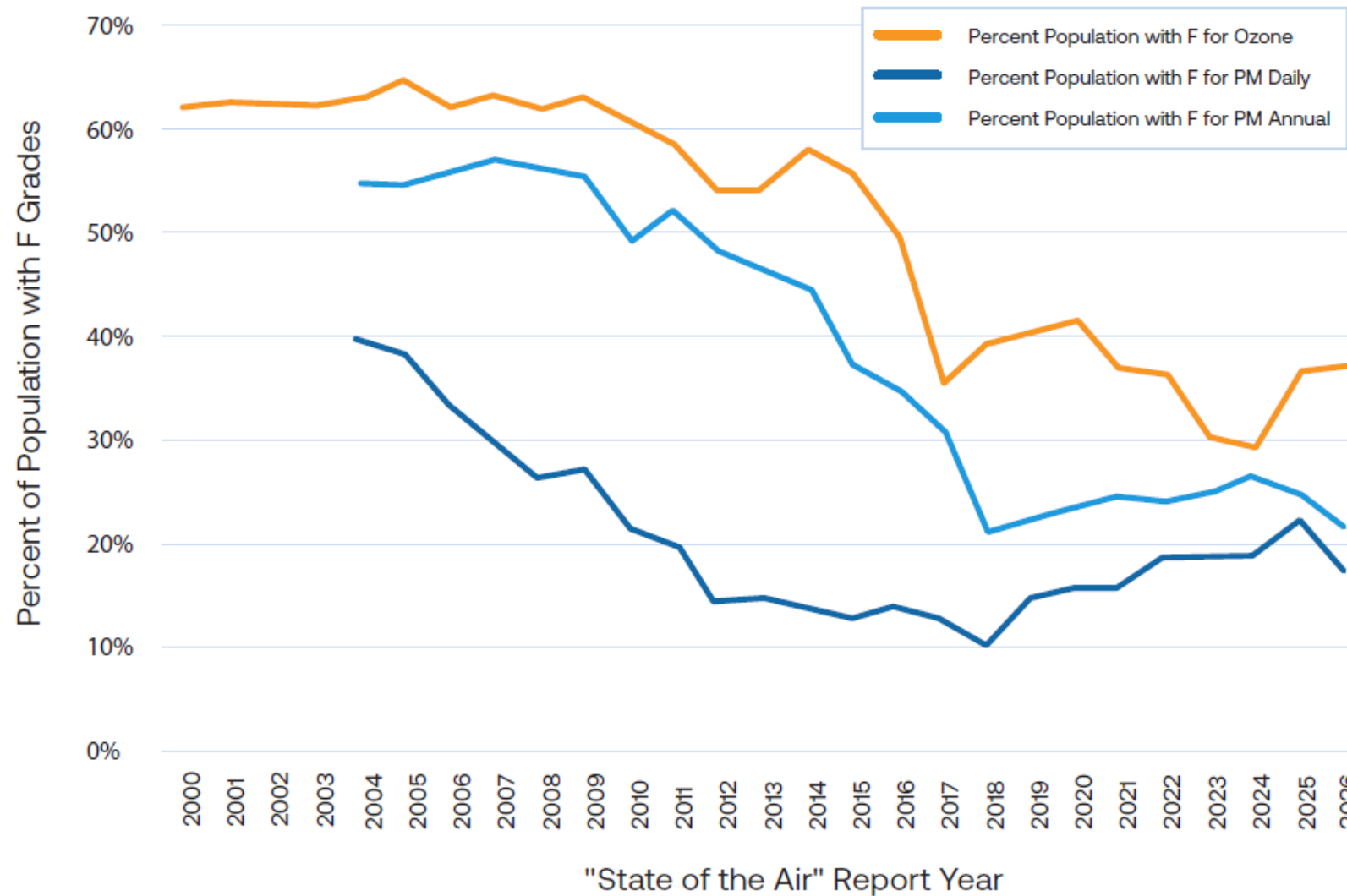
Impeding lung growth

Contributing to new asthma cases

Increasing risk of respiratory diseases



Percent of US Population with F Grades over Time, by Pollutant



Percent of US Total Population Living in Counties with F Grades for Ozone and PM_{2.5}, According to the Standards Now Current



A changing climate
is making the job of
cleaning up the air
more difficult

Data for the 2026 Report

- From EPA
- Quality-assured and validated
- Covers 2022, 2023, and 2024



Ozone Continues to Rise

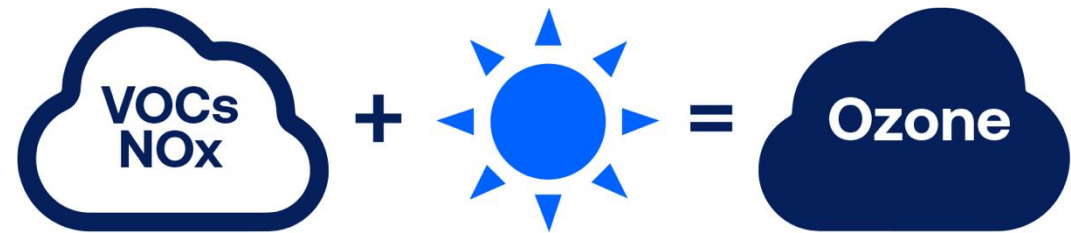
- 38% of people live in counties with unhealthy levels of ozone
 - Nearly 4 million **more** people than last year
- Extreme heat, smoke and atmospheric inversions contributed to the formation of ozone
- Central states from Minnesota to Texas, and in a swath from California to Texas experienced especially bad ozone levels.

More than 129 million people live in counties with **F grades** for ozone pollution.

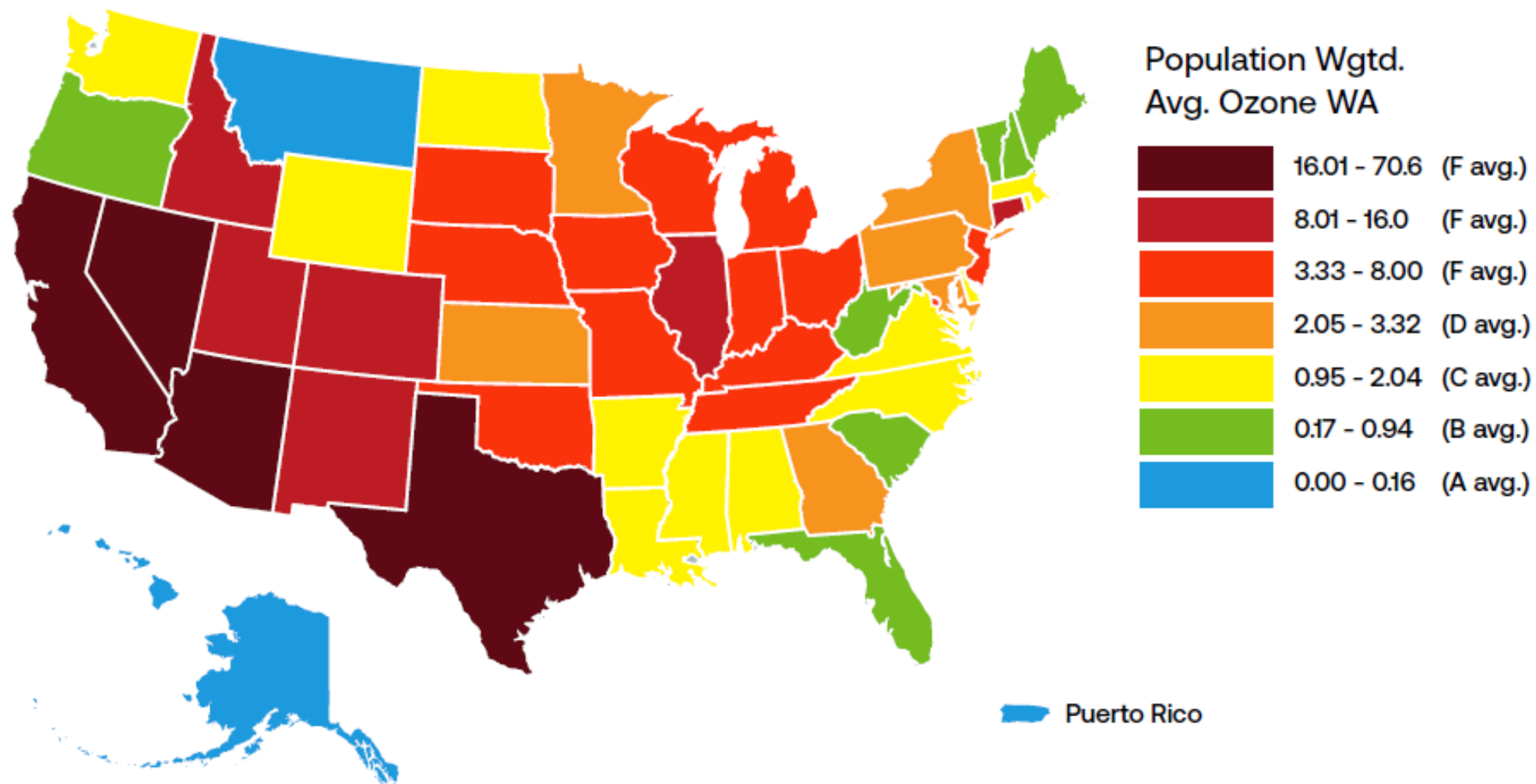


Most polluted cities for ozone

1. Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA
2. Visalia, CA
3. Bakersfield-Delano, CA
4. Phoenix-Mesa, AZ
5. Fresno-Hanford-Corcoran, CA
6. Houston-Pasadena, TX
7. San Diego-Chula Vista-Carlsbad, CA
8. Denver-Aurora-Greeley, CO
9. Dallas-Fort Worth, TX-OK
10. El Centro, CA



Average Yearly Bad Ozone Days, Weighted by County Populations

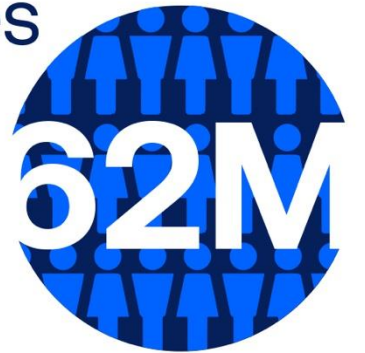


Graded-County-Population-Weighted Average Severity-Weighted Yearly Average Days of Poor Air Quality for Ozone by State — 2022-2024

Short-term particle pollution

- 61.5 million people live in counties with an “F” grade for unhealthy spikes in particle pollution.
 - 15.6 million fewer people than in last year’s report
 - This is still significantly higher than the historic low total of 35 million people in the 2018 report.

62 million people
live in counties
with **F grades**
for daily particle
pollution.



Most polluted cities for short-term PM_{2.5}

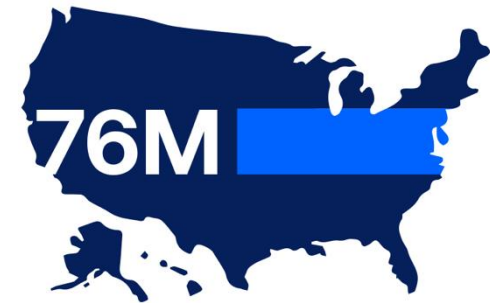
1. Fairbanks-College, AK
2. Eugene-Springfield, OR
3. Bakersfield-Delano, CA
4. Brownsville-Harlingen-Raymondville, TX
5. Visalia, CA
6. Fresno-Madera-Hanford, CA
7. Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA
8. Seattle-Tacoma, WA
9. Bismarck, ND
10. McAllen-Edinburg, TX



Year-round particle pollution

- 75.9 million people living in 21 states received a failing grade.
- This is 9 million fewer than last year, **but still the third highest number** in report history.

76 million people
live in counties with failing
grades for year-round
particle pollution



Most polluted cities for year-round PM_{2.5}



1. Bakersfield-Delano, CA



2. Brownsville-Harlingen-Raymondville, TX

3. Eugene-Springfield, OR

4. Fresno-Madera-Hanford, CA



5. San Diego-Chula Vista-Carlsbad, CA (tie)

5. Visalia, CA (tie)



7. Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA

8. Houston-Pasadena, TX

9. Detroit-Warren-Ann Arbor, MI (tie)



9. Fairbanks-College, AK (tie)

Cleanest cities

- **Bangor, Maine**
- Last year, there were two cities on this list.
- Two years ago, there were five. This reflects an overall worsening of air quality across the country.

***New:* Short Section on Data Centers**

Data Centers: An Increasing Source of Air Pollution

While major drivers of unhealthy air, such as power plants and traffic pollution, are well known, a newer, rapidly-growing contributor is gaining attention: data centers.

READ MORE



Navigating Lung.org/sota



American Lung Association.
State of the Air

2026

[Back to Lung.org](#)

TRANSLATE



Report Cards

Key Findings

Health Impact

Recommendations

For The Media

State of the Air

For 27 years, the American Lung Association has analyzed data from official air quality monitors to compile the State of the Air report. The more you learn about the air you breathe, the more you can protect your health and take steps to make the air cleaner and healthier.





What's the State of Your Air?

 SELECT LOCATION





Finding the data you want

Report Cards

Find grades and rankings for cleanest and most polluted places to live.



Cleanest Cities



See the cleanest cities and learn more about how your city ranks.

[READ MORE](#)



Most Polluted Cities



See the 25 most polluted cities and counties for ozone and particle pollution ranked.

[READ MORE](#)



States and Counties



Get the report card for your state's air quality, and the number of people in groups at risk.

[READ MORE](#)



Compare Your Air



Find out how your city measures up when it comes to air pollution.

[READ MORE](#)

State pages



American Lung Association.

State of the Air

2026

Report Cards

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Back to Lung.org

TRANSLATE



Report Card: California







What's the State of Your Air?



SELECT LOCATION

Within California, 50 out of 58 counties could be graded for at least one measure of air quality.

You can make a difference in the air that you breathe.

SIGN OUR PETITION

SHARE YOUR STORY



Related Metropolitan Areas

Metro Area

High Ozone Days

Particle Pollution

Populations at Risk

California reports data on 40 out of 58 counties. Counties with no ozone data are not shown.

Sorted by County

County	Grade	Wgt. Avg.	Orange Days	Red Days	Purple Days
Amador	D	2.3	7	0	0
Butte	A	0.0	0	0	0
Calaveras	F	3.3	10	0	0
Colusa	A	0.0	0	0	0
El Dorado	F	9.0	27	0	0
Fresno	F	54.5	138	17	0

County & metro pages

On the county page you'll find grades, trend charts, population data and a link to any related metro area

California: San Joaquin



What's the State of Your Air?

SELECT LOCATION

Ozone	Particle Pollution	
	24-Hour	Annual
C	F	Fail

How is my grade calculated? ⓘ

If you live in San Joaquin County, the air you breathe may put your health at risk.

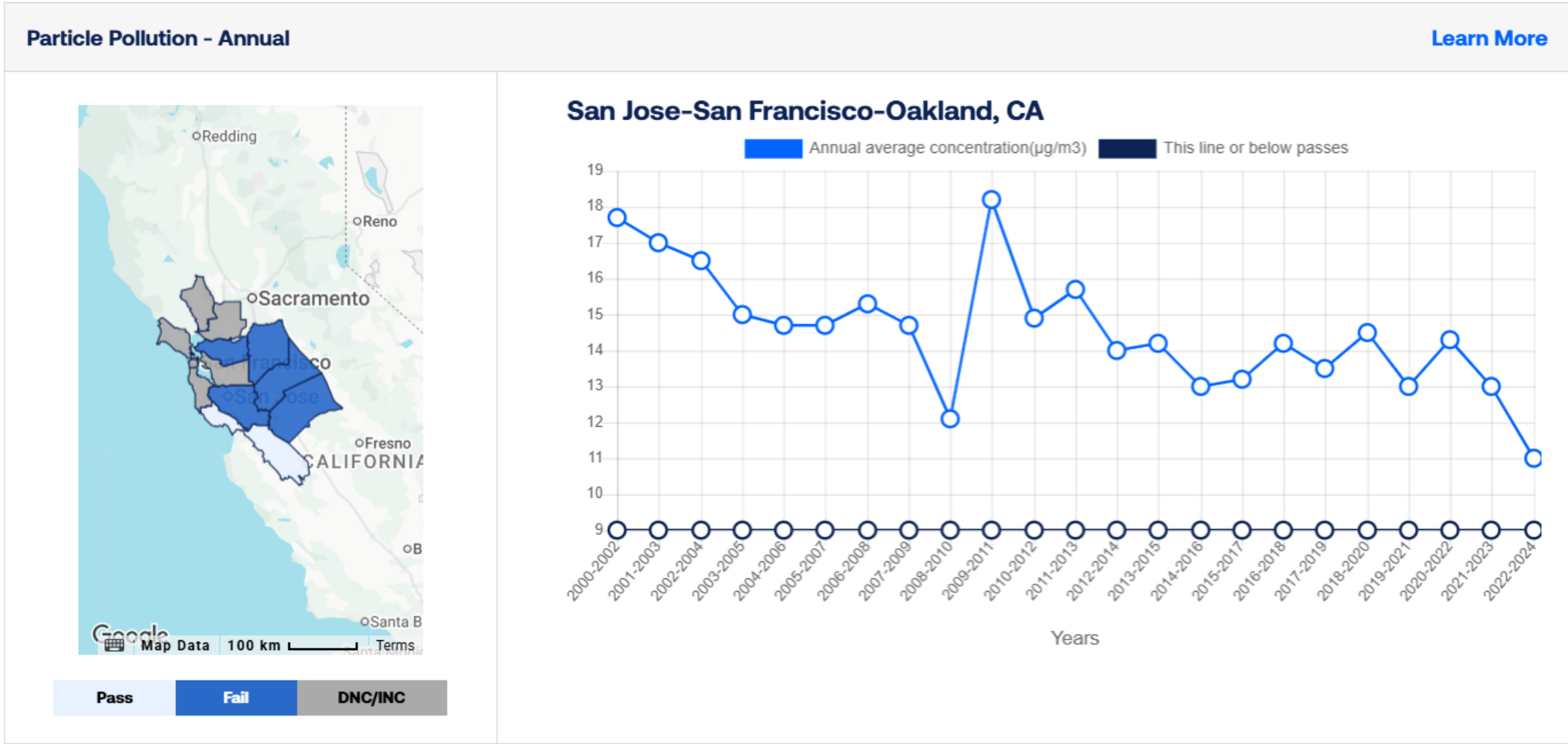
SIGN OUR PETITION

SHARE YOUR STORY



View Related Metropolitan Area

Trend Charts show progress



Other sections of the report

- Key Findings
 - Nationwide results
 - Trends for each pollutant
 - Worst 25 cities
 - Populations at risk
 - Most polluted and cleanest places to live
- Health Impact of Air Pollution
 - NEW: Content on the connection between air pollution exposure in childhood and chronic disease
- Recommendations for Action

Advancing Our Advocacy Priorities

Advocacy Context: Federal Efforts to Weaken, Delay and Repeal Lifesaving Clean Air Standards

- Particle Pollution Standards (missed deadlines)
- Repealing standards on mercury and air toxics
- Repealing Endangerment Finding
- Eliminating clean vehicle standards
- Weakening standards for gas-fired plants
- Increasing emissions from oil & gas facilities
- Attacking state authority to protect health
- Granting broad exemptions to clean air rules

EPA is Devaluing Our Kids' Health

EPA no longer accounts
for health impacts of
pollution in regulatory
cost-benefit analysis



“State of the Air” 2026 Advocacy Message

EPA must:

- ✓ return to its mission
- ✓ value the health of the nation’s children
- ✓ follow science and the law to protect public health

Sign the petition to EPA at [Lung.org/SOTA](https://lung.org/SOTA).

Note: [Lung.org/sota-petition](https://lung.org/sota-petition) will go directly to the petition.

“Recommendations for Action” Overview

State and Local Actions

- Clean Air Infrastructure Investments
- Charging for cars, trucks, buses and freight
- Transit and Active Transportation
- Smart surfaces
- Policies to clean up “indirect” sources like warehouses or ports
- Renewable energy expansion
- Appliances, Buildings and Industrial Facilities

“Recommendations for Action” Overview

Individual Actions

- Check your local air quality and forecasts
- Prepare for air pollution episodes like wildfires
- Carpool, walk, bike or take transit

Use your voice to:

- Tell your story about what clean air means to you
- Call for policy members to protect your community's air

Advocacy Activities

- Share the SOTA 2026 petition
- Share “Recommendations for Action” with leaders at every level
- Write and recruit for letters to the editor and op-eds
- Share with friends and neighbors

Questions?

Key contacts

Questions? Reach out anytime!

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