

Air Pollution in the United States: A Brief Overview

Historical Trends in Air Pollution

Prominent Sources of Air Pollution

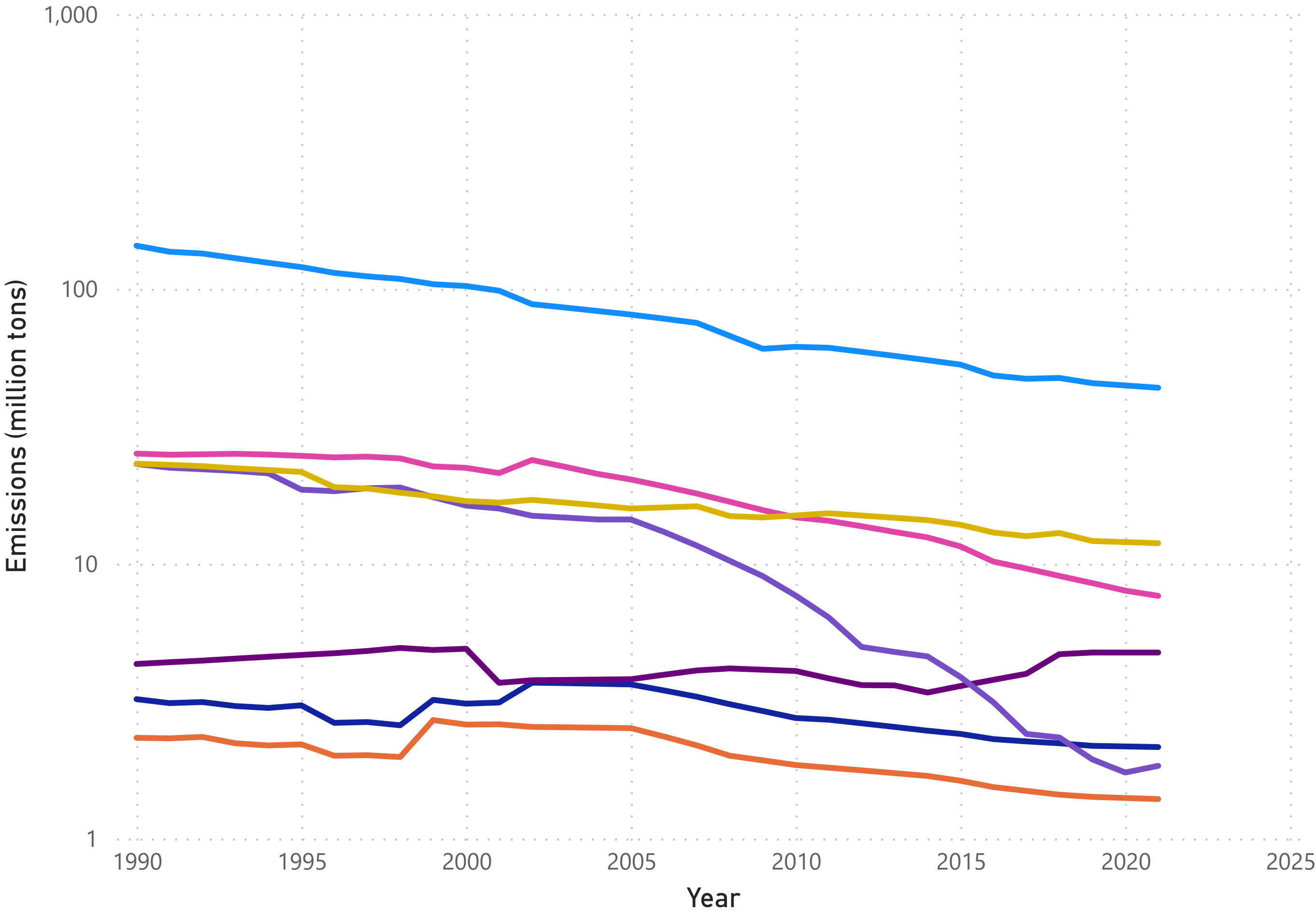
Areas Currently Not Meeting National Ambient Air Quality Standards

Over the past few decades, air pollution has steadily declined in the United States. This decline has been driven primarily by policies like the Clean Air Act and technological improvements invented by American innovators. This very brief overview of air pollution in the United States will touch on historical trends in air pollution, current sources of air pollution, and National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Use the buttons above to navigate through this report.

As noted in the introduction, air pollution levels have been steadily declining in the United States. The EPA is engaged in ongoing efforts to continue this trend, reducing the adverse effects of air pollution for both public health and the environment. This line graph shows yearly US emissions of seven of the most important air pollutants since 1990 in million tons. Note that it is on a logarithmic scale. Use the slicer below to examine the trends of individual pollutants.

Emissions by Year and Pollutant

Pollutant CO Direct PM10 Direct PM2.5 NH3 NOx SO2 VOC



Pollutant

CO	Direct PM10	Direct PM2.5	NH3	NOx	SO2	VOC
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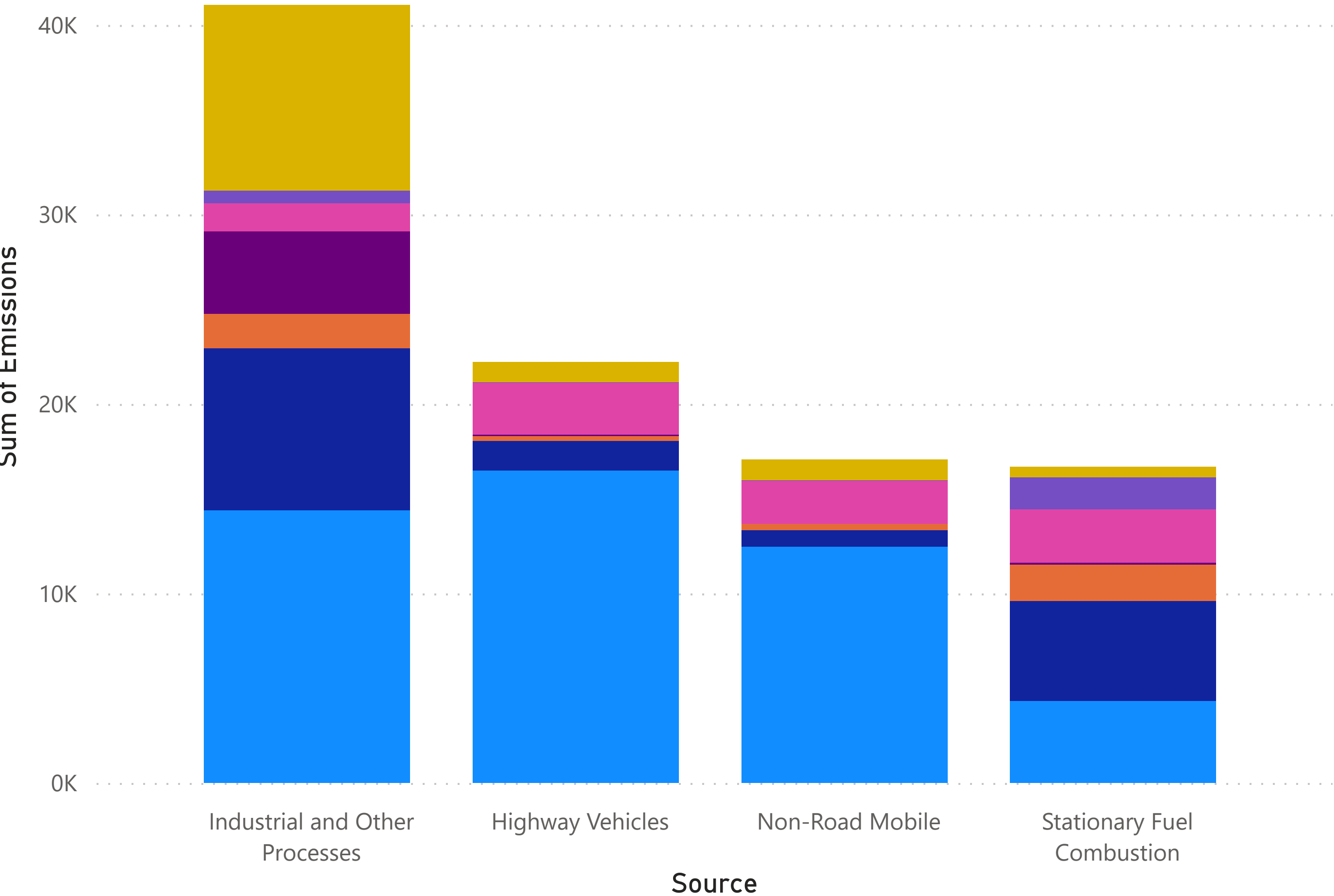
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Although air pollution levels have been steadily decreasing in the past few decades, there is still more work to be done. Identifying which sources produce the most air pollution can provide a roadmap for potential avenues to reduce air pollution. This column graph shows the amount of emissions of seven of the most important air pollutants from particular sources in thousand tons. The data are from 2017. Use the slicer below to examine the contributions of particular pollutants.

Sum of Emissions by Source and Pollutant

Pollutant CO Direct PM10 Direct PM2.5 NH3 NOx SO2 VOC



Pollutant

CO

Direct PM10

Direct PM2.5

NH3

NOx

SO2

VOC

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Although air pollution has steadily increased in the United States over the past several decades, there are still areas that do not meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) set forth in the Clean Air Act. These seven pollutants have been found to be harmful to public health and the environment, and the EPA requires each of these areas to develop a plan to reduce air pollution levels to meet the air quality standards. This map shows the areas in the United States that currently have air pollution levels above the stated standards, as well as which year that standard was set. It also differentiates between ozone levels collected over 1-hour and 8-hour periods. Use the pollutant dropdown to see which areas are currently not meeting the standards.

Areas Currently Not Meeting National Ambient Air Quality Standards



Pollutant

8-Hour Ozone (2015)

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