Asheville-Buncombe
Air Quality Agency

Buncombe County
FY 2026 Budget Presentation

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Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency

Agenda

A. High-Level Summary
   - Recent trends – Headcount & Operating Expenses

B. What's New?
   - Personnel – Reorganization complete, budget for temporary/professional services (second year file digitization), audit of financial/audit, did not budget for intern
   - Operating – Add new ozone monitoring site, increase in monitoring costs, increase in indirect costs, decrease in travel/training budget
   - Revenues – Decrease in grant funds (reduced amount of one-time funds), grant uncertainty, grant freeze
   - Actual Net Impact to Fund Balance
   - Fee Changes – Title V fees CPI increase

C. Strategic Alignment, Goals, & Accomplishments

D. Equity Analysis Tool

High-Level Summary

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- Reorganization Complete
  - Changes to salary and benefit levels

- Funding Digitization Project, Contract services for financial/grant audits
- Internship funding-cut
- Community outreach

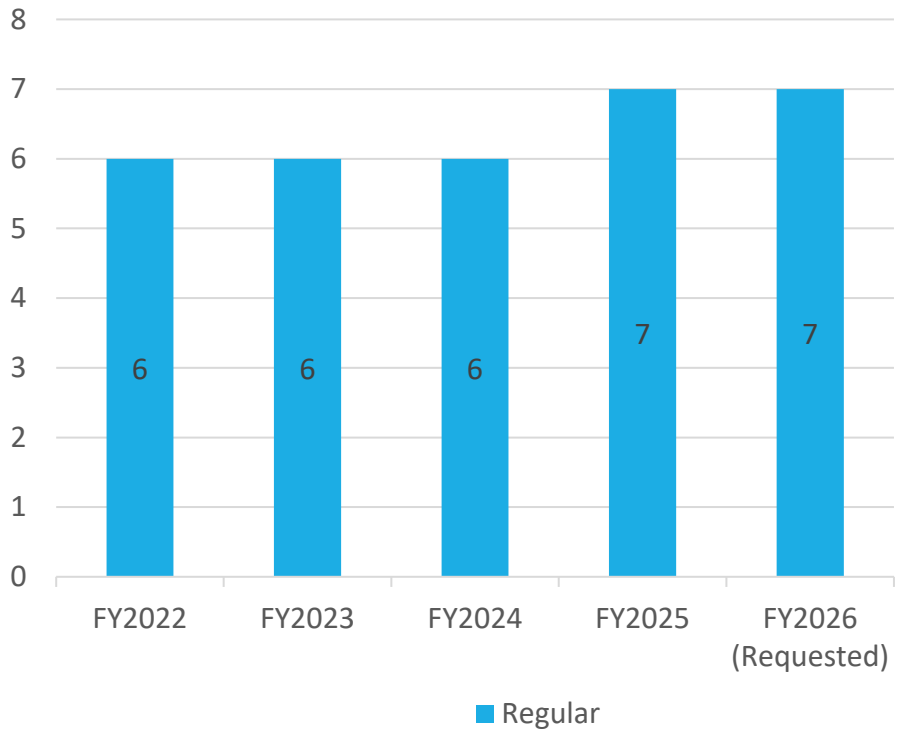
- The Air Quality fund balance continues to be healthy, but staff expect that to be reduced in current and future budget years. *Full accrual fund balance FY24=$228,000

FUND BALANCE-Modified Accrual				
FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24*
$596,736	$716,382	$719,071	$715,689	$746,841

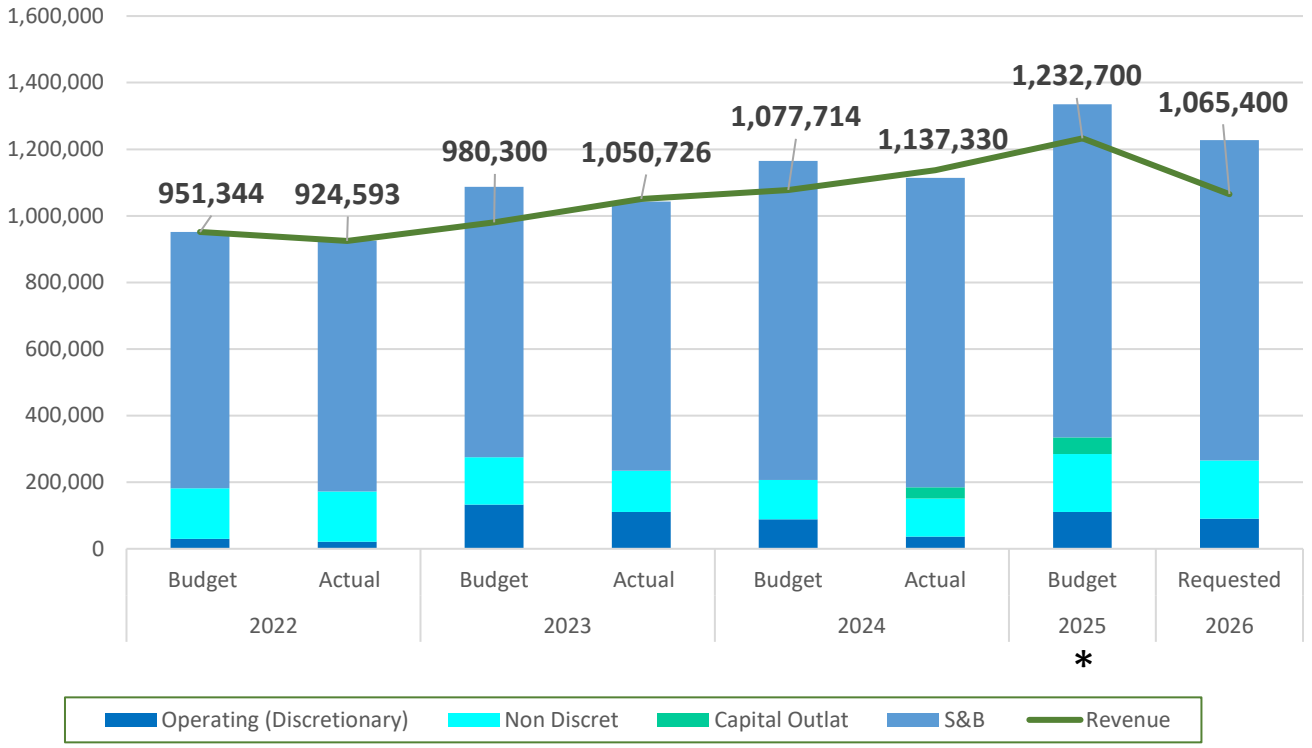
Recent Trends

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Headcount



Operating expenses



* Revenue does not include fund balance

What's New? Personnel

Personnel

- New position requests:
  - Temporary part time for digitalization project – $10,000
  - Contract Services for audits of grants/financials – $6,000

Cost: No additional operating costs

Why?

Need to implement modern data management system for files and data. Digitize older files. Electronic permitting for industrial facilities.

Review Recurring Grants for Compliance with Matching and Maintenance of Effort Requirements

How does this advance your strategic plan or business plan?

- Improve customer service – operational excellence
- Increase transparency, access to files related to emissions and environmental outcomes

Risks of not approving:

- Unable to comply with new NC rules that allow electronic submittal of permits, reports
- Unable to start digitalization project

Alternatives:

- What could you do without to get this expansion? N/A
- Is there an existing position that could be altered to support this need? No

What's New? Operating

Operating

- New Ground Level Ozone Monitoring Site at AB Tech

- **Cost:** $35,000
- $10,000-concrete pad, electrical
- $25,000-one calibrator and one Zero Air Pak*
- Building-Provided by NC DAQ with MOU**

- **Why?**
- Required by Federal Regulations (40 CFR Part 58 Appendix D)-due to Haywood Co. removal from MSA by OMB in 2023
- Building and Installation: 2025-2026. Operation required by March 2026.

How does this advance your strategic plan or business plan?

- Environment and Energy Stewardship-Mission
- Environmental Justice Area-EJ and Equity

Risks of not approving:

- Failure to meet EPA program requirements

Alternatives:

- What could you do without to get this expansion? N/A

* Spreading the cost over 2 years. Analyzer $18,000 next year

** Contingent on NC IRA Funds, steel tariff cost concerns

What's New? Operating (Cont.)

Other Noteworthy Operating Items

- General Increase in Monitoring Supplies costs due to additional temporary monitors post Helene
  - **Cost:** $4,500
  - Compare to FY2024 (Actual): $3,316
  - Compare to FY2025 (Budget): $5,000
- Increase in Indirect Costs
  - **Cost:** $147,787
  - Compare to FY2024 (Actual): $91,764
  - Compare to FY2025 (Actual): $141,639
- Decrease in travel/training budget
  - **Cost:** $12,856
  - Compare to FY2025 (Budget): $15,124

Revenues

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Grants

EPA 105 Grant

- *Local Air Quality Program*
- FY2023: $214,517
- FY2024: $280,000
- FY2025: $222,974
- FY2026 (Budget): $230,000

EPA 103 PM 2.5 Grant

- *PM2.5 Monitoring Program*
- FY2023: $60,000
- FY2024: $84,000
- FY2025: $63,053
- FY2026 (Budget): $70,000

EPA 103 One-Time Grants

- FY2023 ARP: $75,700
- FY2024 CAA: $42,214
- FY2025-26 IRA: $233,000

Other Revenues

Gas tax reimbursement

- FY2023: $152,670
- FY2024: $155,494
- FY2025 (Budget): $150,000
- FY2026 (Budget): $160,000

Permitting Fees

- FY2023: $524,898
- FY2024: $538,718
- FY2025 (Budget): $547,700
- FY2026 (Budget): $539,900

Total Revenues:

- FY2023: $1,050,726
- FY2024: $1,137,330
- FY2025 (Budget): $1,349,960
- FY2026 (Budget): $1,065,400

Federal Grant Freeze

EPA 103 – Fine Particulate Matter (PM 2.5) Grant

- Recurring Grant
- Funds PM2.5 monitoring program's regular operations
- Grant Period Ends: March 31st, 2025
- Total Grant Award: $63,053
- ~~Balance Left (Mid-Feb): $63,053~~ Update: funds released 3/5/2025

EPA 103 – Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Grant

- One-Time Grant
- Funds the expansion and enhancement of air monitoring activities
- Grant Period Ends: October 30th, 2026
- Total Grant Award: $233,000
- Balance Left (Mid-Feb): $71,580

Other federal government budget issues: $7,500 for electric vehicle rebate pending, Congress sets grant budget, FY25 105 grant amount (to be drawn down in FY26) TBD, no award yet and year ends Sept. 30, 2025

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Inflation Reduction Act Grant (IRA FY25/26)

Awarded $233,000 for the purchase of the following:

Alicat FP-25



TeleDyne T640X (PM10)



Ford Lightning Electric Truck





Spare Pumps

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Actual Net Impact to Fund Balance

BCFY	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Revenue	1,001,062	994,734	906,678	1,017,227	1,097,849	888,876	883,227	859,666	943,873	924,593	1,050,726	1,137,330
Expenses	1,005,088	955,695	1,110,699	945,445	1,165,436	915,656	872,797	763,772	824,228	925,285	1,042,689	1,114,216
Difference	(4,026)	39,040	(204,021)	71,782	(67,588)	(26,780)	10,430	95,894	119,645	(692)	8,037	23,114

(debit to fund balance)

Asheville-Buncombe Air Quality Agency

Fee Changes

Fee	Description	Existing Rate	Proposed rate	Why?	Estimated Impact
Title V permit fees	This annual CPI increase was adopted into our rules with our fee increases in September 2021.	See final slide for details	Increase of 3.17905%	The Title V fees are required to be sufficient to fully support the program.	Increase in annual revenues by ~$3,622 for TV permitting fees.
Title V tonnage fee	The tonnage fee increase for Title V (TV) facilities may be considered as part of the Agency's budget process each year and requires Air Quality Board approval.		Increase of $1.96 per ton of emissions		Increase in annual revenues by ~$2,096 if the TV tonnage fee increase is approved.

Total increase ~$5,718 in FY26 (tonnage fee increase pending board approval)

Strategic Alignment, Goals, & Accomplishments

Accomplishments in FY25

- **Completed reorganization of agency and filled vacant position**
- Upgraded and expanded air pollution monitoring network, replaced older diesel with new electric vehicle
- Recognition ceremony and intern-Asheville-Buncombe Sustainable Microbrewery Initiative
- Free radon test kits
- Helene Response:
  - **2 emergency air pollution monitors and 8 low-cost air quality sensors deployed**
  - Air Curtain Incinerators and Open Burning of Storm Debris
  - **150 Demolition Permits**
  - Burning Complaints-Up est. 50%

Strategic Focus Areas

Operational Excellence

- Improve customer service and service to the community

Environmental and Energy Stewardship

- Participate in Vehicle Evaluation Team and Subcommittee on Energy and Environment.
- Promote energy efficiency programs - permitted facilities and community.
- Utilize EPA's Advance program to increase public engagement and decrease emissions. EE and Mobile Source Reductions
  - Sustainable Brewery Project
  - Clean School Bus Program
  - Residential Woodsmoke Emissions

Goals for FY26

- Continue to modernize data management systems with IT
  - Add permitted facilities to Accela
  - Take electronic payments from facilities
- **File retention policy and digitization project**
- Continue Partnerships with UNCA (low-cost air sensors in community- EJ project)
- Educational display at Community Science Shelter and Air Quality monitoring site.
- **Increase community outreach related to Helene-Air Quality Index and temporary monitors, open burning and storm debris burning, indoor air hazards including asbestos, lead, and mold**
  - Neighborhood and Built Environment Workgroup with DHHS
- Formalize EJ policy and increase language access resources

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2024 ABAQA Report Parameters

Number of Facilities, By Category	
Title V	8
Synthetic Minor	9
Small	55
Stage I Vapor Recovery	151
Dry Cleaners	7

Number of Operating Permits Issued, By Category	
Title V	0
Synthetic Minor	0
Small	3

Number of Construction or Modification Permits Issued, By Category	
Title V	1
Synthetic Minor	3
Small	3

How many stack tests were observed?	5

Number of Inspections Performed at Each Source Category	
Title V	7
Synthetic Minor	9
Small	22
Stage I Vapor Recovery	0
Dry Cleaners	0

Asbestos Permitting Program	
NESHAP Permits	139
Local Permits	240
City of Asheville Permit Reviews	346
Buncombe County Permit Reviews	144

Number of Complaints Investigated	
Industry	5
Asbestos	2
Dust, Odor, IAQ	8
Open Burning	69
Stage I Vapor Recovery	0

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FY26 Budget Equity Questions

Alignment with Equity Goals	Equity Considerations
• We are moving forward with our digitalization plans. This will make facility and emissions data more accessible to all Buncombe County residents. • Our recently upgraded and expanded air quality monitoring site is in an EJ area.	• Marginalized or underserved communities have historically experienced poorer air quality partly due to the proximity of air pollution sources to those communities. • We are working with Dr. Evan Couzo and Dr Caitlin Crossett (UNCA) with a community sensor project mapping PM emissions in historically redlined districts. Low-cost air quality sensors are now located at Asheville City Schools.

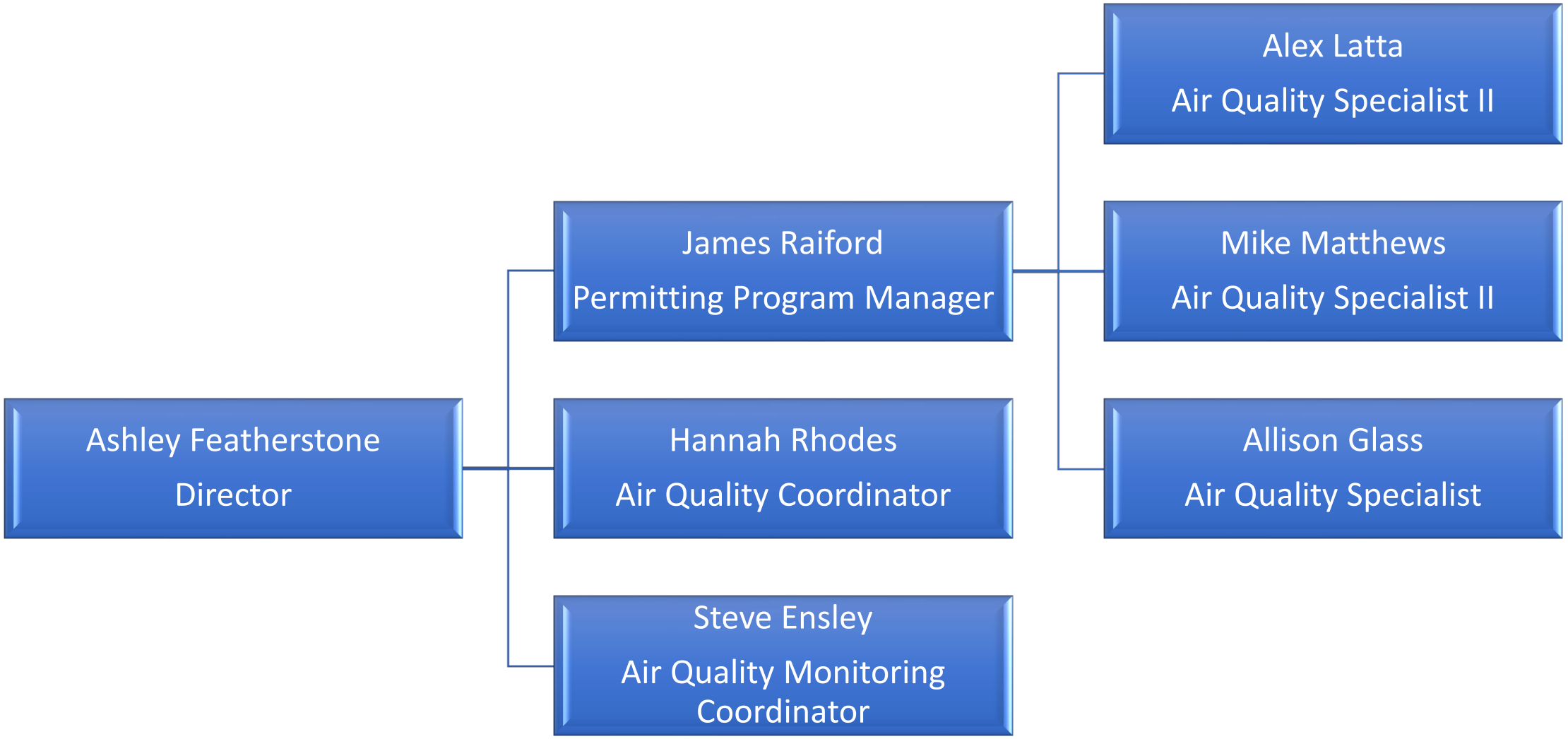
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Title V Application Fee Change Details

Fee Name	FY2025 Fee	FY2025 Unit	FY2026 Proposed Fee	FY2026 Proposed Unit
Annual Base Fee	$11,694	Per Year	$12,066	Per Year
Annual Complexity Fee	$2,924-$8,771	Per Year	$3,016-$9,049	Per Year
17.0300 Permit	$1,169	Per Application	$1,207	Per Application
Initial Application or Major Modification	$11,694	Per Application	$12,066	Per Application
Initial Application or Major Modification (PSD **and** NSR/NAA)	$35,081	Per Application	$36,196	Per Application
Initial Application or Major Modification (PSD **or** NSR/NAA)	$17,541	Per Application	$18,099	Per Application
Minor Modification	$3,508	Per Application	$3,620	Per Application
General Title V Air Curtain Incinerator	10% of otherwise applicable fee	Per Application	10% of otherwise applicable fee	Per Application

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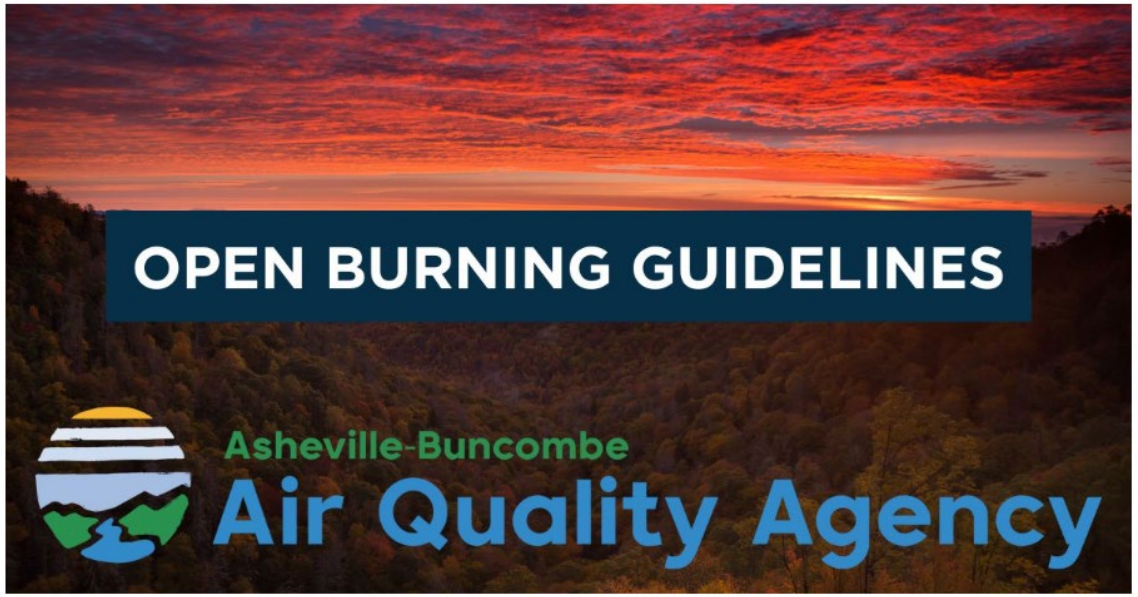
Organizational Chart



AB Air Quality Response

- Published guidance documents on website explaining open burning guidelines including air curtain incinerator requirements
- Requested notifications from anyone proposing to operate an air curtain incinerator
- Worked with NC DAQ and EPA to deploy non-regulatory PM2.5 monitors and sensors as well as two MetOne EBAMs to better understand air quality conditions in other parts of the County

Open Burning in Response to Hurricane Helene



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Disaster Debris



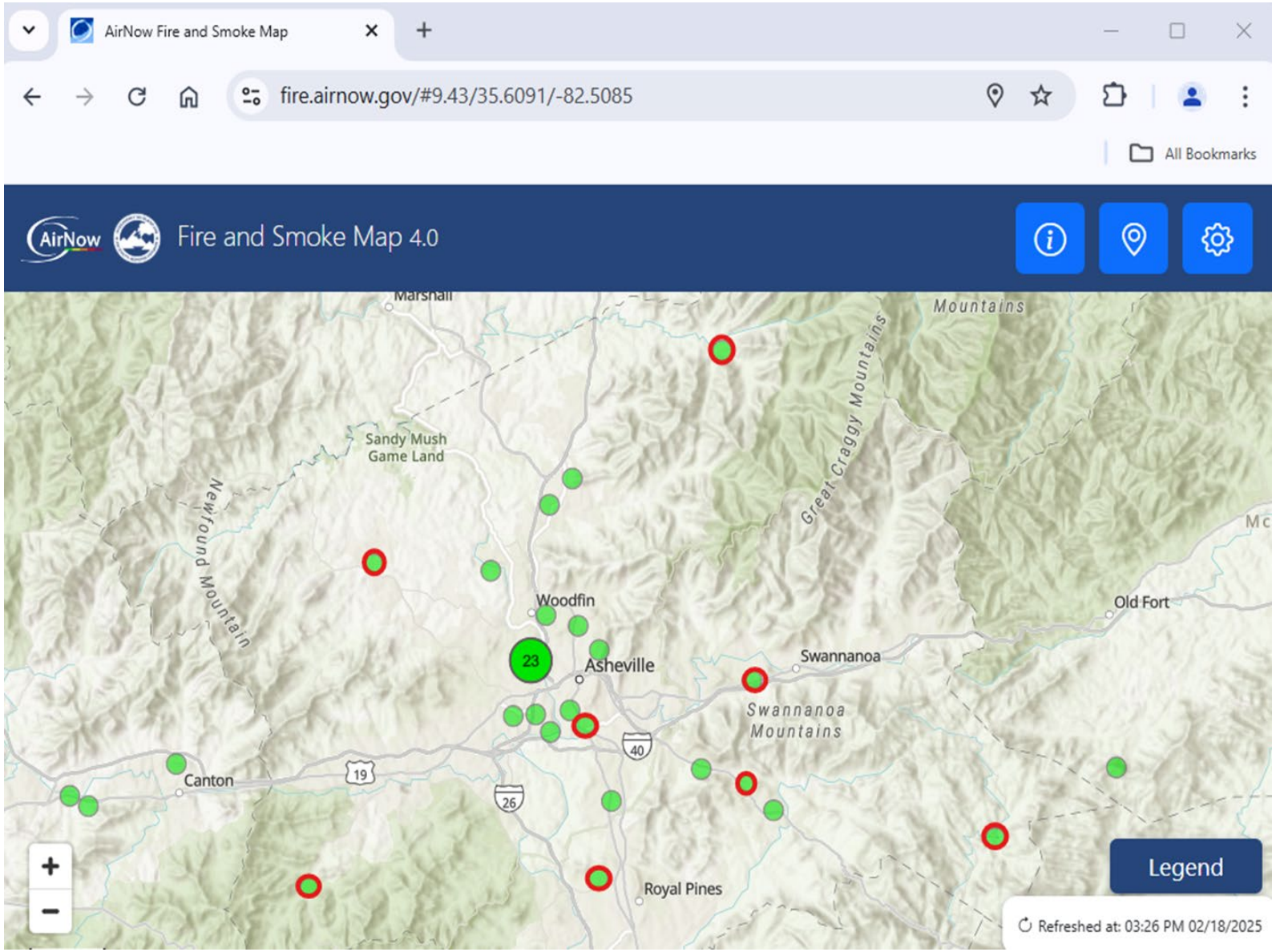
North Carolina Disaster Recovery Act allows open burning and use of air curtain incinerators (ACIs) for storm debris removal

Have received 4 notifications to use air curtain incinerators and 3 requests for permission for storm debris open burning

Approximately 50% increase in open burning since Helene (limited data)

Will be an ongoing issue, potentially lasting years

Check EPA Fire and Smoke Map (fire.airnow.gov) for real-time air quality conditions.



Low-cost sensors installed after Helene by AB Air Quality, NCDAQ and EPA highlighted in RED

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EBAMs



Fairview Elementary



ARO

Purple Airs

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Art Space



Barnardsville FD



Biltmore Village

Purple Airs cont.

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Fairview Library



Leicester Library



Upper Hominy FD

Purple Airs cont.

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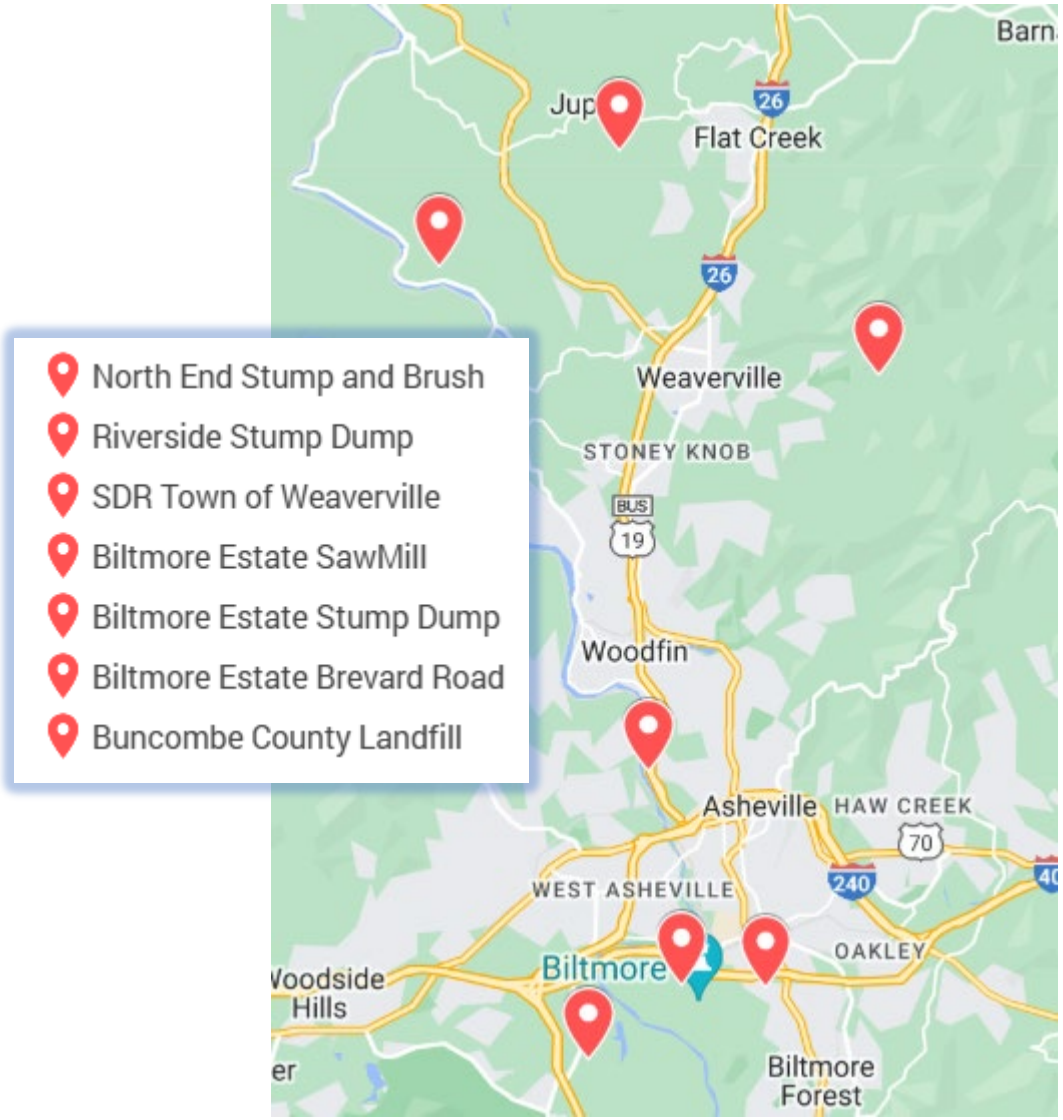


Skyland Library



Broad River FD

Air Curtain Incinerators Proposed/Operating



- Four ACIs Proposed in Buncombe County to be operated at seven sites
- Only one ACI is an OSWI unit
- Two units have asked to keep the ACIs permanently and will require permits once hurricane debris is removed

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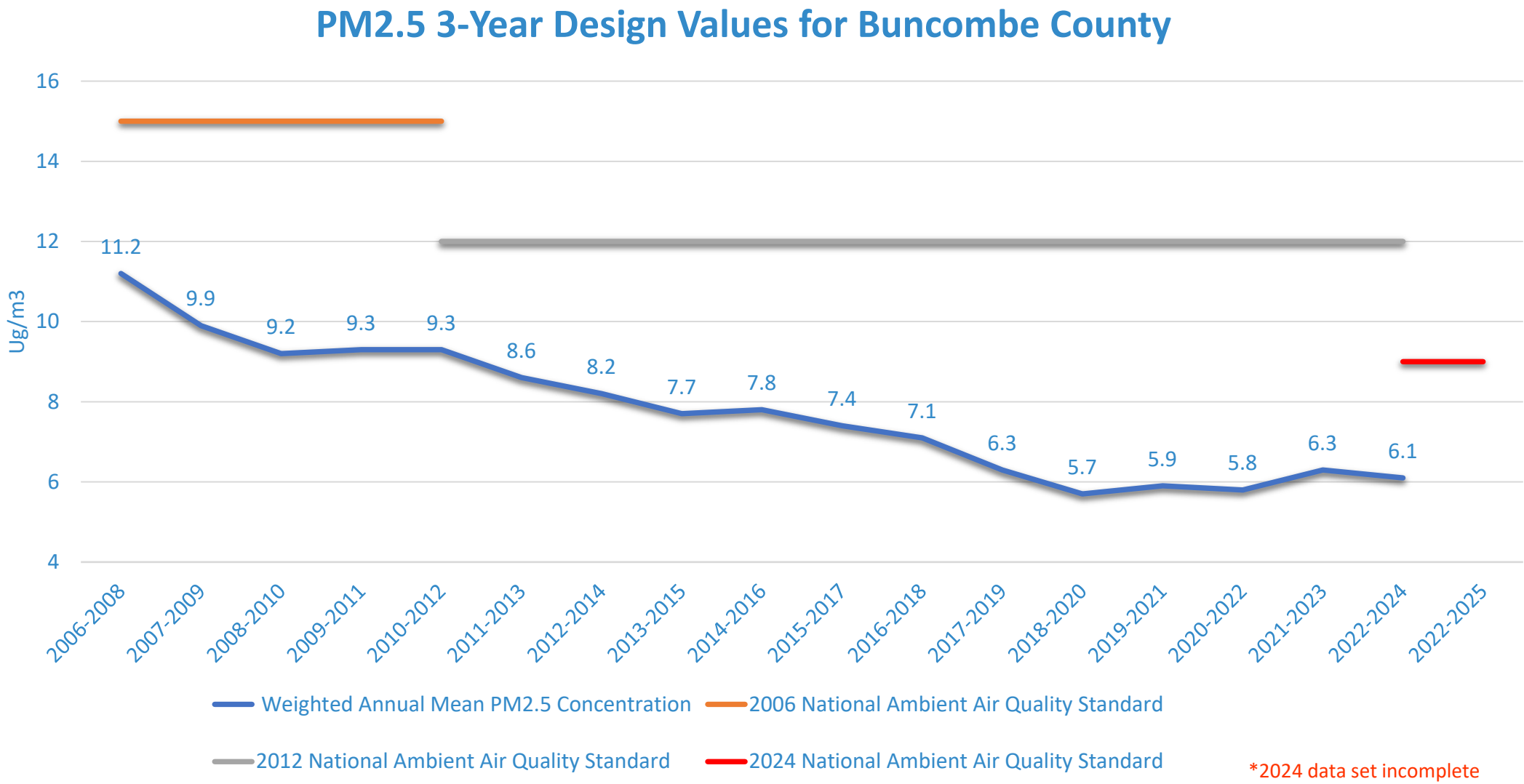

CAT
M30-6
678-855 1723
BurnDebris.com


AirBurners



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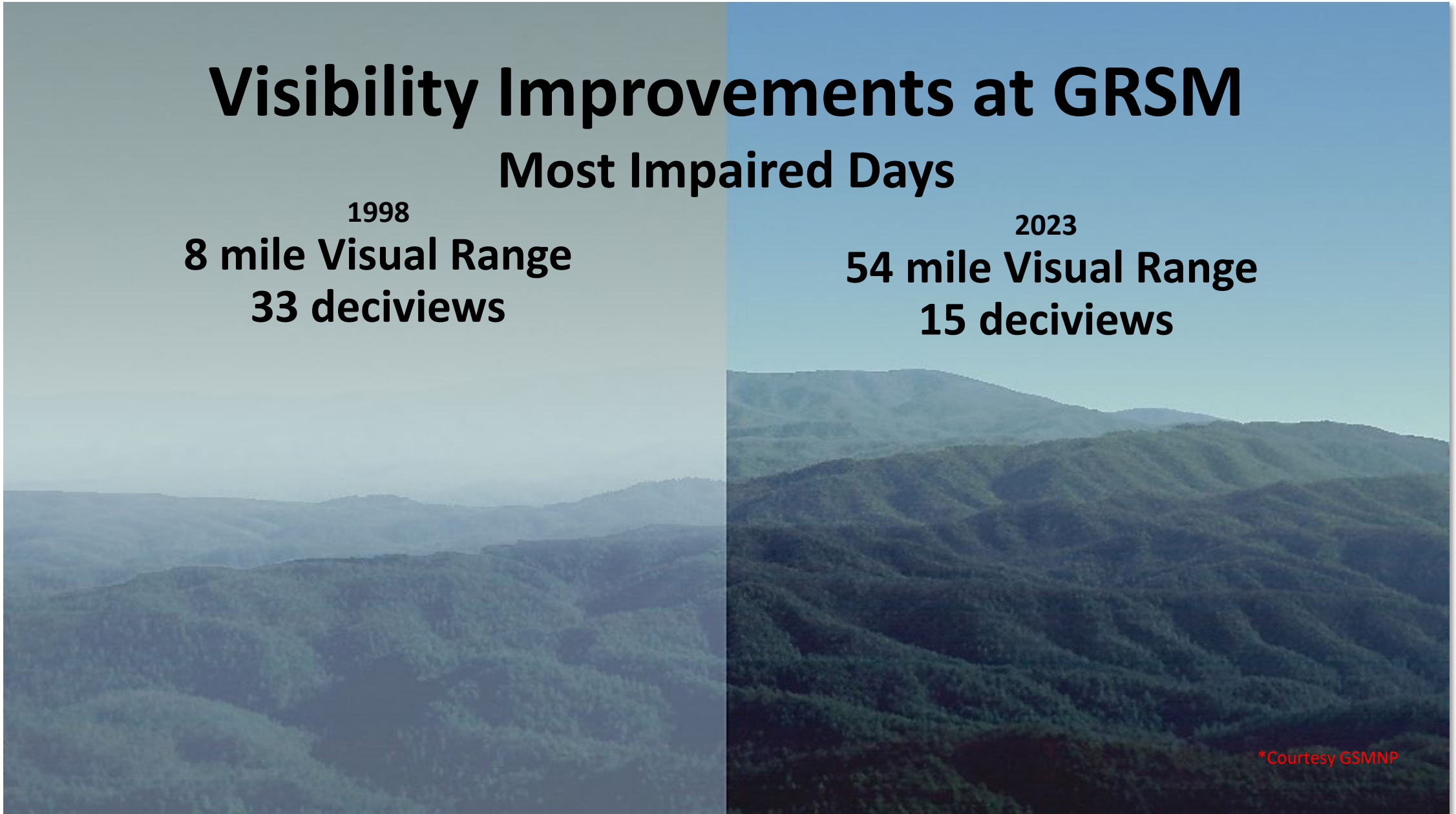
PM2.5 Levels in Buncombe County



*2024 data set incomplete

Visibility

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Thank You Air Quality Team and Board!