Air Quality Advisory Council Orientation

Welcome and thank you for your commitment to serve on the Buncombe County Air Quality Advisory Council! More information about the role and program are included here.

Mission and Purpose

The mission of Buncombe County Air Quality (BCAQ) is to protect and monitor the area's air quality to safeguard the public health and the environment.

BCAQ operates as a Division of Permits and Inspections, pursuant to the provisions of North Carolina General Statute Sections 160A-461, 160A-464, and 143-215.112 (c)(3) for the purpose of developing and administering a local air quality program. The agency is one of three local air pollution control programs certified by the North Carolina Environmental Management Commission to implement air quality regulations and programs. Prior to being reorganized under Buncombe County in 2026, the air quality agency was a multi-jurisdictional program that operated under the same enabling legislation with a governing board appointed in accordance with an interlocal agreement.

What does the local air program do?

The Agency is responsible for implementing the delegated provisions of the federal, state and local air quality regulations in Buncombe County. The program operates an air pollution monitoring network that is used to determine whether our area is in compliance with the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS). A permitting and inspection program ensures that industrial facilities, gas stations, dry cleaners, grading contractors, and asbestos removal activities comply with all applicable air quality regulations that are put in place to protect the public health and welfare. Additionally, BCAQ responds to air quality related complaints (dust, smoke, open burning, odors), offers compliance assistance, education and outreach services, and works with community partners on voluntary pollution prevention programs. BCAQ also maintains an indoor air quality webpage for resident inquiries and has partnered with other programs to distribute free radon test kits.

Governing Body

The Buncombe County Board of Commissioners is the governing body that oversees the air quality program. The Air Quality Advisory Council includes 5 members that are appointed by the Commission.

Council Member Duties

The Buncombe County Air Quality Advisory Council conducts public hearings and reviews and advises on air program actions; advises the Board of Commissioners in developing policies and plans to improve air quality programs; participates in the appeals review process over air quality regulations and ordinances promulgated by the Board of Commissioners; reviews and advises the local air quality program pursuant to the local air quality ordinance, and advises the Board of Commissioners of actions necessary to maintain a certified local air quality program. To accomplish these duties, the Council meets bi-monthly and at other times as needed.

Meeting Schedule

The Air Quality Council meets in person, bi-monthly on the fourth Tuesday at 3:30 pm and at other times as warranted. The regular meeting location is the board meeting room at 35 Woodfin Street in Asheville. The time commitment is estimated at 2 to 3 hours every other month. This is a volunteer appointment, not a paid position.

More information

For more information, please contact Ashley Featherstone, Division Manager, at 828-250-6778 or ashley.featherstone@buncombenc.gov. More information is also available on our website at www.buncombenc.gov/air, minutes, and live streams of the meetings are on the Engage Buncombe site at https://engage.buncombecounty.org/s8486.

Council members may access the internal board SharePoint site that includes all policies, rules, related links and other useful information at https://buncombecountync.sharepoint.com/sites/SP-AIR-Asheville-BuncombeAirQualityAgencyBoard.