



WNC Regional Air Quality Agency Board Update 2020

JOEL STORROW, CHAIRMAN

ASHLEY FEATHERSTONE, DIRECTOR
WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA REGIONAL AIR QUALITY AGENCY

About Us

Members

Joel Storrow, Chair
Karl Koon, Vice Chair
Vonna Cloninger
Evan Couzo
Garry Whisnant

Mission

The Mission of the Western North Carolina Regional Air Quality Agency is to protect and monitor the area's air quality to safeguard the public health and the environment.

Purpose

The Air Quality Board's primary responsibility is to govern the overall operations of the Agency, including oversight of the Agency budget, selecting the Director according to Buncombe County personnel policies, approval of industrial permits, and final judgment on appealed Notices of Violation.

WNCRAQA - Overview

- ▶ Inter-local Agreement (Pursuant to NCGS 143-215.112 Local Air Pollution Control Programs)
- ▶ Governed by an Independent 5 Member Board
 - ▶ 3 members are appointed by Buncombe County Commission
 - ▶ 2 members are appointed by Asheville City Council
- ▶ Advisory Committee
 - ▶ Members of the community from diverse backgrounds
 - ▶ Citizens may apply and are appointed by the board

Air Pollution in WNC

- ▶ Temperature Inversions
 - ▶ Trap air pollution near surface, rather than dispersing it
- ▶ “Bowl” Effect associated with topography
- ▶ Any locally-generated pollution exacerbates the problem



History

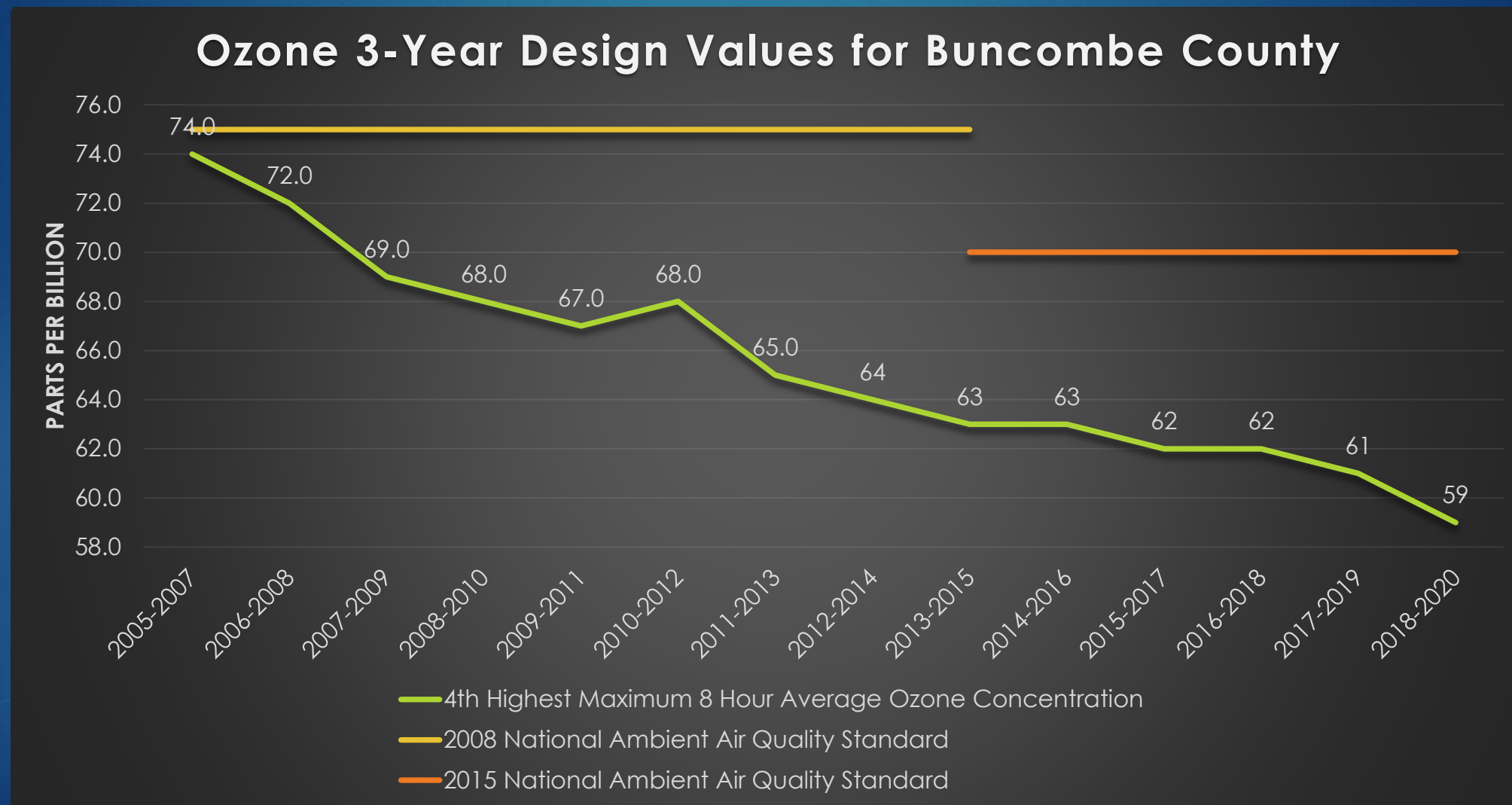
- ▶ City of Asheville Smoke Abatement Program – 1947-1967
- ▶ Multi-County Agency
 - ▶ 1967-1970 Buncombe, Haywood, Henderson, Transylvania
 - ▶ 1970-2000 Buncombe and Haywood
 - ▶ 2000-Buncombe County and City of Asheville



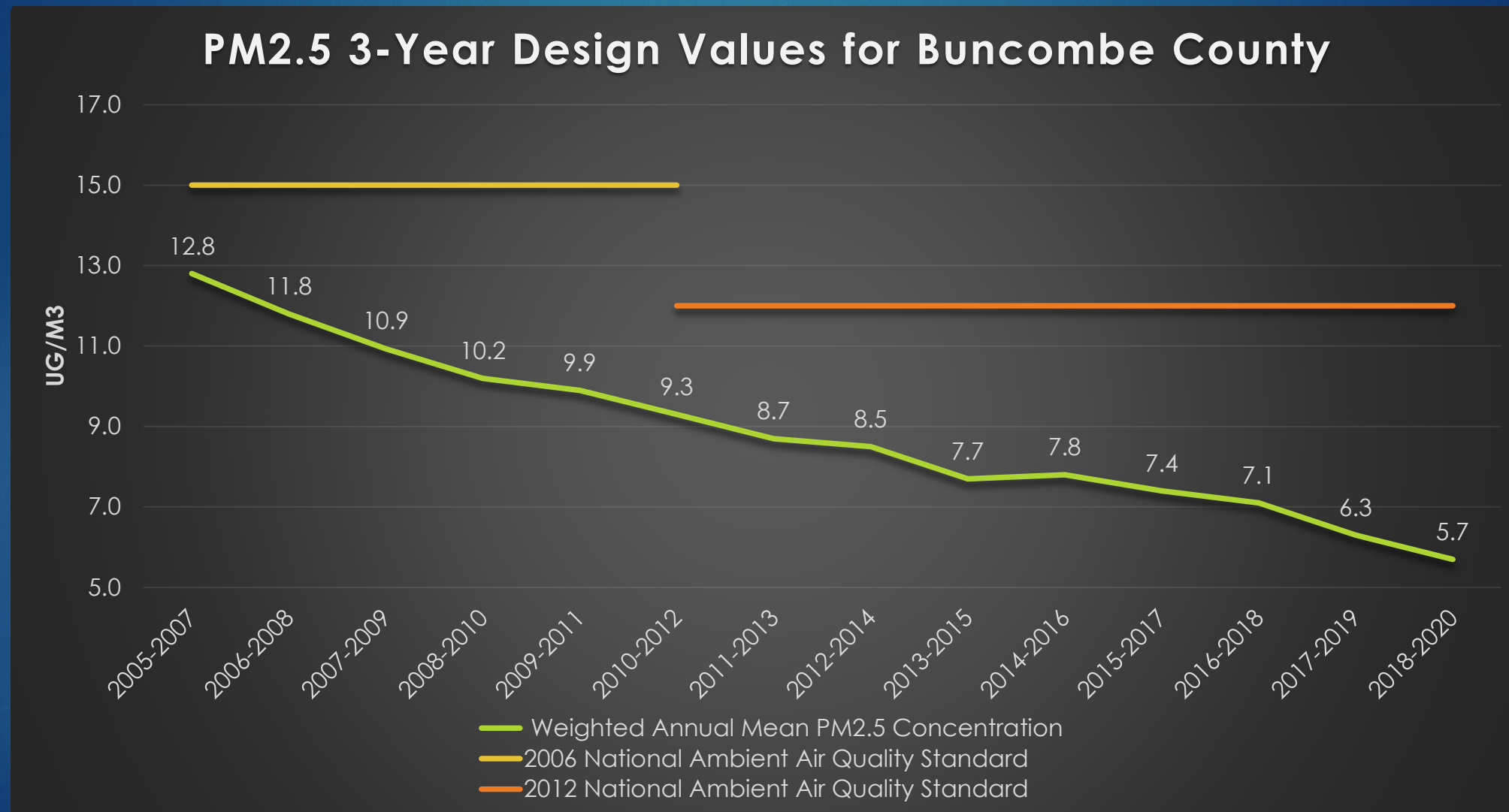
What does the Agency do?

- ▶ Monitor Air Quality for compliance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)
- ▶ Responsible for implementing federal, state, and local air quality regulations
 - ▶ Permitting of industrial and area sources
 - ▶ Asbestos Removal, Demolition and Renovation permits
 - ▶ Open Burning and Dust
- ▶ Education and Outreach
 - ▶ Pollution Prevention Projects and Outreach
 - ▶ Diesel retrofits-school buses and fire engines
 - ▶ Clean Air Excellence Awards
 - ▶ Work with partners: local Clean Air Campaign and Clean Vehicles Coalition

Ozone Levels in Buncombe County



PM_{2.5} Levels in Buncombe County



Improvement in Haze on 20% Most Impaired Days at Look Rock



Then...

1998

9 mile Visual Range



Now...

2017

39 mile Visual Range



What's New

- ▶ Duke Energy Progress Western Carolinas Modernization Project
 - ▶ 2 new natural gas/fuel oil fired combined cycle are operational.
 - ▶ Coal fired units retired on January 29, 2020
- ▶ EPA designated the Limestone Township portion of Buncombe County as Attainment/Unclassifiable for the SO₂ standard in 2020
 - ▶ NAAQS: 75 ppb (99th percentile of 1-hour daily maximum concentrations)
 - ▶ 3 Year Design Value of 11.5 ppb
- ▶ Data Modernization Program
 - ▶ Working with IT to implement Accela Program
 - ▶ Electronic payments for regulated community

Financial Update

- ▶ Agency is 100% self funded:
 - ▶ US EPA Grants
 - ▶ Industrial and commercial permit fees
 - ▶ NC Gas Tax
- ▶ Permit fees for Title V permitting program have been decreasing over time
 - ▶ Based on emissions
- ▶ EPA Grant Funding has been level since 2004
 - ▶ Funding decreased with inflation

Next Steps

- ▶ Board Retreat-April 15
 - ▶ Budget review
 - ▶ Revenues and expense forecasting
 - ▶ Fund balance review
- ▶ Permit Fee Evaluation
- ▶ Advisory Committee Roles and Responsibilities
- ▶ Participate in county initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (environmental and energy stewardship)
- ▶ Participating in EPA's environmental justice workgroup

Questions?

Joel Storrow, Chair

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