

WESTAR Planning Committee (July 9, 2026)

Roll call:

Attendance: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, Clark County, Albuquerque, Yakima, Denver RAQC, NPS,

Presentation from Utah on its CAA 197B(b) demonstration:

- EPA proposed to approve Utah's 197B demonstration
- Utah has three NAA for the 2015 ozone NAAQS (including the Northern Wasatch Front)
- Current design value is 75 ppb
- Area was designated as a Serious nonattainment area, but rulemaking was stayed by the 10th Circuit, reverting it back to a Moderate NAA
- Utah has demonstrated difficulties with improving the ozone concentrations in spite of achieving significant VOC and NO_x emission reductions in recent years.
 - These challenges led Utah to pursue the 179B demonstration (showing that the area would have attained the standard "but for" the presence of international contributions)
 - Modeling conducted by Ramboll
 - Approval prevents the area from being redesignated as "Serious" or higher
 - A key part of the process for how Utah and Arizona pursued this was through EPA Administrator Zeldin's rescission of previous guidance in April 2025
 - Utah's 179B demonstration is a very dense document that evaluates emissions trends, wildfires and other exceptional events, etc.
 - Influence of wildfires in 2021 considered
 - Considered the ozone source contributions (to determine how much was anthropogenic vs. non-anthropogenic)
- EPA's proposed approval rescinded the Serious designation, found that the area would have attained the standard by the Moderate attainment date and maintains the area as a Moderate NAA; identifies what CAA Moderate requirements are still obligated; affirms that atypical events are appropriate for CAA 179B
- Public comments: approximately 30 unique comments provided
- What does a CAA Section 179B demonstration mean for the long run:
 - An approved 179B will not remove SIP obligations for current designation, does not negate the requirement to reduce emissions and attain the standard
 - Approved 179B does increase the flexibility in how to approach attaining the standard
 - Utah continues to work towards attaining the standard and improving air quality

Question: “If Utah is waiting for science to ‘catch up,’ what exactly does that mean?”

Utah still can’t seem to pin down why its modeling does not demonstrate ozone concentration reductions that correlate with the actual emissions reductions occurring.

Also trying to determine which species of ozone precursors are most vital to further reducing ozone formation.

Question: “Is there any statutory time requirement for Utah to reach attainment now?”

No, Utah now stays as a Moderate attainment area until it has the data to redesignate.

Question: “What happens if ozone levels continue to rise in Utah in the future? Is there a point where Utah would have to re-submit a 179B demonstration?”

Uncertain how to forecast this at this time. Utah’s understanding at this time is that they believe it will remain as a Moderate area indefinitely.

[Wyoming presentation on EPA’s proposed FIP revision for Dave Johnston Unit 3 – Mike Morris gave the presentation and, consequently, could not take notes simultaneously, so they are omitted here]

EPA issued some guidance on preconstruction permitting, timing of securing offsetting emission reductions.

D.C. Circuit Court upheld the 2024 PM_{2.5} NAAQS. EPA had argued that the prior EPA Administrator had acted in error in promulgating the new standard, but the Court ruled that the Administrator had been within his purview.

- Will wait to see if this is appealed to the Supreme Court, or if EPA undertakes a partial/full review of the annual PM_{2.5} NAAQS
- EPA seemed to specify that, for states that can’t make some of the statutory deadlines for I-SIP submittal, it may provide some flexibility/leniency
- EPA is also requesting an 18-month extension to issue designations for PM_{2.5} NAAQS (could impact I-SIP submittal deadline)
- I-SIP training session last year; all trainings are posted on WESTAR website
- For future topics, Alaska requests that the timelines associated with PM_{2.5} NAAQS continues to be on the recurring agenda

This only the second time that Unified Agenda has been published without Spring or Fall agenda (may have also happened in 2022)...don’t anticipate seeing an update to this particular agenda this year.

- Lots of planned proposed rules on the agenda (including the Regional Haze Rule revisions)
- Aaron Szabo is stepping down as Assistant Administrator