



Intermountain West Ozone Exchange Conference

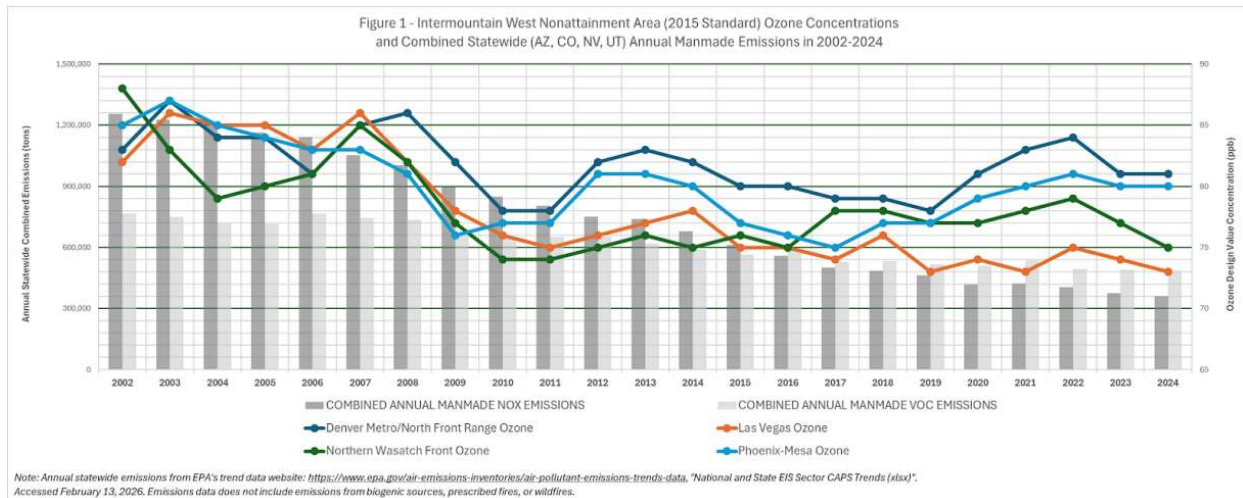
A Unique Opportunity to Promote Information Exchange, Educate and Problem Solve High Ozone Levels in the Intermountain West

When: October 26-28, 2026

Where: Pedersen Toyota Center at the Ranch Events Complex (5280 Arena Cir, Loveland, CO 80538)

Hosts: North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) and Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG)

Why do we need this conference? Ozone levels in the intermountain west are no longer responding as anticipated to state initiatives reducing human-made pollutant emissions that contribute to ozone production.



Ozone is not directly emitted into the atmosphere, it is chemically created by combining nitrogen oxides (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the presence of sunlight. NOx and VOC are called ozone precursors. In areas where the ozone monitors show exceedance of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone, local air agencies must reduce ozone levels by reducing these ozone precursors. However, in IMW nonattainment areas contributions from high background levels, natural sources, wildfires and related mitigation activities, international sources, and more appear to unduly influence whether areas can attain or come into attainment of the NAAQS. These sources of ozone precursors and ozone are not within any one state's authority to control. Air quality planning agencies throughout the intermountain west have been undertaking scientific research to better understand this disconnect, however there are few opportunities to share and then discuss on-going research, findings and data gaps.

This conference fills that need, providing an essential forum for advancing understanding of these studies, touching upon atmospheric chemistry, regional transport dynamics, background ozone contributions, and climate-related factors that may be influencing observed trends.

The last time a regional ozone conference was held was in 2016 by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Given the pressing need for understanding the ozone attainment challenges in the IMW states, this conference provides a regional venue in which to broadly share research findings and collectively discuss solutions.





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What are the goals for this conference?

- Sharing information among IMW air quality agencies, metropolitan planning organizations, academic researchers, industry, local governments, community groups, and members of the public
- Education on the EPA's State Implementation Plan process and Clean Air Act requirements and provisions
- Recognition and prioritization of unique regional challenges and considerations faced in the IMW
- Discussing near-term and longer-term solutions and communication planning
- Recognition of research gaps still needed to be filled to help inform decision makers

This conference will not debate ozone health and environmental effects, the setting of the ozone standard, nor advocate for specific statutory, regulatory or policy changes.

Who should attend and why? Anyone concerned about ozone in the Intermountain West and wanting to better understand why certain areas are challenged in meeting ozone standards despite significant efforts to reduce air pollution should attend. This includes researchers, government officials, air quality planners, industry and environmental representatives, community members and more. While technical information will be presented, presenters will also share thoughts about what the information might mean for local communities. The conference will also provide opportunities for roundtable discussions among attendees choosing to participate.

What makes this conference unique? Unlike traditional conferences that center primarily on technical presentations and expert panels, this conference is being designed as a grassroots, community-driven exchange of ideas, data, and lived experience. This conference will create a forum for information sharing, education and problem solving among individuals with varied knowledge and opinions on how best to address high ozone levels in the Intermountain West region.

What is the agenda? While the agenda will be informed by the response to our Call for Abstracts, open through late June 2026, agenda topics of interest include:

- Recent and on-going studies, findings and data gaps,
- Unique regional challenges and considerations faced in the Intermountain West, including local and state human-made emissions, topography, weather, wildfire related activities and natural events, biogenic emissions, background ozone, and long-range transport
- Options to address those unique challenges, including those currently available in the existing statutory and regulatory frameworks, and other near-term and/or long-term solutions,
- Public communication on high ozone days or anticipated high ozone days, and measuring communications effectiveness, and
- Emerging air quality issues (e.g., artificial intelligence, multipollutant interactions, behavior changes)

Visit this website (<https://nfrmpo.org/air-quality/ozone-exchange/>) to sign up to receive updates and/or email questions and comments to: imwozone@outlook.com

