FACT SHEET 2023

WHAT IS HAZE?

Haze is made of tiny airborne particles and gases that block and scatter light, reducing visibility across distances.

The pollutants causing haze are mainly particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, and sulfur dioxide – they muddy scenic views in national parks and wilderness areas around the country, from Mingo Wilderness Area in Missouri to Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky and many public lands in between.

Haze pollution also damages sensitive ecosystems and can degrade water quality. It can travel hundreds of miles from its original source, through neighborhoods and communities, causing a myriad of health complications for those who breathe it in.

NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

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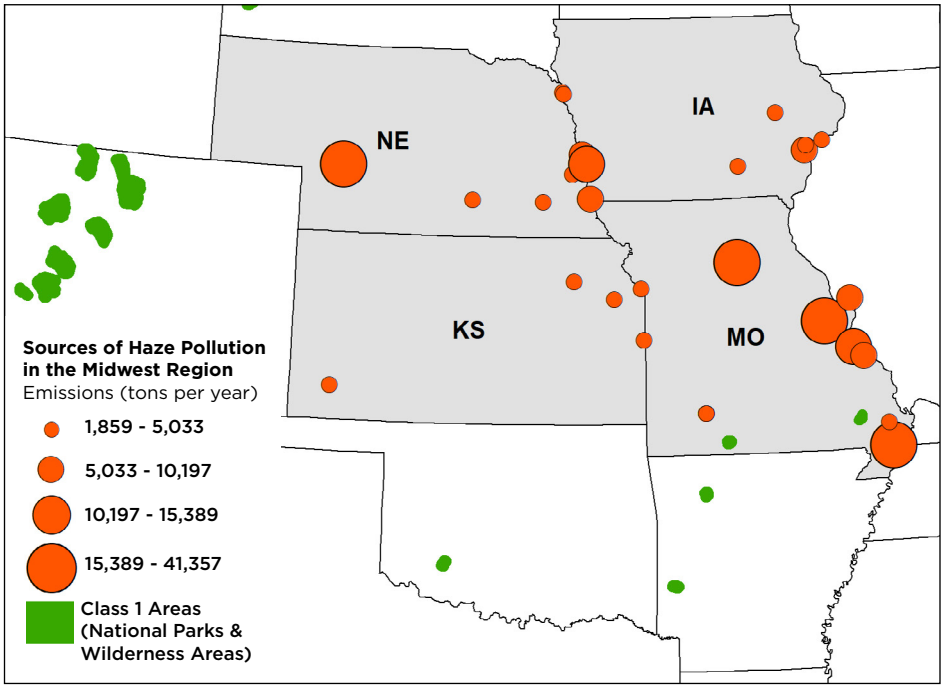
Haze Pollution in Midwest Parks

EPA's Region 7, also known as the Midwest region, includes Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska.



156 national parks and wilderness areas are designated under the Clean Air Act as "Class 1 areas," meaning they have some of the highest levels of air quality protection in the country. However, most national park sites are still experiencing poor air quality and diminished visibility.

The Regional Haze Rule is intended to cut pollution harming skies in these special places. Every ten years, each state must develop a plan to reduce haze-causing emissions from pollution sources within their state. The state agencies then send these plans to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for approval or disapproval.

In the first round of regional haze planning over ten years ago, significant emissions reductions were achieved thanks in large part to advocacy efforts for strong state plans. 1.4 million tons of haze pollution (nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and particulate matter) each year were eliminated, along with 79 million tons of climate pollution (carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide). 146 coal plants were required to either close or clean up. The second round of haze planning is currently in progress.

SOURCES OF HAZE POLLUTION
IN THE MIDWEST REGION

Electricity generation, cement manufacturing, mineral processing, and other industrial polluters are contributing to hazy skies from Hercules Glades to Mingo Wilderness Area and beyond – pollution from this region travels all the way to Kentucky and America's most haze polluted national park, Mammoth Cave.

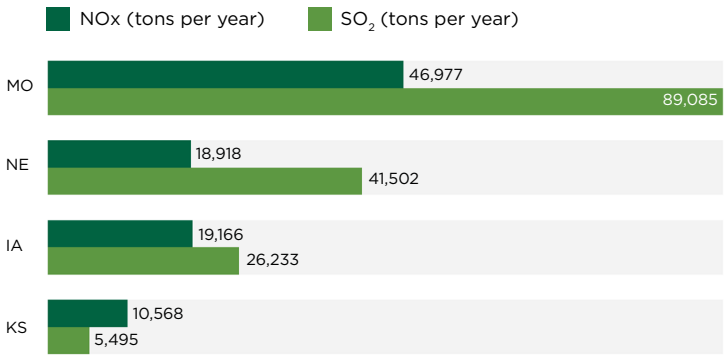
States in the Midwest are Ignoring Industrial Polluters in Haze Plans

Unfortunately, during this current round of Regional Haze planning, states in the Midwest are failing to meet the haze program requirements under the Clean Air Act. NPCA has identified 30 sources of haze pollution in EPA's Region 7. Collectively, these polluters emit around 258,000 tons of haze pollution each year, which equates to 1,032 football stadiums full of pollution. The state agencies that have submitted haze plans failed to select a broad number of polluters to review in their plans. They also failed to require meaningful emission reductions from the few sources that they did select.

State Haze Planning Failures

Missouri is one of the biggest haze polluting states in the nation due to the high level of uncontrolled emissions coming from the state's industries. Missouri's haze plan improperly concludes that no new reductions in pollution are warranted, even from the coal-fired power plants contributing to the majority of haze-causing emissions in the state. Iowa used a flawed screening method, resulting in sources that contribute to haze pollution in parks being ignored. Iowa also did not adequately address concerns raised by Federal Land Managers, like the National Park Service.

Haze-Causing Emissions by State



The Labadie coal plant is the #1 haze polluter in EPA's Region 7. (Photo courtesy of **Patricia Schuba, Labadie Environmental Organization**)

TOP 10 POLLUTERS

1. **Labadie Coal Plant - Ameren**
   Fossil fuel power plant in Franklin, MO
2. **Gerald Gentleman Station - Nebraska Public Power District**
   Fossil fuel power plant in Lincoln, NE
3. **New Madrid Power Plant - Associated Electric Cooperative**
   Fossil fuel power plant in New Madrid, MO
4. **Thomas Hill Energy Center - Associated Electric Cooperative**
   Fossil fuel power plant in Randolph, MO
5. **Rush Island Power Plant - MidAmerican Energy**
   Fossil fuel power plant in Jefferson, MO
6. **Walter Scott Jr. Energy Center - MidAmerican Energy**
   Fossil fuel power plant in Pottawattamie, IA
7. **Nebraska City Station - Omaha Public Power District**
   Fossil fuel power plant in Otoe, NE
8. **North Omaha Power Station - Omaha Public Power District**
   Fossil fuel power plant in Douglas, NE
9. **Louisa Station - MidAmerican Energy**
   Petroleum and coal products facility in Louisa, IA
10. **Mississippi Lime Company**
    Mineral processing plant in Ste. Genevieve, MO

TAKE ACTION

As of May 2023, two states in the Midwest have submitted haze plans to EPA; Iowa and Nebraska remain outstanding, though Iowa has hosted a public comment period on their draft plan. EPA must now decide whether to approve, partially approve, or disapprove the state plans. We urge EPA to act swiftly to hold all states in the Midwest accountable for reducing their haze-causing emissions. Join us in acting now!

Visit **npca.org/reports/regional-haze** to learn more about what you can do.