

Report: Reno air quality getting worse

Reno tied for 11th-most polluted city in the nation for short-term particle pollution in a study done by the American Lung Association.

Compared to the 2015 State of the Air report, Reno has seen an increase in short-term particle pollution. That report covered 2011-13, while the 2016 report is for 2012-14. The 2016 report also found year-round particle pollution levels significantly higher than the previous report.

Many of these spikes in Reno were directly linked to wildfires.

Researchers said increased heat, changes in weather patterns, drought and wildfires are all related to climate change, which has contributed to the extraordinarily high numbers of days with unhealthy particle pollution in some cities, including Reno.

“The 2016 State of the Air report finds unhealthful levels of ozone in Reno, putting our local citizens at risk for premature death and other serious health effects such as asthma attacks and cardiovascular harm. And, since we have such high levels of year-round particle pollution, our citizens face increased risk for lung cancer,” Frankie Vigil, executive director of the American Lung Association in Reno, said in a statement. “Across the nation, the report found continued improvement in air quality, but more than half of the people in the United States live in counties that have unhealthful levels of either ozone or particle pollution.”

The report focuses on ozone pollution and particle pollution. The report analyzes particle pollution through average annual particle pollution levels and short-term spikes in particle

pollution.

“Particle pollution is made of soot or tiny particles that come from coal-fired power plants, diesel emissions, wildfires and wood-burning devices. These particles are so small that they can lodge deep in the lungs and trigger asthma attacks, heart attacks and strokes, and can even be lethal,” said Vigil. “Year-round particle pollution levels have dropped thanks to the cleanup of coal-fired power plants and the retirement of old, dirty diesel engines.”

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*