

# GREENPEACE INDIA DEMANDS REVISION OF NATIONAL AIR QUALITY STANDARDS

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India's annual concentration standards for pollutants continue to be 40 g/m<sup>3</sup> for PM<sub>2.5</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> – a figure eight times higher than WHO's standards of 5 g/m<sup>3</sup> for particulate matter and 10 g/m<sup>3</sup> for NO<sub>2</sub>. | Photo Credit: Verma Sushil Kumar

A group of people along with Greenpeace India activists gathered at the CPCB office here on Friday to demand immediate revision of the national air quality standards, saying they do not reflect the impact of air pollution on human health.

Holding placards and banners that read "Air Pollution Se Azadi" (freedom from air pollution), "Raise Your Standards" and "Clean Air is a Fundamental Right", the protesters gathered to direct attention of policymakers about the limitations of existing National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), a statement said.

They also demanded transparency and accountability from the Central Pollution Control Board in its decision-making processes, it added.

Over the past week, Greenpeace India volunteers visited many of Delhi's iconic locations wearing Hazmat suits and gas masks to raise concerns about the capital's hazardous air quality, it said.

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The participants have also been garnering support for the ongoing petition addressed to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, demanding better transportation systems for cleaner air, it said.

Amruta S Nair, Climate and Energy Campaigner at Greenpeace India, said, "Air pollution has emerged as a major health crisis in India, and a financial disaster affecting millions of people.

"The current standards do not reflect the latest science on the impacts of air pollution on human health, especially on vulnerable groups such as children, senior citizens, women, daily wage labourers - especially outdoor labourers, sexual minorities and more."

Nair said air pollution is becoming a huge factor in out-of-pocket expenditures, which is aggravating inequalities in society.

"Unfortunately, the existing standards offer politicians and policymakers leeway to ignore such a big health emergency," she said.

Avinash Chanchal, campaign manager at Greenpeace India, said, "The CPCB has accepted our open letter and assured us that they will be updating the air quality standards shortly.

"We are going to continue reminding them regularly until it is done."

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