

Most major Chinese cities seen failing on air quality

February 3 2015

The air quality in 66 of China's 74 major cities, including the capital Beijing, failed to meet basic standards last year, China's Environment Ministry said, underlining the struggles the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitter has in reining in threats to public health and quality of life.

The worst-performing cities were in the country's north adjacent to Beijing, with the Hebei province industrial center of Baoding just to the southwest coming in dead last, according to a report published on the ministry website Tuesday.

Haikou, capital of the southern island province of Hainan, had the best air among [major cities](#), with the Tibetan capital Lhasa coming third, the report said. Ratings were conducted based on samples of major pollutants including PM2.5, PM10, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide and ozone.

On a positive note, the number of cities meeting standards was up from three in 2013 and average PM2.5 levels were down slightly in the Beijing region from 106 micrograms to 93.

After decades of rising pollution levels, China has begun acknowledging the threat by regularly publishing updates on levels of dangerous PM2.5, tiny particles in the air that at sufficient quantities reduce visibility and increase health risks.

In November, China pledged to stop the growth in its carbon emissions

by 2030 and last year recorded its first drop in [coal production](#) since 2000 as it switches to cleaner energy sources. China depends on coal for 80 percent of its electricity supply and about two-thirds of total energy.

Beijing has limited the number of new cars on its roads and plans to cut coal usage by 75 percent by 2022.

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