



Site-Specific Standards

The regulation of air pollution in Ontario is a patchwork of rules, making it difficult to protect vulnerable groups from the health, social, and economic effects of air pollution. A site-specific standard is one way Ontario regulates air pollution. To improve and better regulate air quality, site-specific standards require reform.



What are Site-Specific Standards?

- Site-specific standards are outlined in Ontario's main air pollution regulation, O. Reg. 419/05, under sections 32-37.
- Site-specific standards exempt an individual facility from having to comply with the provincial air standard for 5-10 years, **allowing the facility to emit higher concentrations** of a specific substance than would otherwise be allowed through the provincial standard.
- A facility can apply for a site-specific standard **based on economic or technical feasibility**.
- Members of the public can comment on proposals for site-specific standards, raising concerns they may have, which are posted on the Environmental Registry of Ontario.



The Problem with Site-Specific Standards

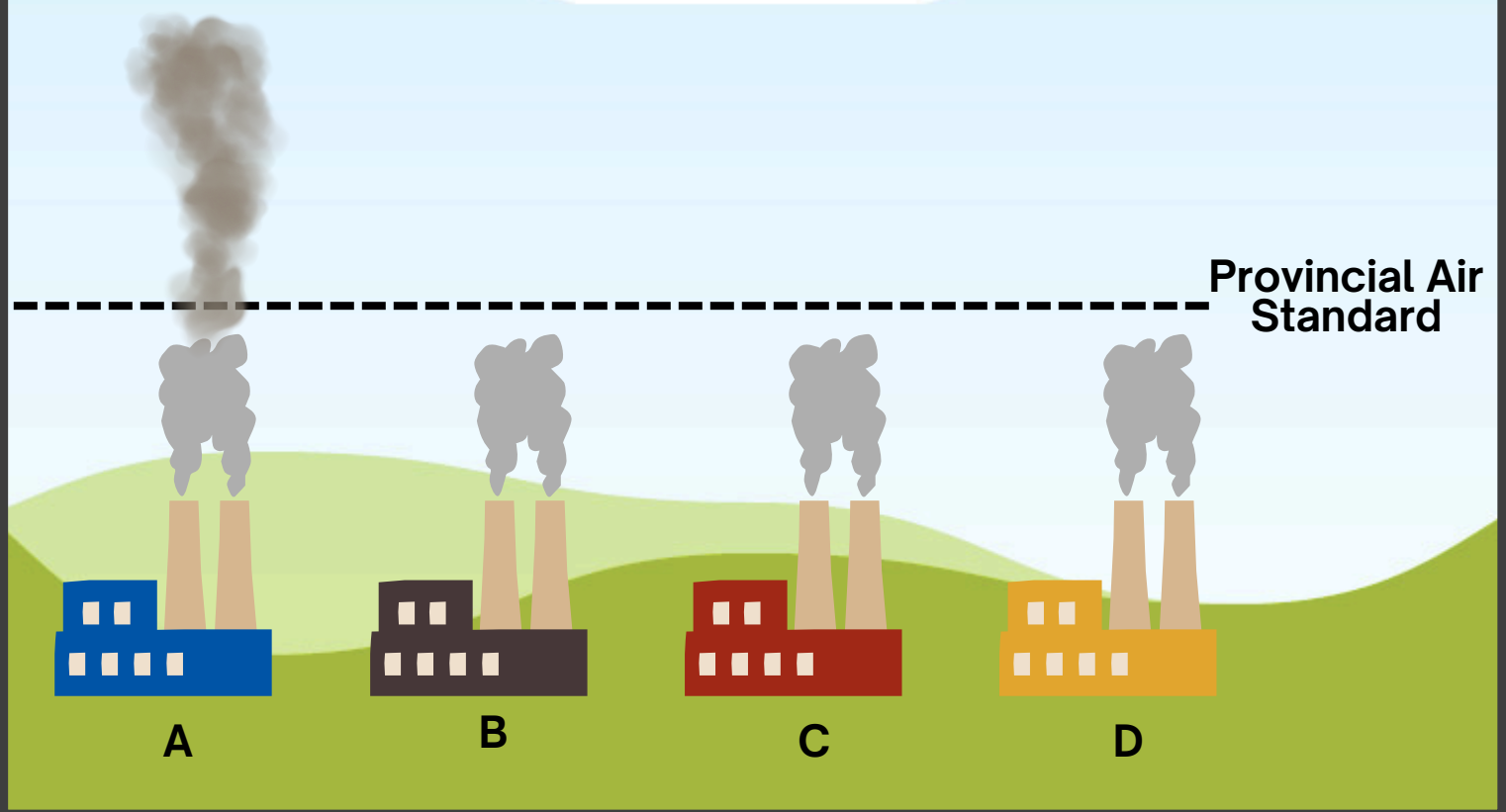
- Facilities pollute at much higher levels than the provincial standard, making it **difficult to improve air quality and protect nearby communities** whose health could be impacted.
- **Cumulative effects** from other facilities and pollutants are not properly considered in the decision to issue a site-specific standard.
- Site-specific standards can **operate for a lengthy period** of time without a facility being required to re-apply for the exemption.
- There is **no right to seek leave to appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal**, so the affected community cannot easily challenge a decision.





Site-Specific Standard

Facility A is allowed to exceed the provincial air standard for a specific substance, but Facilities B, C, and D cannot.





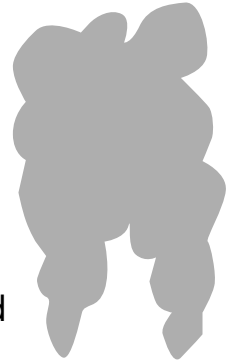
What Needs to be Done About Site-Specific Standards?

To protect those living near facilities that emit harmful substances in Ontario, CELA recommends:

- A **systemic review** of the current regime and its impact on human health and the environment by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks
- **Stricter criteria** for the issuance of site-specific standards, including a **cumulative impact assessment** of air quality in the affected area before approval



- Facilities with a site-specific standard should be **required to improve their environmental performance** and meet provincial standards over a short phase-in period
- **Allow the public to appeal** Ministry decisions to the Ontario Land Tribunal



Example: Algoma Steel in Sault Ste Marie

Algoma Steel's steelmaking plant located in Sault Ste Marie has been issued a number of site-specific standards.

Currently, Algoma Steel's existing site-specific standards for benzene, benzo(a)pyrene, and total suspended particulate matter have expired, although the Company has applied for new ones. For years Algoma Steel has legally been allowed to emit pollutants at levels significantly above provincial air standards. It is now requesting site-specific standards as high as 884% of the provincial standard for benzene, 53000% of the provincial standard for benzo(a)pyrene, and 112.5% of the provincial standard for total suspended particulate matter.

Algoma Steel has also requested a new site-specific standard for sulfur dioxide, which would exceed the provincial standard by 615% (1 hour) and 340% (annual).

