

The Beijing Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau and its staff win the 2018 Kong Ha Award

In recognition of the efforts and impact of two decades of progressive air pollution control measures in China's capital, the Beijing Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau and its staff are the recipients of the 2018 Kong Ha Award for Excellence in Air Quality Management.

The Kong Ha Award for Excellence in Air Quality Management was launched in 2008 by the Clean Air Asia Partnership to honor the memory of the late Kong Ha, Clean Air Asia Chairperson from December 2004 to April 2007.

The award, conferred during Better Air Quality conferences, serves as a tribute to people who are responsible for the formulation of air quality management-related policies and their day-to-day implementation, celebrating their outstanding contributions to improved air quality in Asia.

Faced with extremely high levels of air pollution, from 1998 the Beijing Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau embarked on a series of ambitious and far-reaching multi-sector air pollution mitigation strategies, including improvements to energy and industrial infrastructure, vehicle pollution control, the upgrading of city management, ecological restoration, and the raising of public environmental awareness. Their commitment and dedication have resulted in continuous air quality improvements.

In the past five years alone, there have been a growing number of good air quality days, a drop in heavy pollution episodes, and drastic reductions in major pollutant concentrations. From 2013 to 2017, ambient concentrations of SO₂, CO, NO₂, PM2.5 and PM10 fell by 70.4%, 38.2%, 17.9%, 35.6% and 22.2% respectively. The ambient concentration of O₃ is now following a similar downward trend. Their pollution control efforts also saw the average life expectancy of Beijing's population rise from 76 years to 82 years in the past two decades, and achieved multiple other environmental, economic and social gains.

Beijing's leadership on air pollution and the success of the Beijing Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau's initiatives are now internationally recognized and are serving as an example for other emerging economies and rapidly growing urban areas in Asia that are also grappling with poor air quality.

With this award, we pay tribute to the diligence and dedication of the more than 1100 staff at the Beijing Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau, who remain committed to ensuring blue skies are once again a familiar sight in the city.

“The Beijing Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau has been working on a day-to-day basis on the formulation and implementation of a range of air quality management policies and strategies, and have made clear and tangible differences through their efforts,” said Clean Air Asia Executive Director Bjarne Pedersen.

The Kong Ha Award Committee 2018 is comprised of the following members:

- Mary Jane Ortega, Trustee, Clean Air Asia
- Dr Shing-tat Mak, Principal Environmental Protection Officer of the Mobile Source Group, Air Policy Division, Environmental Protection Department
- Michael Walsh, International Consultant
- Anumita Roychowdhury, Director, Centre for Science and Environment
- Bjarne Pedersen, Executive Director, Clean Air Asia
- Wing-Tat Hung, Professor, Hong Kong Polytechnic University (retired), Director of The Conservancy Association