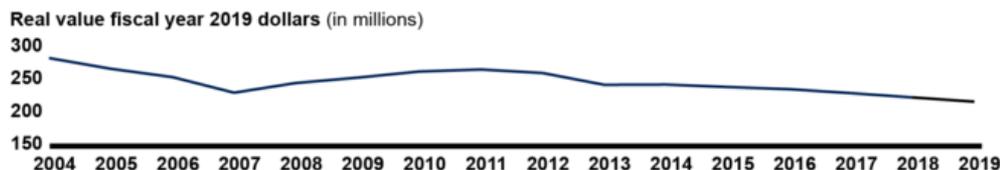November 2020. GAO Issues *Air Pollution: Opportunities to Better Sustain and Modernize the National Air Quality Monitoring System* (https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-21-38)

Two Priority Recommendations from GAO Report:

1. …EPA…, in consultation with state and local agencies, should develop, make public, and implement an asset management framework for consistently sustaining the national ambient air quality monitoring system.

2. …EPA…, in consultation with state and local agencies and other relevant federal agencies, should develop and make public an air quality monitoring modernization plan to better meet the additional information needs of air quality managers, researchers, and the public.

Annual Inflation-Adjusted EPA Funding for State and Local Air Quality Management Grants

Real value fiscal year 2019 dollars (in millions)

Source: GAO analysis of Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, data. | GAO-21-38

May 2021. WESTAR letter to EPA on the topic of the GAO monitoring report documents certain deficiencies in how IMPROVE operates and communicates.

"States must rely on this data but have very limited access to verify proper sampling procedures. 24-hour average data for each sample day must be successfully and simultaneously captured from multi-channel filter samplers that require substantial time and cost to 1) properly operate, 2) collect and ship samples, and 3) then rely on the samples being correctly processed at a single lab location for the whole U.S. under a federal contract. …While states are required to use these data, they have very limited access to verify that proper quality assurance and quality control protocols are followed."

(http://www.westar.org/Docs/GAO%20Monitoring%20Report%20Support%20Letter.pdf)

June 2020. WESTAR state air staff had a virtual meeting with NPS/CIRA staff to discuss WESTAR concerns and remedies.

Many of the issues identified can be corrected through better communication and an IMPROVE Charter and Governance document.