

The US Embassy in Beijing decided to release its own reports on the quality of Beijing's air because the Chinese official statistics were "unreliable". So the Twitter service [@BeijingAir](#) [was born](#)

According to a US Embassy cable from 2009 released by Wikileaks, China's government was upset with the service because it conflicted with the official Chinese statistics, which was causing "confusion" and undesirable "social consequences." From the cable:

According to Wang, the existence of the machine and the openness of the Twitter site are "not fair" to the Beijing EPB. He cited that the Twitter site's consistent characterization in recent days of Beijing air quality as "unhealthy" or "very unhealthy" takes credit away from "all the progress" Beijing EPB has made in recent years in improving the city's air quality. Wang added that the fact that the Embassy's air quality data is not based on the Chinese-approved standards for measuring air pollution is not only confusing but also insulting, citing that the U.S. government would be similarly incensed if the Chinese Embassy in Washington were to do the same. Wang concluded by again urging that if data could not be limited to Americans only, the Embassy should identify a "compromise." Ultimately, MFA would "hate to see" the bilateral environmental cooperation or even the overall relationship negatively "affected by this issue."

The US Embassy responded to this request for "compromise" with the following statement:

[...] the Embassy's primary interest is to make the information collected by the air monitor as easily-accessible by Mission personnel, family members, and Americans residing and traveling in Beijing as possible. Therefore, the Embassy has no position on non-American citizens also having access to the data, nor is the Embassy concerned with how others choose to interpret the information found on the Twitter site. The Embassy does, however, have a strong interest in "setting the record straight," and ensuring that the public understands that mission health has always been and remains the primary motivation for the program. Furthermore, because the Embassy's monitor only collects data in one location, it cannot replace or negate the information provided by the Beijing EPB. Finally, since the Embassy collects data on PM 2.5 and Beijing EPB on PM 10, and each is indexed differently, the two indices cannot and should not be compared. Therefore, until the Beijing EPB begins publishing PM 2.5 data (which they already have the equipment to collect) on a real time basis, the Embassy is not able to discontinue its program for monitoring PM 2.5 onsite

Of course, Twitter is now blocked in China by the communist regime to stop Chinese citizens from having a source of information other than the state media propaganda.

However, Chinese bloggers still spread the information provided by @ [BeijingAir](#) .



Chinese bloggers keep spreading translated [Air Quality Index \(AQI\)](#) according to twitter: [BeijingAir](#)
(screenshot)

Advice from A Chinese blogger: If you have to visit Beijing, try to arrange your visit at a raining day.