



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 8

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JUN 28 2004

Ref: 8P-AR

Honorable Olene S. Walker
Governor of Utah
State Capitol
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

Dear Governor Walker:

Fine-particle pollution represents one of the most significant barriers to clean air facing our nation today. These tiny particles – about 1/30th the diameter of a human hair – have been scientifically linked to serious human health problems. Their ability to be suspended in air for long periods of time makes them a public health threat far beyond the source of emissions. An important part of our nation's commitment to clean, healthy air deals with reducing levels of this fine-particle or PM_{2.5} pollution.

In February, your state submitted its recommended boundaries for PM_{2.5} attainment and nonattainment areas. After a thorough review of your recommendations, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finds that your entire state is in attainment at this time. This means that across your state, all areas meet the more protective, health-based fine-particle standard. That is truly good news for the residents of your state. Your recommendation letter requested boundaries for attainment/unclassifiable areas that would be smaller than whole counties. We have not taken action on that request today. However, we intend to respond to your boundary recommendation shortly -- allowing at least 120 days for you to review our response.

We challenge you to not only maintain, but also continue the progress you have made toward clean air. It is a commitment to no turning around or backsliding in the clean air status for fine particles that your state has achieved. You will hear from us again in November when EPA makes it's final decisions on PM_{2.5} designations determining those areas that meet or do not meet the fine particle standards.

The EPA has made the reduction of fine particle pollution a critical element of a comprehensive national clean air strategy. This strategy includes EPA's recent rule to reduce pollution from nonroad diesel engines, and the proposed rule to reduce pollution from power plants in the eastern U.S. These two rules are important components of EPA's efforts to help states and localities meet the more protective national fine-particle and 8-hour ozone air quality standards. Together these rules will help all areas of the country achieve cleaner air.

We look forward to a continued dialogue with you as we work together to implement the PM_{2.5} standards. Should you have any questions, I invite you to contact me at our toll free number 1-800-227-8917. Your staff or that of the Utah Department of Air Quality (UDAQ) may also wish to contact Richard Long, Director of our Air and Radiation Program, at (303) 312-6005, or Libby Faulk, Air and Radiation Program staff, at (303) 312-6083. Again, we congratulate you on the clean air fine particle status that your state has achieved.

Sincerely yours,



Robert E. Roberts
Regional Administrator

cc: Dianne Nielson, UDEQ
Rick Sprott, UDAQ



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