



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 4
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

JUN 28 2004

4APT-APB

Honorable Haley Barbour
Governor of Mississippi
State Capitol
501 North West Street
Woolfolk Bldg., 15th Floor
Jackson, MS 39201

Dear Governor Barbour:

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, EPA agrees 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.

We challenge you to not only maintain, but also continue the progress you have made toward clean air. It is a commitment to no 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 its final decisions on PM_{2.5} designations determining those areas that meet or do not meet the fine particle standards.

The Bush Administration 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 PM2.5 standards. Should you or your staff have any questions, I invite you to contact our Regional Air Office. Again, we congratulate you on the clean air fine particle status that your state has achieved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. I. Palmer, Jr.", with a large, stylized initial "J" and a trailing flourish.

J. I. Palmer, Jr.
Regional Administrator

cc: Charles Chisolm, MSDEQ
Dwight K. Wylie, P.E., Air Div, MSDEQ