



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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Ref: 8P-AR

MAR 24 2004

Honorable John Hoeven
Governor of North Dakota
State Capitol
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Governor Hoeven:

Thank you for your letter of June 25, 2003 forwarding North Dakota's Division of Air Quality's recommendations on air quality designations for the national health based standards for fine particles.

Your letter is an important step toward providing citizens in your state with critical information about air pollution levels in their community. We intend to carefully review the recommendations and work with Terry O'Clair, Director, North Dakota's Division of Air Quality, as necessary in determining final designations.

As explained in the attached guidance, our April 2003 PM_{2.5} designations guidance established the metropolitan area (i.e., the larger of the Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) or Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)) as the presumptive boundary for PM_{2.5} nonattainment areas, based on the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) 1999 definition of CMSA and MSA. We acknowledged in our April 2003 guidance that OMB planned to publish revised urban area definitions sometime in 2003, but because the specific release date was not known at that time, the guidance stated that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) anticipated using the 1999 definitions for the PM_{2.5} designations process. OMB subsequently issued revised urban area definitions on June 6, 2003. While we are not requiring states to use the recently-issued OMB urban area definitions, EPA does intend to assess all counties included in OMB's 2003 definitions, as well as any adjacent counties, when reviewing each state's recommendations. All counties will be reviewed using the 9 factors identified in the April 1, 2003 guidance.



We look forward to working with North Dakota in the coming months on designations for the fine particle standards. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me or Richard Long, Director, Air and Radiation Program of my staff, at 303-312-6005.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. E. Roberts', written in a cursive style.

Robert E. Roberts
Regional Administrator

enclosure

cc: L. David Glatt, Chief, EHS w/enclosure
Terry O'Clair, Director, Air Quality w/enclosure