



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

REGION 2  
290 BROADWAY  
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

AUG 14 2008

Mr. Carlos López-Freytes  
Chairman  
Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board  
P.O. Box 11488  
San Juan, PR 00910

Dear Chairman Freytes:

Thank you for your recommendations on the status of fine particle pollution throughout Puerto Rico. Fine-particle pollution represents one of the most significant barriers to clean air facing our nation today. Health studies link these tiny particles – about 1/30<sup>th</sup> the diameter of a human hair – to serious human health problems including aggravated asthma, increased respiratory symptoms like coughing and difficult or painful breathing, chronic bronchitis, decreased lung function, and even premature death in people with heart and lung disease. Fine particle pollution can remain suspended in the air for long periods of time and create public health problems far away from emission sources. Reducing levels of this fine-particle (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) pollution is an important part of our commitment to clean, healthy air.

We have reviewed your September 25, 2007 letter submitting Puerto Rico's recommendations on air quality designations for the most recent 24-hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> air quality standard. The revised standard is referred to as the "2006" 24-hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> air quality standard. Consistent with the Clean Air Act, this letter is to inform you that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) agrees that Puerto Rico is in attainment at this time. This means that across Puerto Rico, all areas meet the 2006 24-hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard. This is truly good news for the residents of Puerto Rico.

EPA has taken steps to reduce fine particle pollution across the country, such as the Clean Diesel Program to dramatically reduce emissions from highway, nonroad and stationary diesel engines. In addition, state programs to attain the previous PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards will also help to reduce unhealthy levels of fine particle pollution.

We intend to make final designation decisions for the 24-hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard by December 18, 2008. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. We look forward to a continued dialogue with you as we work together to implement the PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan J. Steinberg".

Alan J. Steinberg  
Regional Administrator

cc: Carmelo Vázquez Fernández, EQB

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