



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 5  
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD  
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

AUG 19 2014

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

The Honorable John Kasich  
Governor of Ohio  
Riffe Center, 30<sup>th</sup> Floor  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Governor Kasich:

Thank you for your recommendations dated December 13, 2013, of air quality designations for the 2012 revised primary annual fine particle (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) throughout Ohio. I appreciate the information Ohio shared with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as we move forward to improve PM<sub>2.5</sub> air quality. This letter is to notify you of EPA's preliminary response to Ohio's recommendation and to inform you of our approach for completing the initial area designations for the 2012 revised primary annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard.

On December 14, 2012, EPA promulgated a revised primary annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> NAAQS (78 FR 3086, January 15, 2013). In that action, EPA revised the primary annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard, strengthening it from 15.0 micrograms per cubic meter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) to 12.0  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ; retained the existing 24-hour PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard at 35  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ; retained the existing 24-hour PM<sub>10</sub> (coarse particle) standard at 150  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ; and retained the current suite of secondary PM standards. EPA revised the primary annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard based on an integrated assessment of an extensive body of new scientific evidence, which substantially strengthens our body of knowledge regarding PM<sub>2.5</sub>-related health effects. The revised primary annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard will provide increased protection for children, older adults, persons with pre-existing heart and lung disease, and other at-risk populations against an array of PM<sub>2.5</sub>-related adverse health effects, including premature mortality, increased hospital admissions and emergency department visits, and development and exacerbation of chronic respiratory disease.

History shows us that better health and cleaner air go hand-in-hand with economic growth. Working closely with the states and tribes, EPA is implementing the standards using a commonsense approach that improves air quality and minimizes the burden on state, local, and tribal governments. As part of this process, EPA is working with the states and tribes to identify areas in the country that meet the standards and those that need to take steps to reduce PM<sub>2.5</sub> air pollution. Within one year of promulgation of a new or revised air quality standard, the Clean Air Act requires the Governor of each state to submit to EPA a list of all areas in the state, with a designation recommendation for each area. As a first step in implementing the 2012 annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard, Governors were to submit their designation recommendations, including appropriate area boundaries, by December 13, 2013.

As required by the Clean Air Act, EPA then promulgates designations for all areas across the country. EPA designates an area as “nonattainment” if it is violating the 2012 annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> NAAQS or if it is contributing to a violation of the NAAQS in a nearby area. Consistent with designations for previous PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards, EPA intends to use a designation category of “unclassifiable/attainment” for areas that are monitoring attainment or do not have monitors, but for which EPA has reason to believe are likely attainment and are not contributing to nearby violations. Additionally, EPA intends to designate as “unclassifiable” those areas where EPA cannot determine based on available information whether the area is meeting the NAAQS or where EPA has not determined that the area contributes to a nearby violation. At this time, EPA is proceeding with initial area designations using quality-assured, certified air quality monitoring data from 2011 to 2013.

EPA has reviewed Ohio’s December 12, 2013 annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> designation recommendations and other relevant technical information, including 2011–2013 air quality data, and EPA intends to modify Ohio’s recommended area boundaries for the Canton-Massillon, OH, Cleveland, OH, and Cincinnati-Hamilton, OH-KY areas. Technical Support Documents, which provide a detailed analysis to support our preliminary decisions, are enclosed and are also available on the EPA’s website at <http://www.epa.gov/pmdesignations/2012standards/state.htm>. EPA intends to designate all other areas of the state as unclassifiable/attainment. EPA will continue to work with state officials regarding the appropriate boundaries for the areas in Ohio. If Ohio has additional information for EPA to consider, please submit it to us by October 29, 2014.

EPA will make its proposed designation decisions and supporting documentation available to the general public for review and comment. We will be announcing a 30-day public comment period shortly in the *Federal Register*. After considering any additional information we receive, the EPA plans to promulgate final annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> designations in December of 2014.

EPA is committed to working with the states and tribes to share the responsibility of reducing PM<sub>2.5</sub> air pollution. Current and upcoming federal standards and safeguards – including pollution reduction rules for power plants, vehicles, and fuels – will ensure steady progress to reduce PM<sub>2.5</sub>-forming pollution and will protect public health in communities across the country. We look forward to a continued dialogue with you and your staff as we work together to implement

the 2012 annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard. If you any questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Ronna Beckmann or Eileen Deamer, the Region 5 Intergovernmental Liaisons, at (312) 886-3000.

Sincerely,



Susan Hedman  
Regional Administrator

Enclosures

cc:

Craig W. Butler  
Director, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

Robert Hodanbosi  
Chief, Division of Air Pollution Control  
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency