



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

OFFICE OF THE  
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

Robert Martin  
Chairperson  
Morongo Band of Mission Indians  
12700 Pumarra Rd.  
Banning, California 92220

AUG 19 2014

Dear Chairperson Martin:

This letter is to notify you of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) preliminary decision to designate the Morongo Band of Mission Indians' area of Indian country as nonattainment for the 2012 annual fine particle National Ambient Air Quality Standard (2012 annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> NAAQS) and to inform you of our approach for completing the designations. Although your involvement is not required, we would like to invite you to participate in the designations process and to offer you consultation.

In a letter dated May 22, 2014, the EPA encouraged you to participate in the designations process, request consultation, and submit recommendations if you chose to do so. We did not receive a recommendation letter or consultation request from you. However, because the EPA is required to designate all areas of the country, we intend to promulgate an appropriate designation for your area of Indian country. This is not the final step in the designation process, and you still have time to provide air quality information to the EPA and request consultation. More information regarding this designation is included below.

After considering relevant technical information, including 2011–2013 air quality data, the EPA intends to designate your area of Indian country as nonattainment along with the surrounding state area. A Technical Support Document, which provides additional detail regarding the status of data for your area of Indian country and the rationale to support the EPA's nonattainment designation, is enclosed and is available on the EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/airquality/particlepollution/designations/2012standards/tribal.htm>. If you have additional information that the EPA should consider, we ask that you submit it to us by October 29, 2014.

Please notify us by September 29, 2014 if you are interested in consulting with us regarding the designations process. When requested, consultation will be conducted in accordance with the EPA Policy on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes ([www.epa.gov/tribal/consultation/consult-policy.htm](http://www.epa.gov/tribal/consultation/consult-policy.htm)).

As background, on December 14, 2012, the EPA promulgated a revised primary annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> NAAQS (78 FR 3086, January 15, 2013). In that action, the 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. The 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.

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

The EPA will make its preliminary 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 additional information we receive, the EPA plans to promulgate final annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> designations in December of 2014.

The 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 assure 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 working together with you and your staff to implement the 2012 annual PM<sub>2.5</sub> NAAQS. If your Tribe is interested in consultation or participating in further discussions or meetings with the EPA officials about the designations process, please contact me or have your staff contact Kerry Drake of my staff at 415-947-4157, or drake.kerry@epa.gov.

Sincerely,



Jared Blumenfeld

Enclosure

cc: James Payne, Environmental Director, Morongo Band of Mission Indians