



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

**REGION 8**

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**JUN 28 2004**

Ref: 8P-AR

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

Dear Governor Hoeven:

Fine-particle pollution represents one of the most significant barriers to clean air facing our nation today. These tiny particles – about 1/30<sup>th</sup> 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<sub>2.5</sub> pollution.

In February, your state submitted its recommended boundaries for PM<sub>2.5</sub> attainment and nonattainment areas. After a thorough review of your recommendations, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finds 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<sub>2.5</sub> designations determining those areas that meet or do not meet the fine particle standards.

The EPA 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 PM<sub>2.5</sub> standards. Should you have any questions, I invite you to contact me at our toll free number 1-800-227-8917. Your staff or that of the North Dakota Department of Air Quality may also wish to contact Richard Long, Director of our Air and Radiation Program, at (303) 312-6005, or Libby Faulk, Air and Radiation Program staff, at (303) 312-6083. Again, we congratulate you on the clean air fine particle status that your state has achieved.

Sincerely yours,



Robert E. Roberts  
Regional Administrator

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



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