



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

APR 3 0 2010

OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

The Honorable William Rhodes
Gila River Indian Community
P.O. Box 98
Sacaton, Arizona 85247

Dear Governor Rhodes:

The purpose of this letter is to explain the status of the designations for the coarse particle (PM_{10}) and fine particle ($PM_{2.5}$) national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS), and to offer formal consultation with the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) on these issues prior to reaching our preliminary decisions. The consultation process will provide a forum for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and GRIC to confer on technical information and next steps.

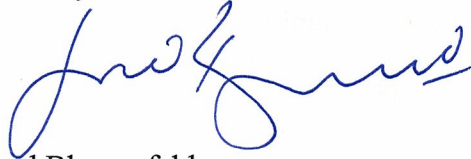
Previously, EPA had designated Pinal County as "unclassifiable/attainment" for the 1987 PM_{10} NAAQS and for the 1997 annual $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS. We also deferred the initial air quality designation of Pinal County for the 2006 24-hour $PM_{2.5}$ NAAQS. Based on the 2006-2008 air quality monitoring data, Pinal County appears to be violating all three standards so EPA is in the process of gathering and evaluating information on the potential nonattainment boundaries for these standards.

On October 14, 2009, and December 30, 2009, EPA sent letters requesting your recommendations regarding the PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ designations for the GRIC reservation. Thank you for your letter dated February 5, 2010, in which you recommended "attainment/unclassifiable" as the designation for GRIC for the $PM_{2.5}$ standards. We agree with your recommendation. We have also engaged in discussions with your air quality staff regarding the importance of recognizing the boundaries of GRIC as an air quality control region. We have elevated this issue to Headquarters and we are working with them to address the concerns raised by GRIC.

The PM_{10} situation is more complicated due to a number of "exceptional events" that have been flagged in EPA's air quality system database. If EPA concurs on all of these exceptional events, GRIC would be attaining the PM_{10} standard; however, if EPA does not concur, GRIC would be violating the PM_{10} standard. In order to work through these issues with your environmental staff, we are recommending to EPA Headquarters that the PM_{10} designation be deferred for GRIC until we have resolved the exceptional event issues. Resolving the exceptional events issues may take several months and we will be in contact with GRIC's air quality staff during this time.

We are requesting that formal consultation occur by June 24, 2010. Please contact Colleen McKaughan, Associate Air Director, at (520) 498-0118 to schedule the consultation and to answer any questions that you may have. We look forward to productive discussions as we continue working with you and your staff to develop the PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} designations.

Sincerely,



Jared Blumenfeld
Regional Administrator

cc: Margaret Cook, Environmental Director