



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 1

1 CONGRESS STREET, SUITE 1100
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02114-2023

June 28, 2004

Honorable Donald L. Carcieri
Governor of Rhode Island
State House
Executive Chambers
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Governor Carcieri:

Fine-particle pollution represents one of the most significant barriers to clean air facing our nation today. These tiny particles - about 1/30th 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_{2.5} pollution.

On February 11, 2004, you sent us your recommendations on fine-particle air quality designations. After a thorough review of your recommendations, EPA agrees that the entire State of Rhode Island 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 Rhode Island.

We challenge you to not only maintain, but also continue the progress you have made toward clean air. We wish to ensure that there is no backsliding in the clean air status for fine particles that your state has achieved. This is especially important as your economy grows in the future. You will hear from us again in November when EPA makes its final decisions on PM_{2.5} designations determining those areas that meet or do not meet the fine particle standards.

The Bush Administration 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.

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We look forward to a continued dialogue with you as we work together to implement the PM_{2.5} standards. Should your staff have any questions, I invite them to contact David Conroy, Acting Chief of the Air Programs Branch, at 617-918-1661. Again, we congratulate you on the clean air fine particle status that your state has achieved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert W. Varney
Regional Administrator

cc: Frederick J. Vincent, Interim Director, RI DEM
Stephen Majkut, OAR, RI DEM