



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 1
1 CONGRESS STREET, SUITE 1100
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02114-2023

June 28, 2004

Honorable Brenda Commander
Chief
Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians
88 Bell Road
Littleton, ME 04730

Dear Chief Commander:

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 PM2.5 pollution.

After a thorough review of information on air quality, EPA intends to designate your lands as in attainment with the fine particle standard at this time. This means that all areas meet the more protective, health-based fine-particle standard. That is truly good news for the residents of your lands. You will hear from us again in November when EPA makes its final decisions on PM2.5 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.

We look forward to a continued dialogue with you as we work together to implement the PM2.5 standards. Should you or your staff have any questions, I invite you to contact David Conroy of my office. Again, we congratulate you on the clean air fine particle status that your lands have achieved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Varney".

Robert W. Varney
Regional Administrator

cc: Sharri Venno, Environmental Planner

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