



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

JUN 28 2004

Honorable Charles W. Turnbull
Governor
Office of the Governor
21-22 Kongons Gade
Charlotte Amalie
St. Thomas, VI 00801

Dear Governor Turnbull:

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.

In February, the Virgin Islands submitted its recommended boundaries for PM_{2.5} attainment and nonattainment areas. After a thorough review of your recommendations, EPA agrees that the Virgin Islands is in attainment at this time. This means that across the Virgin Islands, all areas meet the more protective, health-based fine-particle standard. That is truly good news for the residents of the Virgin Islands.

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 the Virgin Islands has achieved. 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.

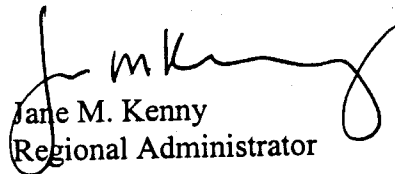
The Bush Administration has made the reduction of fine particle pollution a critical element of a comprehensive national clean air strategy. This strategy includes EPA's recent rule to reduce pollution from nonroad diesel engines, and more stringent controls on diesel trucks and buses starting in 2007. 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 PM2.5 standards. Should you or your staff have any questions, I invite you to contact me at (212) 637-5000 or have your staff contact Walter Mugdan, Director of the Division of Environmental Planning and Protection at (212) 637-3724. Again, we congratulate you on the clean air fine particle status that the Virgin Islands has achieved.

Sincerely,



Jane M. Kenny
Regional Administrator

cc: Dean C. Plasket, Esq., Commissioner
Department of Planning and Natural Resources