



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION VII
901 NORTH 5TH STREET
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 66101

JUN 23 2007

OFFICE OF
THE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

Mr. Mark Peniska
Chairman
Ponca Tribe of Nebraska
1701 E Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

Dear Chairman Peniska:

Fine-particle pollution represents one of the most significant barriers to clean air facing our nation today. These tiny particles – less than 1/30th 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.

In April, the Region VII Regional Operations Committee submitted its recommended boundaries for PM2.5 attainment and nonattainment areas on behalf of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska. After a review of that recommendation, EPA finds that your tribal lands are in attainment at this time. This means that across your tribal lands, all areas meet the more protective, health-based fine-particle standard. That is truly good news for the residents on your tribal lands.

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 tribe has achieved. 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. These rules will allow most areas of the country to meet those standards without having to impose additional local controls.

We look forward to a continued dialogue with you as we work together to implement the PM2.5 standard. Should you or your staff have any questions, I invite you to contact William Spratlin, Director, Air, RCRA, and Toxics Division at 913-551-7401. Again, we congratulate you on the clean air fine-particle status that your tribe has achieved.

Sincerely,

James Gulliford
Regional Administrator