



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 1

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

Honorable Deval Patrick
Governor of Massachusetts
State House, Room 360
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Patrick:

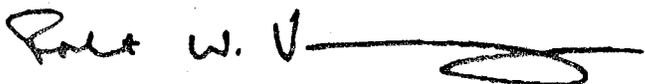
Thank you for your recommendations on the status of fine particle pollution throughout Massachusetts. Fine-particle pollution represents one of the most significant barriers to clean air facing our nation today. Health studies link these tiny particles – about 1/30th the diameter of a human hair – to serious human health problems including aggravated asthma, increased respiratory symptoms like coughing and difficult or painful breathing, chronic bronchitis, decreased lung function, and even premature death in people with heart and lung disease. Fine particle pollution can remain suspended in the air for long periods of time and create public health problems far away from emission sources. Reducing levels of fine-particle (PM_{2.5}) pollution is an important part of our nation's commitment to clean, healthy air.

We have reviewed the December 18, 2007 letter submitting Massachusetts' recommendations on air quality designations for the 2006 24-hour PM_{2.5} standards. We have also reviewed the technical information submitted to support Massachusetts' recommendations. We appreciate the effort the Commonwealth has made to develop this supporting information. Consistent with the Clean Air Act, this letter is to inform you that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) agrees that all of Massachusetts is in attainment at this time. This means that across the Commonwealth, all areas meet the 2006 24-hour PM_{2.5} standards. This is truly good news for the residents of Massachusetts.

EPA has taken steps to reduce fine particle pollution across the country, such as the Clean Diesel Program to dramatically reduce emissions from highway, nonroad and stationary diesel engines. In addition, State programs to attain the 1997 PM_{2.5} standards will also help to reduce unhealthy levels of fine particle pollution.

We intend to make final designation decisions for the 2006 24-hour PM_{2.5} standards by December 18, 2008. Please also be aware that in near future, EPA is planning to publish a notice in the Federal Register to solicit public comments on our intended designation decisions. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Your air quality staff may wish to contact Anne Arnold, Manager of the Air Quality Planning Unit, at 617-918-1047. We look forward to a continued dialogue with you as we work together to implement the PM_{2.5} standards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Varney", followed by a horizontal line and a large, stylized flourish.

Robert W. Varney
Regional Administrator

cc: Ian Bowles, Secretary, EOE
Laurie Burt, Commissioner, MassDEP
Barbara Kwetz, Mass DEP