



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029

AUG 18 2008

Honorable Adrian M. Fenty
Mayor of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 316
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mayor Fenty:

Thank you for your recommendations on the status of fine particle pollution (PM_{2.5}) throughout the District of Columbia (D.C.). 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 pollution is an important part of our nation's commitment to clean, healthy air.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the December 18, 2007 letter from Mayor Adrian M. Fenty, submitting the District of Columbia's recommendations on air quality designations for the 2006 24-hour PM_{2.5} standard. EPA has also reviewed the technical information submitted to support the recommendations. EPA appreciates the effort the District of Columbia has made to develop this supporting information.

Consistent with the Clean Air Act, this letter is to inform you that the EPA intends to make modifications to the District of Columbia's recommended designations and boundaries. Based upon 2005 to 2007 air quality monitoring data, the Washington, D.C. area is now in attainment. This is truly good news for the residents of the Washington, D.C. area.

EPA has enclosed a detailed description of the areas where EPA intends to modify the District of Columbia's recommendations, and the basis for such modification. Your District Department of the Environment Director, Mr. George S. Hawkins and the Air Quality Division Associate Director, Ms. Cecily M. Beall, will also receive a copy of this letter and the enclosure. Should you have additional information that you wish to be considered by EPA in this process, please provide it to EPA Region III by October 20, 2008.



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 implemented to attain the 1997 PM_{2.5} standards, will also help to reduce unhealthy levels of fine particle pollution.

EPA intends to make final designation decisions for the 2006 24-hour PM_{2.5} standard by December 18, 2008. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Please also be aware that in the near future, EPA is planning to publish a notice in the Federal Register to solicit public comments on our intended designation decisions. EPA looks forward to a continued dialogue with you as we work together to implement the PM_{2.5} standards.

Sincerely,



Donald S. Welsh
Regional Administrator

Enclosure

cc: Mr. George S. Hawkins, Director
District of Columbia Department of the Environment

Ms. Cecily M. Beall, Associate Director for Air Quality Division
District Department of the Environment

Enclosure 1

**District of Columbia
Area Designations for the 2006 24-Hour
Fine Particle National Ambient Air Quality Standard**

The table below identifies that EPA intends to designate Washington, D.C. as attaining the 2006 24-hour fine particle standard.¹ A county or an area will be designated as nonattainment if it has an air quality monitor that is violating the standard or if the county or area is determined to be contributing to the violation of the standard.

Area	District of Columbia Recommended Nonattainment Area	EPA's Intended Nonattainment Area
Washington, D.C.	District of Columbia	None: monitoring attainment based on 2005- 2007 data

¹ EPA designated nonattainment areas for the 1997 fine particle standards in 2005. In 2006, the 24-hour PM_{2.5} standard was revised from 65 micrograms per cubic meter (average of 98th percentile values for 3 consecutive years) to 35 micrograms per cubic meter. The level of the annual standard for PM_{2.5} remained unchanged at 15 micrograms per cubic meter (average of annual averages for 3 consecutive years).