



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

AUG 18 2008

Honorable Timothy M. Kaine
Governor of Virginia
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor Kaine:

Thank you for your recommendations on the status of fine particle pollution (PM_{2.5}) throughout Virginia. 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 17, 2007 letter from Mr. David K. Paylor, Director of the Department of Environmental Quality, submitting Virginia'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 Virginia has made to develop this supporting information.

Consistent with the Clean Air Act, this letter is to inform you that EPA agrees that the entire Commonwealth of Virginia is in attainment at this time. This means that across the Commonwealth of Virginia, all areas meet the 2006 24-hour PM_{2.5} standard. This is truly good news for the residents of Virginia.

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

cc: Mr. David K. Paylor, Director
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

Mr. Michael G. Dowd, Air Quality Division Director
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality