



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

AUG 18 2008

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

R-19J

The Honorable Tim Pawlenty
Governor of Minnesota
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Governor Pawlenty:

Thank you for your recommendations on the status of fine particle (PM_{2.5}) pollution throughout Minnesota. As you know, 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.

We have reviewed the December 14, 2007, letter from Brad Moore, Commissioner of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, submitting Minnesota's recommendations on air quality designations for the 2006 24-hour PM_{2.5} standards. We have also reviewed the technical information submitted to support Minnesota's recommendations. We appreciate the effort your State has made to develop this supporting information. Consistent with the Clean Air Act, this letter is to inform you that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency agrees that your entire state is in attainment at this time. This means that across your state, all areas meet the 2006 PM_{2.5} standards. This is truly good news for the residents of Minnesota.

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 EPA plans to publish a notice in the Federal Register in the near future in order to solicit public comments on our intended designation decisions. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. We look forward to a continued dialogue with you as we work together to implement the PM_{2.5} standards.

Sincerely,


Lynn Buhl
Regional Administrator