



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 6

1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200
DALLAS, TX 75202-2733

AUG 18 2008

The Honorable Bill Richardson
Governor of New Mexico
State Capitol, Room 400
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Governor Richardson:

Thank you for your recommendations on the status of fine particle pollution throughout New Mexico. 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 your November 16, 2007 letter submitting New Mexico's recommendations on air quality designations for the 2006 24-hour PM_{2.5} standards as well as your January 9, 2008 letter submitting Bernalillo County's recommendation. We have also reviewed the technical information submitted to support New Mexico'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 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) agrees that your entire state, including Bernalillo County, is in attainment at this time. This means that across your state, all areas meet the 2006 24-hour PM_{2.5} standards. This is truly good news for the residents of your state. We challenge you to not only maintain, but also continue the progress you have made toward clean air.

EPA has taken steps to reduce fine particle pollution both regionally and across the country. These actions include the Clean Diesel Program to dramatically reduce emissions from highway, non-road and stationary diesel engines, and the Fine Particle Implementation rule, which defines the requirements for states with levels of fine particle pollution that do not meet national air quality standards.

You should also be aware that EPA is opening a 30-day public comment period on our intended designation decisions. 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. We look forward to a continued dialogue with you as we work together to implement the PM_{2.5} standards.

Sincerely yours,



Richard E. Greene
Regional Administrator

cc: Mr. Ron Curry, Secretary
New Mexico Environment Department

Ms. Mary Uhl, Chief
Air Quality Bureau
New Mexico Environment Department

Mr. Jim Norton, Director
Environmental Protection Division
New Mexico Environment Department

Mr. Alfredo Santistevan, Director
Environmental Health Department
City of Albuquerque