



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION VII
901 NORTH 5TH STREET
KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 66101

OFFICE OF
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

AUG 15 2008

The Honorable Dave Heineman
Governor of Nebraska
Office of the Governor
PO Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848

Dear Governor Heineman:

Thank you for your recommendations on the status of fine particle pollution throughout Nebraska. 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 2007 letter from you submitting Nebraska'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 Nebraska's recommendations. We appreciate the effort Nebraska 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 with your recommendation that the entire state should be designated attainment.

The EPA has taken steps to reduce fine particle pollution across the country, such as the Clean Diesel Program, which will dramatically reduce emissions from highway, nonroad and stationary diesel engines. In addition, your state's continued implementation of the 1997 PM_{2.5} NAAQS will help reduce unhealthy levels of fine particle pollution for the 24-hour PM_{2.5} standard.

We intend to make final designation decisions for the 2006 24-Hour PM_{2.5} standards by December 18, 2008. 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,

John B. Askew
Regional Administrator

cc: Mike Linder, Director, NDEQ
Shelley Kaderly, Administrator, Air Quality Division, NDEQ