



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

75 Hawthorne Street

San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

**OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR**

AUG 18 2008

The Honorable Linda Lingle
Governor of Hawaii
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Governor Lingle:

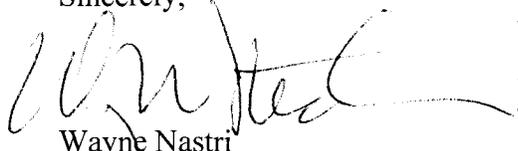
Thank you for your recommendation on the status of fine particle pollution throughout Hawaii. Fine-particle pollution represents one of the most significant barriers to clean air facing our nation today. Health studies link these tiny particles – about 1/30th the diameter of a human hair – to serious human health problems including aggravated asthma, increased respiratory symptoms such as 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 letter of November 9, 2007 submitting Hawaii's recommendation on air quality designations for the 2006 24-hour PM_{2.5} standards. We have also reviewed the technical information submitted to support Hawaii's recommendation. 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 is in attainment at this time, based on monitoring data from 2005-2007. This means that across your state, all areas meet the 2006 24-hour PM_{2.5} standards. However, we understand that monitors on the Island of Hawaii are now exceeding the 2006 24-hour PM_{2.5} standards due to volcanic activity. We also understand that you intend to flag these exceedances as exceptional events. We will continue to work with you as this air quality challenge unfolds.

EPA has taken steps to reduce fine particle pollution both regionally and across the country such as the Clean Diesel Program to dramatically reduce emissions from highway, nonroad and stationary diesel engines. In addition, State programs to attain the 1997 PM_{2.5} standards will also help to reduce unhealthy levels of fine particle pollution.

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 the 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 or have your staff contact Deborah Jordan, Air Division Director, at 415-947-8715. We look forward to a continued dialogue with you as we work together to implement the PM_{2.5} standards.

Sincerely,



Wayne NASTRI
Regional Administrator

cc: Laurence Lau, Deputy Director for Environmental Health, Hawaii Department of Health
Wilfred Nagamine, Manager, Clean Air Branch, Hawaii Department of Health