



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards
Research Triangle Park, North Carolina 27711

APR 27 1990

Ms. Cheryl Richardson
Anchorage Clean Air Coalition
1747 Laurence Court
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Ms. Richardson:

This letter is in response to your March 29, 1990 letter requesting clarification of the carbon monoxide (CO) national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS).

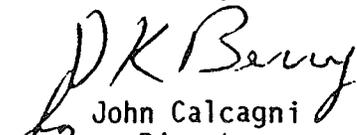
On April 30, 1971, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) promulgated the NAAQS for CO under section 109 of the Clean Air Act (36 FR 8186). Identical primary and secondary standards were set at levels of 9 parts per million (ppm), 8-hour average; and 35 ppm, 1-hour average; neither to be exceeded more than once per year. In 1978, EPA began its review of the CO standards and on September 13, 1985 EPA reaffirmed the primary standards and rescinded the secondary standards (50 FR 37484). Therefore, primary NAAQS for CO remain at 9 ppm, 8-hour average; and 35 ppm, 1-hour average.

As for the definition of a violation, EPA guidance since the late 1970's has been that in order to compare a monitor reading to the NAAQS, first the value must be rounded off to the same number of significant figures as the NAAQS with which the reading is being compared. Since the CO NAAQS (8-hour average) has only one significant figure, the monitored value must be rounded to the nearest whole number. Values of 0.5 and up are rounded up and values less than 0.5 are rounded down. Therefore, the lowest monitored value that could be considered a violation of the CO NAAQS is 9.5 ppm. This approach is described in 40 CFR 50.8(d) (copy enclosed).

With respect to the target CO level for State implementation plan revisions, EPA has employed the CO NAAQS (9 ppm) as the appropriate target level.

If you have any further questions, please call Jill Vitas of my staff at (919)541-5313.

Sincerely,


John Calcagni
Director
Air Quality Management Division

Enclosure