



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT - 8 2009

THE ADMINISTRATOR

The Honorable Rick Perry
Governor, State of Texas
State Capitol
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Governor Perry:

Based on the most recent air quality data, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has determined that all areas in Texas meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for fine particles (PM_{2.5}), measured over a 24-hour period. Consistent with the requirements of the Clean Air Act, EPA is designating all of Texas as unclassifiable/attainment. I commend the residents of Texas and their environmental leaders for meeting these air-quality standards.

My predecessor, Administrator Stephen Johnson, sent a letter last December, identifying areas that EPA had designated as meeting or not meeting the 24-hour PM_{2.5} standards based on data available at that time. However, the Agency did not complete the process of designating areas as attainment or nonattainment. Once the new EPA leadership team was in place, we reviewed the status of areas for the 24-hour PM_{2.5} standards to ensure that the final designation decisions reflect current policy and the most up-to-date air-quality monitoring data. The final rule I signed today reflects the results of that review.

Our review of the most recent air quality data indicates a new violation of the annual fine-particle standards in Harris County. Within the next few days, you should receive a separate letter from Lawrence Starfield, Acting Regional Administrator for EPA's Region 6 Office. His letter will outline the process EPA will work through with you to address this new violation.

Meeting these air-quality standards is very important to protect public health and the environment. Fine-particle pollution is a complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets. When inhaled, they can reach the deepest regions of the lungs and cause serious health problems, including aggravated asthma, chronic bronchitis, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, heart attack and premature death in people with heart or lung disease. Fine-particle pollution is also the main cause of visibility impairment in our cities and our treasured national parks.

EPA has taken significant actions that will reduce fine-particle pollution locally, regionally and nationally. The Clean Diesel Program, for example, will dramatically reduce particle-forming emissions from highway, non-road and stationary diesel engines. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided \$300 million in new funding for

programs to support the implementation of verified and certified diesel-emission reduction technologies. Federal programs to reduce particle-forming emissions of nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide from stationary sources have also dramatically reduced the interstate transport of pollution that contributes to local violations of the standards. However, protecting public health by keeping fine-particle pollution levels below EPA's health protective standards will require continued work by EPA as well as our valued partners at the state, tribal and local environmental agencies.

Thank you for your continued efforts to improve air quality. Together, we have made considerable progress in reducing air pollution and its impacts on public health and the environment. For additional technical information, please visit <http://www.epa.gov/pmdesignations>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa P. Jackson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lisa P. Jackson

cc: Mr. Bryan Shaw
Commissioner, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Mr. David McIntosh
Associate Administrator, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations

Mr. Lawrence Starfield
Acting Regional Administrator, Region 6