



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC 27711

OFFICE OF
AIR QUALITY PLANNING
AND STANDARDS

June 29, 2012

Dear Tribal Leader:

On June 14, 2012, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed to revise the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for particulate matter (PM). The purpose of this letter is to invite you to consult on this proposal.

The current PM NAAQS include both primary (health-based) and secondary (welfare-based) standards. The EPA has separate standards for fine particles (PM_{2.5}) and coarse particles (PM₁₀).

To protect public health, the EPA is proposing to:

- Strengthen the annual PM_{2.5} standard by lowering the level from 15.0 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) to within the range of 12.0 to 13.0 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. The EPA is also seeking comment on alternative standard levels down to 11.0 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.
- Retain the current 24-hour PM_{2.5} standard at 35 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.
- Retain the existing 24-hour PM₁₀ standard of 150 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

To protect public welfare, the EPA is proposing to:

- Set a distinct secondary standard for PM_{2.5} to address visibility impairment primarily in urban areas. The proposed standard would limit visibility impairment due to fine particles to a level set at one of two options – either 30 deciviews or 28 deciviews over a 24-hour period. Under the proposed standard, PM_{2.5} light extinction will be calculated using speciated PM_{2.5} mass and relative humidity data, similar to the Regional Haze Program.
- Retain the existing secondary PM standards (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀) to provide protection for non-visibility effects such as materials damage, climate impacts, and ecological effects.

The proposed rule and accompanying materials, including maps relating to current and projected air quality, are available on the EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/air/particlepollution/actions.html>.

The proposed rule was published in the *Federal Register* today, June 29, 2012. The EPA will accept comment for 63 days following publication or until August 31, 2012. The EPA will also hold two public hearings: one in Philadelphia, PA on July 17, 2012 and one in Sacramento, CA on July 19, 2012. We will provide an informational call if there is interest or if you prefer to initiate a formal consultation with the EPA on this rule, please contact Toni Colón at (919)541-0069, email colon.toni@epa.gov or Laura McKelvey at (919) 541-5497, email: mckelvey.laura@epa.gov.

We value your input to assure that we develop the best rule possible. We endeavor to conduct our efforts with sensitivity to the needs and culture of tribes and with attention to the impact of our actions on tribal sovereignty. We look forward to receiving your input.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lydia", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lydia N. Wegman
Director
Health and Environmental Impacts Division
Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards

cc: Tribal Environmental Director
Tribal Environmental Staff