



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 10

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, Washington 98101-3140

August 18, 2008

CERTIFIED MAIL – RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

The Honorable Sarah Palin
Governor of Alaska
Post Office Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001

Dear Governor Palin:

Thank you for your recommendations on the status of fine particle pollution throughout Alaska. 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.

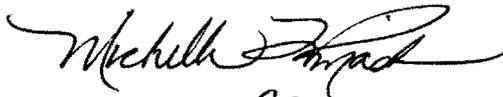
We have reviewed the December 14, 2007 and the June 2, 2008 letters from you and Alice Edwards, Acting Director, Air Quality Division, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, submitting Alaska's recommendations on air quality designations for the 2006 24-Hour PM_{2.5} standards. We have also reviewed the technical information submitted to support Alaska's recommendations. We appreciate the effort your State has made to develop this supporting information. U. S. Environmental Protection Agency intends to designate two areas in Alaska as nonattainment; a portion of the Fairbanks North Star Borough and a portion of Juneau Borough. This letter is to inform you that EPA intends to make modifications to Alaska's recommended boundaries for these areas.

We have enclosed a detailed description of areas where EPA intends to modify your state recommendations, and the basis for such modification. Your Environmental Director will also receive a copy of this letter and the enclosure. Should you have additional information that you wish to be considered by EPA in this process, please provide it to us by October 20, 2008.

EPA has taken steps to reduce fine particle pollution both regionally and across the country. These actions include the Clean Diesel Program to dramatically reduce emissions from highway, nonroad and stationary diesel engines, and the Fine Particle Implementation rule, which defines requirements for states with levels of fine particle pollution that do not meet national air quality standards.

Please also be aware that in near future, EPA is planning to publish a notice in the Federal Register to solicit public comments on our intended designation decisions. 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Miller".

Elin D. Miller *for*
Regional Administrator

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Larry Hartig
Commissioner, Alaska Department
of Environmental Conservation

Ms. Alice Edwards
Acting Director, Air Quality Division
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation