



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 1

1 CONGRESS STREET, SUITE 1100
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02114-2023

July 31, 2003

The Honorable Craig R. Benson
Governor of New Hampshire
107 North Main Street, State House - Room 208
Concord, NH 03301

OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

Dear Governor Benson:

Thank you for your letter of July 15, 2003, forwarding New Hampshire's recommendations on air quality designations for the national health-based standard for ground-level ozone, a major constituent of smog. As you know, breathing ozone and fine particles can cause serious respiratory and cardiovascular effects. Many health studies have correlated increased exposure to fine particles with increases in premature death. In 1997, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) revised its national ambient air quality standards for these two pollutants. After prevailing in a lengthy court battle, we are now working with states to take the steps necessary to protect the public from these pollutants. Your letter is an important step toward providing citizens in New Hampshire with critical information about air pollution levels in their community.

We intend to carefully review the recommendations and work with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services in determining final designations. EPA will work through a process to ensure nonattainment areas are defined in a consistent manner throughout the country. Please be aware that your current recommendation deviates from EPA's nonattainment boundary guidance since it does not cover the entire New Hampshire portion of the Boston Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) defined by the Bureau of Census, and it does not include all of the areas in the existing serious ozone nonattainment areas. You have also requested that the southern New Hampshire area be separate from the eastern Massachusetts nonattainment area recommended by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. I would urge you to further consider expanding your recommended boundaries in New Hampshire so as to strengthen your position on the separation of this New Hampshire area from the eastern Massachusetts area. EPA must make its final official designation decisions for ozone by April 15, 2004. For the fine particle standards, states are to make these recommendations by February 2004, and EPA will make its final decisions by December 15, 2004.

Once EPA officially designates an area as not meeting one of these air quality standards, New Hampshire will be required to develop and submit to EPA a plan for cleaning up the air in those designated nonattainment areas. These plans will be due no later than three years after the date that an area is designated as nonattainment. The level of emission controls and the dates for achieving clean air in these nonattainment areas will vary depending upon the severity of the problem.

Help us serve you better. If you need to call us regarding this correspondence in the future, please reference 01-0300165.

We hope that you will encourage the communities in New Hampshire to take early actions to improve their air quality. My staff are available to help identify appropriate pollution control measures. We will also work with other affected states to take necessary steps to reduce air pollution.

We look forward to working with New Hampshire in the coming months on designations. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me or David Conroy, Manager of the Air Quality Planning Unit, at (617) 918-1661.

Sincerely,



Robert W. Varney
Regional Administrator

*Craig -
This suggested approach
may be the best and easiest way
to achieve your goal of splitting
off from the Mass. nonattainment area.
Call if you'd like to discuss.
- Bob*

cc: Michael Nolin, NH DES
Robert Scott, NH DES