UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 4
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
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ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

DEC - 3 2003

4APT-APB

R. Lewis Shaw, P.E., Deputy Commissioner
South Carolina Department of Health
and Environmental Control
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, SC 29201-1708

Dear Mr. Shaw:

Thank you for making recommendations on 8-hour ozone air quality designations. Your letter is an important step in providing citizens of South Carolina with information on air pollution levels where they live and work. Levels of ground-level ozone have improved significantly since the Clean Air Act (CAA) was amended in 1990 at which time 135 areas were designated as not attaining the 1-hour ozone standard. Since that time nearly half those areas (67) have cleaned up their air to meet the 1-hour ozone standard and have been redesignated as attaining that standard. However, many areas have still not met the less stringent 1-hour ozone standard, and in 1997, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) promulgated a more stringent 8-hour ozone national ambient air quality standard. Thus, much work remains to be done. Under the CAA, EPA is required to promulgate designations for new or revised standards such as the 8-hour ozone standard. Earlier this year, after several public interest groups filed a lawsuit claiming EPA had not met the statutory deadline for designating areas for the 8-hour ozone standard, we entered into a consent decree that requires us to promulgate designations by April 15, 2004.

The CAA defines a nonattainment area as any area that does not meet (or that contributes to ambient air quality in a nearby area that does not meet) the national primary or secondary ambient air quality standard for the pollutant. EPA guidance indicates that South Carolina should use the larger of the Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA), Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), or the 1-hour ozone nonattainment area as the presumptive boundary for 8-hour ozone nonattainment areas. The guidance provides 11 factors that South Carolina should consider in determining whether to modify the presumptive boundaries. We have reviewed your letter, dated July 14, 2003, submitting South Carolina's recommendations on air quality designations for the 8-hour ozone standard. We have also reviewed the extensive justification information you have submitted to support your recommendations for areas that differed from the presumptive boundaries. We appreciate the effort the State has made to develop this supporting information. Consistent with section 107(d)(1) of the CAA, this letter is to inform you that, based upon the information contained in your letter, and in the absence of additional substantiation for your recommendations, EPA intends to make modifications to South Carolina's recommended designations and boundaries.

We recognize that you have considered the eleven factors identified in EPA's National designation guidance as you developed your recommendations. However, based on a review of your submittal, the EPA Headquarters Office of Air and Radiation believes the information you provided is not sufficient to justify the conclusion that the partial counties identified below should be excluded from the applicable nonattainment area. Equally important, the way in which these factors were evaluated is not consistent with the manner in which other states and EPA regions have applied these same factors. A nationally consistent view of the 11 factors is essential to ensuring the fair and equitable National implementation of the 8-hour ozone standard and achievement of public health protection for all citizens. If you would like to provide additional information about the areas in question, please provide this information by February 6, 2004, so that we can continue to work with your office as we move forward to make final designations.

EPA has been tracking preliminary 2003 ozone monitoring data and its impact on areas' preliminary 2001-2003 design values. We received your letter, dated November 14, 2003, informing us that the ozone monitoring data for 2003 has completed the full quality assurance and quality control process and has been fully uploaded into the the Air Quality System. The Abbeville, Augusta-Aiken and Florence areas are now meeting the 8-hour ozone standard and, because of this, you have revised your official recommendation for Abbeville, Aiken, Darlington and Florence Counties to attainment. EPA concurs with your revised recommendation for the Abbeville, Augusta-Aiken and Florence areas. The State of Georgia has also sent in a letter indicating that the 2001-2003 monitoring data for the Georgia counties in the Augusta-Aiken CMSA are not violating the 8-hour standard. You also recommended that Cherokee and Pickens Counties, which are part of the Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson CMSA, be designated attainment. We will continue to review issues related to these two counties prior to the final designations decision in April 2004.

The enclosure to this letter identifies the counties that should be included in each nonattainment area. We are also providing a written summary of our reasoning for modifying your recommendations, explaining why we believe your recommendation is not consistent with the statutory definition of a nonattainment area in light of the 11 factors provided in our guidance.

We look forward to a continued dialogue with South Carolina as we work to finalize the designations for the 8-hour ozone standard. We appreciate your efforts and will review any future supporting information the South Carolina wishes to submit on these recommendations. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Beverly Banister, Director, Air,

Pesticides and Toxics Management Division, at (404) 562-9326 or Kay Prince, Chief, Air Planning Branch, at (404) 562-9026.

Sincerely,

J. I. Palmer, Jr.
Regional Administrator

Enclosure

cc: James Joy, SCDHEC
Carol A. Couch, Ph.D., GAEPD
Ron Methier, GAEPD
William G. Ross, Jr., NCDENR
Keith Overcash, NCDENR

Enclosure

The following table identifies the individual areas and counties comprising those areas within South Carolina that EPA intends to designate as nonattainment. Following the table is a description of areas where EPA intends to modify the South Carolina recommendation and the basis for such modification. EPA intends to designate as attainment/unclassifiable all counties not identified in the table below.

Nonattainment Areas		
Area	**South Carolina Recommended Nonattainment Counties**	**EPA Recommended Nonattainment Counties**
Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill NC-SC[1]	None	York
Columbia	Portion of Richland[2]; Portion of Lexington[2]	Richland (whole); Lexington (whole)
Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson	Portion of Anderson, based on MPO boundary, extended to encompass violating monitor[3]; portion of Greenville based on MPO boundary[4]; portion of Spartanburg, based on MPO boundary extended to encompass violating monitor[5];	Anderson (whole), Pickens (whole); Greenville (whole), Spartanburg (whole), and Cherokee (whole)

1. This is an interstate area. A letter addressing the North Carolina portion of this area was sent to the Environmental Commissioner of North Carolina.
2. Description from Section I of State's Justification for Columbia Area.
3. Description from Section I of State's Justification for Anderson Area.
4. Description from Section I of State's Justification for Greenville Area.
5. Description from Section I of State's Justification for Spartanburg Area

Modifications to South Carolina's Recommendations

Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill

York County: The State recommended that York County be attainment. We intend to modify the State's recommendation to include York County in the Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill nonattainment area. This was done because the County is within the presumptive nonattainment area, and it appears to contribute exceedances of the air quality standard at the monitors in that particular nonattainment area. This County is within the presumptive boundary, and the State has not provided a compelling argument to justify excluding this County.

Columbia, South Carolina

Richland County: The State recommended that portion of Richland County that is contained in the Columbia Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) boundary be designated as nonattainment. We intend to modify the State's recommendation to include the entire county of Richland in the Columbia nonattainment area. This was done because there are two significant nitrogen oxides (NOx) sources in the County, International Paper: Eastover and SCE&G: Wateree, which are outside of the proposed boundary. Of these two sources, International Paper-Eastover is the second largest NOx source in Richland County and does not appear to have installed significant controls. Although this source is subject to the State's federally approved plan to meet the NOx State Implementation Plan (SIP) Call, no information is provided regarding specific controls planned or installed at this facility. The other large source, SCE&G Wateree has installed significant controls. The State provided information related to the 11 factors, however, there was not a compelling argument that the proposed partial boundaries for these counties is the appropriate boundary for the nonattainment area.

Lexington County: The State recommended the portion of Lexington County that is contained in the Columbia MPO boundary. We intend to modify the State's recommendation to include the entire county of Lexington County. The State provided information related to the 11 factors, however, there was not a compelling argument that the proposed partial boundaries for these counties is the appropriate one for the nonattainment area.

Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson, South Carolina

The State recommended that the Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson nonattainment area be divided into three separate nonattainment areas. The State recommended that the portion of Anderson County contained in the Anderson MPO, along with a small portion of Pickens County, be one nonattainment area. On November 14, 2003, the State revised this recommendation to exclude all of Pickens County from the nonattainment area. The State recommended that the portion of Greenville County contained in the Greenville MPO be a separate nonattainment area. The State also recommended that the portion of Spartanburg County contained in the Spartanburg MPO, and a small portion of Cherokee County, be a separate nonattainment area. However, on November 14, 2003, the State revised this recommendation to exclude all of Cherokee County from the nonattainment area. We intend to modify the State's recommendation in which they recommended designating Anderson, Greenville and Spartanburg counties into separate nonattainment areas. We believe that these areas should be treated as one nonattainment area, the Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson area. The State's submittal recommended that the area be separated because they do not consider MSA boundaries as a reliable tool for the designation of nonattainment areas. However, we do not believe that this is a technical basis for separating nonattainment areas. The areas that were recommended to be split are considered one airshed, and therefore, the designation should reflect this.

On November 14, 2003, the State revised their recommendation for Pickens and Cherokee Counties to attainment, based on 2001-2003 data. We intend to modify the State's recommendation to include Pickens and Cherokee counties in the Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson nonattainment area. These counties are within the presumptive nonattainment area and appear to contribute to the nonattainment area. The State provided information related to the 11 factors, however, these counties are within the presumptive boundary, and there was not a compelling argument to exclude them.

The State recommended that only the portions of Anderson, Greenville and Spartanburg Counties that are contained in their respective MPOs be nonattainment. We intend to modify the State's recommendation to the whole counties of Anderson, Greenville and Spartanburg. The State provided information related to the 11 factors, however, there was not a compelling argument that the proposed partial boundaries for these counties is the appropriate boundary for the nonattainment area.