UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200
DALLAS, TX 75202-2733

DEC 03 2003

The Honorable Michael Huckabee
Governor of Arkansas
State Capitol Building
Suite 250
Little Rock, AR 72201

Dear Governor Huckabee:

Thank you for your letter of July 14, 2003, in which you submitted Arkansas' recommendations on air quality designations for the 8-hour national health-based standard for ground level ozone. The State submittal was the first step in our working cooperatively to designate as nonattainment those areas in which the air standards have not been attained and in designating attainment those areas that have achieved the clean air goal. As part of this process, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) committed to take into consideration the most recent air quality data collected to date in calendar year 2003 in making our determination. I am pleased to inform you that based on the data collected by the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) in 2003, all areas of Arkansas except Crittenden County are demonstrating attainment of not only the 1-hour, but also the 8-hour ozone standard.

Consistent with the Clean Air Act, Section 107,(d)(1), this letter is to inform you that EPA intends to make modifications to the proposed designations and boundaries you provided on July 14, 2003, to take into consideration this most current ozone monitoring data.

Throughout the 2003 ozone season, ADEQ and local officials in the Little Rock area along with EPA tracked 2003 ozone monitoring data and its impact on the areas' 2001-2003 ozone levels. We are pleased to report that preliminary 2001-2003 ozone monitoring data through the end of November 2003, indicate that the Little Rock area is attaining the 8-hour ozone standard. Therefore, as noted in the enclosure, we are recommending a modification to your recommendation based on this data. Also, based on preliminary 2001-2003 data, only Crittenden County is not in attainment of the 8-hour ozone standard. We want to specifically acknowledge the voluntary efforts in your State to improve the air quality, especially the efforts with early air quality planning in Little Rock and in Crittenden County. The EPA will continue to closely review monitoring data for additional differences that may occur through the remainder of the 2003 calendar year or as a result of data handling procedures to determine if that might affect the State's recommended designations.

The enclosure to this letter provides a table showing the county that we intend to include in the nonattainment area. Additional detail regarding our recommendation is also included.

The State's and EPA's work to identify areas in attainment or in nonattainment is an important step in our commitment to achieving clear air in our Region. I am pleased with the progress that Arkansas has made in improving air quality. We appreciate your efforts and request that additional information the State wishes to have considered in an analysis for boundary determinations be submitted to EPA by February 6, 2004. We look forward to working with Arkansas as we proceed to finalize the designations for the 8-hour ozone standard.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me or have your staff call Mr. Thomas Diggs, of my staff, at (214) 665-3102.

Sincerely yours,

Richard E. Greene
Regional Administrator (6RA)

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Marcus Devine, Director
Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality
Mr. Keith Michaels, Division Chief
Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality

Enclosure

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

	Arkansas Recommended Nonattainment Counties	**EPA Recommended Nonattainment Counties**
Memphis Area	Crittenden	Crittenden

Modifications to Arkansas' Recommendations

Little Rock Area

The State of Arkansas' recommendation was made to designate Faulkner, Lonoke, Pulaski and Saline Counties within the Little Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as nonattainment based on 2000-2002 monitoring data. Preliminary 2001-2003 ozone monitoring data indicate that the Little Rock MSA is not currently violating the 8-hour standard. However, there is concern that through the remainder of the calendar year or through the quality assurance process of the monitoring data, the Little Rock MSA may show a violation. If this situation were to occur, we would consider the entire Little Rock MSA as nonattainment.