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I-H-47 To- Docket
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Pinal County Air Quality Control District

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June 27, 2002

Writer's Direct # - 520-868-6915

Mr. Tom Helms
Group Leader
Ozone Policy and Strategies Group
Air Quality Strategies and Standards Division
Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mail Drop 15
Research Triangle Park, North Carolina 27711

Re: Implementation of the new 8-hour ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard

Dear Mr. Helms:

This letter responds to your request for local input regarding implementation of the 8-hour ozone standard. More specifically, this letter addresses the appropriate considerations for making nonattainment designations under the new standard.

I present this letter on behalf of Pinal County, a political subdivision of the State of Arizona. Pinal County lies in south central Arizona, generally between Phoenix and Tucson.

The Pinal County Board of Supervisors has designated me as the Control Officer of Pinal County's air quality program. Under authority granted by the Arizona legislature, Pinal County locally implements and enforces many of the elements of the Arizona State Implementation Plan, including monitoring local air quality and generally permitting sources in accord with the New Source Review and Title V requirements of the Clean Air Act.

Those in the State of Arizona have long-standing commitments to adequately assess air quality, and to identify the sources of emissions that may adversely impact air quality. Those commitments are reflected in the fact that Pinal County, in cooperation with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and the Gila River Indian Community, collectively operate six in-county ozone monitors that flank the Phoenix urban area. Pinal County also operates an additional ozone monitor adjoining the Tucson urban area.

With respect to the implementation of the 8-hour ozone standard, I ask that you consider and adopt each of the following principles:

1. Nonattainment boundaries should be drawn to include only those areas that violate, or contribute to the violation of, the new standard. Monitoring data and rational analysis of the geographic distribution of contributing sources and source emissions should drive any nonattainment designations. That is, nonattainment designations should reflect fact.

2. To the extent that regular commuter traffic from rural areas may contribute to urban ozone problems, that traffic should not constitute justification for imposing a nonattainment designation on the rural area, provided the those commuting vehicles must comply with the same emission-testing requirements that apply in the urban area.

   Please note that such a emission-testing requirement already does apply with respect to commuter traffic from Pinal County into the major urban centers of Arizona.

3. Arbitrary geographic or political boundaries should neither expand a nonattainment designation beyond what the facts justify, nor should such arbitrary boundaries exempt areas that logically constitute an integral component of a fact-based nonattainment area.

4. The Clean Air Act does call upon the Administrator to consider "planning and control considerations" in designating nonattainment areas. Seemingly, that calls upon the Administrator to consider future development in formulating a nonattainment boundary proposal.

   Considering future development will require the Administrator to indulge in speculation about growth in adjoining areas that may someday contribute to or suffer from the ozone-related problems.

   I respectfully submit that where local data-gathering will assure timely, factual indication of any increases in ozone levels, additional speculation is unnecessary.

Specifically with respect to Pinal County, I submit that such speculation is unnecessary. The existing ozone monitoring network in the County obviates need to speculate about actual air quality. Pinal County maintains a stationary-source permitting program that obligates a source with potential emissions of more than one ton-per-year to obtain a permit, obviating the need to speculate about stationary source emissions. Commuter traffic into the urban area already falls subject to an auto-emission-testing requirement.

Under those circumstances, even if future development does occur, the Administrator can then adequately assess actual air quality and sources of ozone precursors. If air quality in the "adjoining area" of Pinal County does deteriorate over time, there will be ample opporunity to redraw the nonattainment area boundaries to reflect those changed facts. But today, that combination of monitoring, permitting and control requirements obviates any need for the Administrator to indulge in conjecture about whether nonattainment boundaries should be expanded to accommodate speculative growth that may or may not ever occur in Pinal County.

Again, nonattainment designations should reflect fact, not conjecture.

I appreciate your consideration of my comments on behalf of Pinal County.

Sincerely yours,

Donald P. Gabrielson

Donald P. Gabrielson

cc: N. Wrona, ADEQ
T. Pella, ADEQ
P. Mariella, Gila River Indian Community
D. Stanley-Robb, Pinal County