



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
March 10, 2003

Dear Colleagues:

I am writing on behalf of Ms. Lydia Wegman, Director, Air Quality Strategies and Standards Division, as well as the Air Directors in Regions 6, 8 and 10 regarding our approach to reviewing and acting on the regional haze section 309 State Implementation Plans (309 SIPs). This letter responds to the questions on the regional haze rule transmitted in a letter dated January 7, 2003, from the Co-chairs of the Air Managers Committee and the Initiatives Oversight Committee of the Western Regional Air Partnership (WRAP). We are also following up on our October 16, 2002, letter to Ms. Lynn Terry of the Western States Air Resources Council (WESTAR) regarding regional consistency in the SIP process. Enclosed are a draft *EPA Protocol for Review and Rulemaking Action on 309 SIPs* and an *EPA Response to Consolidated List of WRAP Questions*.

In the draft EPA protocol, we describe a collaborative approach to working internally and with our state and tribal partners to review and act on the 309 SIPs. The protocol acknowledges the challenges of implementing a regional program, and emphasizes the importance of early identification and resolution of issues before SIPs are submitted. The protocol defines goals and objectives, clarifies EPA commitments and expectations, and outlines a process for regional consistency. We view the protocol as a living document to assist us in working together with our partners to develop approvable 309 SIPs. We look forward to discussing with you how we can ensure the protocol is an effective tool.

In our response to the questions, we have worked very diligently to address all of the questions regarding the 309 SIP process and requirements. We have made every effort to provide a clear and concise answer to questions which often involve complex technical and policy issues. Further, we recognize that we will need to have a continuous dialogue with our partners as events unfold and other issues arise in the months ahead. To facilitate coordination, we will make accessible all our correspondence related to implementing the regional haze rule at www.epa.gov/air/visibility.

We very much appreciate all the efforts of the western states and tribes to coordinate their regional haze plans. In these efforts, the WRAP and WESTAR as well as the National Tribal Environmental Council have provided valuable services to their members. Please feel free to call me at 415-947-8715 regarding regional office support for the regional haze program. If you have questions about the draft protocol, please call Tom Webb at 415-947-4139. If you have questions about our explanation of the rule requirements, please call Tim Smith at 919-541-4718.

Sincerely,

Jack Broadbent, Director
Air Division

Enclosures

Addressees:

Ms. Sandra Ely
Chief, Air Quality Bureau
State of New Mexico
2048 Galisteo Street
Sante Fe, New Mexico 87505

Mr. Randy Ashley
Confederated Salish & Kootena Tribes
P.O. Box 278
Pablo, Montana 59855

Ms. Julie Simpson
Environmental Specialist
Nez Perce Tribe
P.O. Box 365
(Main Street and Beaver Grade)
Lapwai, Idaho 83540

Mr. Rick Sprott
Director, Utah Division of Air Quality
150 North 1950 West
Salt Lake City, Utah 84116

Ms. Lynn Terry
President, Western States Air Resources Council
9 Monroe Parkway, Suite 250
Lake Oswego, Oregon 97035

cc: Patrick Cummins, WGA
Dan Johnson, WESTAR
Bill Grantham, NTEC

bcc: Lydia Wegman, OAQPS
Carl Edlund, Region 6
Richard Long, Region 8
Bonnie Thie, Region 10
EPA 309 SIP Team