

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

September 27, 2010

The Honorable Lisa Jackson  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

We write to convey our continued concerns regarding the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) latest actions in its review of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for particulate matter (PM). The Second Draft Policy Assessment (PA) for PM released on July 8, 2010 in the Federal Register lays the foundation for establishing the most stringent and unparalleled regulation of dust in our nation's history. We urge the EPA to refrain from going down this path.

Scientific studies are at best ambiguous in support of tightening the existing coarse PM standard. According to the PA, the science would justify leaving the standard as it is, in terms of public health. It is also critical to maintain the current standard for economic sustainability. A coarse PM NAAQS of 65-85  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  would be approximately twice as stringent as the current standard and would require the designation of many more non-attainment areas than currently exist, particularly in rural areas. The current standards have been very difficult and expensive for industries in the Western part of the country to attain, including agricultural and other resource-based industries. The possibility of those same industries having to meet a standard that is twice as stringent causes us great concern, especially when a revision is not required by science.

In addition, contrary to EPA's assertion, a dust standard in the range of 65-85  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  with a 98<sup>th</sup> percentile form is not equal to the current standard of 150  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  with a 99<sup>th</sup> percentile form in arid rural areas of the United States. In fact, it appears that such a standard would target rural areas. Considering the Administration's claim that it is focusing on revitalizing rural America and rural economic development, a proposal such as this would have a significant negative impact on those very goals.

While we respect efforts for a clean and healthy environment, scientific studies do not support the need for revising the dust standard. We are hopeful that common sense will prevail and the EPA will refrain from causing extreme hardship to farmers, livestock producers, and other resource-based industries throughout rural America. Whether it is livestock kicking up dust, corn being combined, or a pickup driving down a gravel road, dust is a naturally-occurring event in rural areas. Common sense requires the EPA to acknowledge that the wind blows dust around in these areas, and that is a fact of life.

Sincerely,

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