



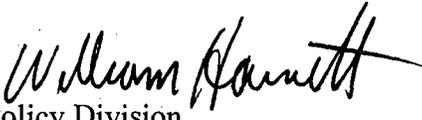
UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC 27711

APR 3 2006

OFFICE OF
AIR QUALITY PLANNING
AND STANDARDS

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Interim Policy for General Conformity Applicability in PM2.5
Nonattainment Areas

FROM: William T. Harnett 
Director, Air Quality Policy Division

TO: Regional Air Division Directors

In accordance with the General Conformity Regulations which apply to Federal actions in nonattainment areas one year after the areas are designated nonattainment, General Conformity requirements become effective for Federal actions in PM2.5 nonattainment areas after April 5, 2006. The General Conformity Regulations require a general conformity determination for Federal actions in nonattainment and maintenance areas where direct and indirect emissions are equal or exceed rates specified in the rule. Federal actions with emissions below these levels are considered to have emission increases that are clearly de minimis and do not have to make conformity determinations.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing a direct final rule with an accompanying proposal to establish de minimis levels for emissions of PM2.5 and its precursors. The de minimis levels for PM2.5 and its precursors are not effective upon publication of the direct final rule, and therefore are subject to change. In the absence of adverse comments this rule will become effective in 60 days or possibly longer if there are comments EPA must consider. Therefore, there will be a period of time where Federal agencies will have to perform General Conformity applicability analysis without the benefit of published de minimis thresholds for PM2.5.

During this time EPA believes it is appropriate for Federal agencies to use the PM-10 de minimis level of 100 tons per year as a surrogate for PM2.5 de minimis levels in their General Conformity applicability analysis. Since PM2.5 emissions are a subset of PM-10 emissions, PM2.5 emissions and its precursors will always be less than PM-10 (PM-10 consists of all particulate matter measuring 10 microns and below). Though PM2.5 may be formed in the atmosphere from precursor emissions (nitrous oxides, sulfur dioxide, VOC and ammonia) the use of the PM-10 thresholds serves as a reasonable surrogate for the precursor emissions and their contribution to PM2.5 nonattainment. Under this guidance, if an action's direct or indirect emissions of PM2.5, or any precursor that has been identified as a

significant contributor to nonattainment for a specific PM2.5 nonattainment area, exceed the 100 ton per year threshold, a General Conformity determination would be required.

If you have questions about the applicability of the General Conformity regulations in PM2.5 nonattainment areas please contact Tom Coda at 919-541-3037.

cc: Kevin McLean, OGC
Sara Schneeberg, OGC
Robert Moyer, OGC
Robert Meyers, OAR
Kimber Scavo, OAQPS
Tom Coda, OAQPS
Robert Hargrove, NEPA Compliance Division
Merrylin Zaw-Mon, OTAQ