



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 7**

11201 Renner Boulevard  
Lenexa, Kansas 66219

OFFICE OF THE  
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

FEB 06 2013

The Honorable Terry E. Branstad  
Governor of Iowa  
State Capitol  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Dear Governor Branstad:

Thank you for your recommendations June 2, 2011 on air quality designations for the state of Iowa for the 2010 revision to the primary National Ambient Air Quality Standard for sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>). Reducing levels of sulfur dioxide pollution is an important part of the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) commitment to a clean, healthy environment. Exposure to SO<sub>2</sub> can cause a range of adverse health effects, including narrowing of the airways which can cause difficulty breathing and increased asthma symptoms. This letter is to notify you of the EPA's preliminary intentions regarding your recommended designations.

On June 3, 2010, the EPA strengthened the health-based or "primary" standard for SO<sub>2</sub> by establishing a standard for 1-hour average SO<sub>2</sub> concentrations at a level of 75 parts per billion. The Clean Air Act requires the EPA to complete the initial designations process within two years of promulgating a new or revised standard. If the Administrator has insufficient information to make these designations, the EPA has the authority to extend the designation process by up to one year. On July 27, 2012, the EPA announced that it had insufficient information to complete the designations for the 1-hour SO<sub>2</sub> standard within two years and extended the designations deadline to June 3, 2013.

At this time the EPA is proceeding with designating as nonattainment most areas in locations where existing monitoring data from 2008-2010 indicate violations of the 1-hour SO<sub>2</sub> standard. The EPA intends to address the designations for all other areas in separate future actions. With input from a diverse group of stakeholders, EPA has developed a comprehensive implementation strategy for these future actions that focuses resources on identifying and addressing unhealthy levels of SO<sub>2</sub>. The strategy is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/airquality/sulfurdioxide/implement.html>. The EPA will continue to work closely with you and our other partners at the state, tribal and local levels to ensure health-protective, commonsense implementation of the 1-hour SO<sub>2</sub> standard.

As you aware, the SO<sub>2</sub> monitor located at Musser Park in Muscatine, IA suffered a malfunction during the three year period beginning in 2008 that was not detected until the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2010. Due to this malfunction a portion of the data recorded by this monitor over the three year period was invalidated and could not be used for regulatory purposes; however, the remaining valid data indicated elevated ambient concentrations of SO<sub>2</sub>. As a result, EPA considers it necessary to apply a provision found at 40 CFR Part 50 Appendix T 3(d) which allows incomplete data sets to be used to establish a valid design value. Using this provision, EPA intends to determine that the ambient air concentration of SO<sub>2</sub> in Muscatine County, IA is exceeding the 2010 SO<sub>2</sub> primary 1-hour NAAQS, and therefore designate the surrounding area as nonattainment.



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Consistent with the Clean Air Act, and after careful consideration of Iowa's recommendations including the valid air quality data from 2008-2010, as well as the most recent air quality data from 2009-2011, EPA intends to designate as nonattainment the following area, including the following county:

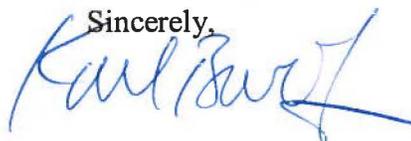
<u>Nonattainment Area</u>	<u>County</u>
Muscatine Area	Muscatine County, IA

The boundary for this intended nonattainment area represents a modification to the boundary that you have recommended. The enclosed Technical Support Document provides a detailed analysis that supports our preliminary nonattainment area decisions.

If the Iowa Department of Natural Resources has additional information that you would like the EPA to consider prior to final Agency action, please submit it to us by April 8, 2013. We also will be publishing a notice in the Federal Register announcing a 30-day period for the public to provide input on EPA's preliminary designation decisions regarding the areas that we would designate as nonattainment based on monitoring data. We intend to promulgate these designations for areas with monitored violations of the 2010 SO<sub>2</sub> standard by June, 2013. We are not yet prepared to propose designations action or seek public comment on other areas.

We look forward to a continued dialogue with you and your staff as we work together to implement the 2010 primary SO<sub>2</sub> standard. For additional information regarding initial designations on the SO<sub>2</sub> standard, please visit our website at [www.epa.gov/so2designations](http://www.epa.gov/so2designations).

If we can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me at (913) 551-7006 or have your staff contact Sarah Hatch, State Governmental Liaison, at (913) 551-7199.

Sincerely,  


Karl Brooks

Enclosure

cc: Chuck Gipp, Director  
Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Catharine Fitzsimmons, Chief  
Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Air Quality Bureau

Gina McCarthy, Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation  
Stephen D. Page, Director, Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards