



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

REGION 6

1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200

DALLAS, TX 75202-2733

**JUN 14 2010**

The Honorable Bill Richardson  
Governor of New Mexico  
State Capitol, Room 400  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Governor Richardson:

Thank you for your recommendations on air quality designations for the revised National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for lead throughout Albuquerque/Bernalillo County, New Mexico. Reducing levels of lead pollution is an important part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) commitment to a clean, healthy environment. Lead exposure can cause a range of adverse health effects, most notably in children. Exposures to low levels of lead early in life have been linked to effects on IQ, learning, memory and behavior. This letter is to notify you of EPA's response to New Mexico's designation recommendations on behalf of Albuquerque/Bernalillo County, and to inform you of our approach for completing the designations for the revised lead NAAQS.

On October 15, 2008, EPA substantially strengthened NAAQS for lead. The new standards, set at 0.15 micrograms per cubic meter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ), are 10 times tighter than the previous standards. In conjunction with strengthening the lead NAAQS, EPA also established new criteria for siting ambient lead monitors. The pre-existing ambient lead monitoring network was inadequate for determining whether many areas are meeting the revised lead NAAQS. Monitors meeting the new network siting requirements were to begin operation January 1, 2010.

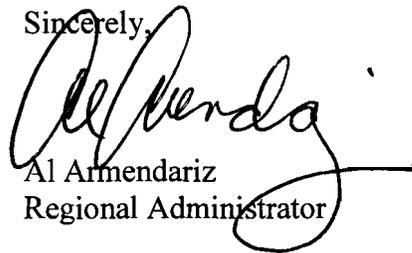
The Clean Air Act requires EPA to complete the initial designation process within two years of promulgating a new or revised NAAQS. If the Administrator has insufficient information to make these designations, EPA has the authority to extend the designation process by up to one year. In light of the new monitoring network which will generate additional information in the upcoming year, EPA intends to complete the lead designations in two rounds. In the first round, to be completed by October 15, 2010, EPA is designating as "nonattainment" any area that is violating the 2008 lead NAAQS based on data from the pre-2010 monitoring network. For all other areas, EPA is extending the deadline for designations by up to one year so that data from the newly deployed monitors can be considered in making appropriate designation decisions. EPA will complete the second round of lead designations no later than October 15, 2011.

We have reviewed New Mexico's April 23, 2009, recommendation letter on air quality designations for Bernalillo County and all the associated technical information for the 2008 lead NAAQS, including, if available, the most recent air quality data from 2007-2009. However, EPA is not intending to complete the initial area designations for your state at this time. Instead,

EPA intends to designate all areas in your state no later than October 15, 2011, in the second round of lead designations. If you would like to submit updated recommendations for your areas for our consideration in the second round of designations, we request that you do so by December 15, 2010. For the second round of designations, we will notify all states and tribes of our preliminary responses to their recommendations no later than June 17, 2011.

We look forward to a continued dialogue with you and your staff as we work together to implement the 2008 lead NAAQS. If you have any questions, please call me at (214) 665-2100, or your staff may call Mr. Emad Shahin of my staff at (214) 665-6717.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Al Armendariz', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Al Armendariz  
Regional Administrator

cc: Mr. Ron Curry  
Secretary, New Mexico Environmental Department

Ms. Mary Lou Leonard  
Acting Director, Air Quality Division  
Environmental Health Department, City of Albuquerque