



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

75 Hawthorne Street

San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

AUG 22 2017

OFFICE OF THE  
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

The Honorable Ralph Deleon Guerrero Torres  
Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
Caller Box 10007  
Capitol Hill  
Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands 96950

Dear Governor Torres:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) intended designation for the Northern Mariana Islands for the 2010 Primary National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>). The designations for this NAAQS are an important part of the EPA's commitment to a clean, healthy environment. This intended designation is a response to designations-related recommendations and information your territory submitted in a letter dated June 1, 2011.

On July 25, 2013, the EPA designated certain areas in 16 states as nonattainment, but did not at that time designate other areas. Additional areas were designated on June 30, 2016, and November 29, 2016. In the Northern Mariana Islands, there were no areas designated in these previous actions. Pursuant to a March 2, 2015, court-ordered schedule,<sup>1</sup> the agency must complete the remaining SO<sub>2</sub> designations by two specific deadlines: December 31, 2017, and December 31, 2020. Accordingly, pursuant to section 107(d)(1)(B)(ii) of the Clean Air Act, this letter is to notify you of the EPA's assessment of your territory's recommended designation. We are in general agreement with your recommendation.

If you or your staff have additional information that the EPA should consider prior to finalizing the designations, please submit it as soon as possible but no later than October 23, 2017. You may submit additional information by sending it to the EPA's public docket for these designations, EPA-HQ-OAR-2017-0003, located at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), and sending a copy to EPA Region 9. The EPA also will publish a notice in the *Federal Register* announcing a 30-day comment period for the public to provide input on the EPA's intended designations.

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has recommended a designation of unclassifiable for the entire territory. After carefully considering your territory's recommendation and all available information, we intend to designate the entire territory as unclassifiable/attainment. There are no areas in the Northern Mariana Islands required to be characterized by modeling or monitoring, and the EPA does not have information that suggests the area may not be meeting the NAAQS or contributing to air quality in a nearby area that does not meet the NAAQS. Enclosure 1 to this letter provides the

<sup>1</sup> *Sierra Club v. McCarthy*, No. 3-13-cv-3953 (SI) (N.D. Cal. Mar. 2, 2015).

information that supports the intended designation decision for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.<sup>2</sup>

The EPA will promulgate the final designations for the areas identified in this letter by December 31, 2017. Upon the completion of this designation action, there will be no remaining areas in the Northern Mariana Islands to be designated.

We share your goal to provide cleaner air for citizens in your territory. We look forward to a continued dialogue with you and your staff as we work together to complete the area designations and implement the 2010 primary SO<sub>2</sub> NAAQS. For additional information regarding designations under the SO<sub>2</sub> NAAQS, please visit our website at <https://www.epa.gov/sulfur-dioxide-designations>. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me, or have your staff contact Meredith Kurpius at (415) 947-4534 or [kurpius.meredith@epa.gov](mailto:kurpius.meredith@epa.gov).

Sincerely,



 Alexis Strauss  
Acting Regional Administrator

Enclosure

cc: Frank Rabauliman, Administrator, CNMI Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality

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<sup>2</sup> Enclosure 1 is Chapter 2 of the Technical Support Document for the designations the EPA plans to complete by December 31, 2017, that addresses the Northern Mariana Islands. The Technical Support Document is also available at <https://www.epa.gov/sulfur-dioxide-designations>.