



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

REGION 6

1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200

DALLAS, TEXAS 75202 – 2733

Office of the Regional Administrator

March 19, 2018

The Honorable Greg Abbott  
Governor of the State of Texas  
PO Box 12428  
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Governor Abbott:

Thank you for your letters addressing air quality designation recommendations for the revised 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone throughout Texas and in the San Antonio area. I appreciate the information Texas shared with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as we both move forward to improve ozone air quality. This letter is to notify you of the EPA's response to Texas's recommendations for the San Antonio area and to inform you of our approach for completing designations for the revised ozone standards.

On October 1, 2015, the EPA lowered the primary 8-hour ozone standard from 0.075 parts per million (ppm) to 0.070 ppm to provide increased protection of public health. The EPA revised the secondary 8-hour ozone standard, making it identical to the primary standard, to protect against welfare effects, including impacts on sensitive vegetation and forested ecosystems. Working closely with the states and tribes, the EPA is implementing the standards using a common sense approach that improves air quality and minimizes the burden on state and local governments. As part of this routine process, the EPA is working with the states to identify areas in the country that meet the 2015 ozone standards and those that need to take steps to reduce ozone pollution to attain the 2015 standards.

As a first step in implementing the 2015 ozone standards, the EPA asked states to submit in the Fall of 2016 their designation recommendations, including appropriate area boundaries. In response to and consistent with the States' recommendations, EPA published an initial round of final designations on November 16, 2017 in the Federal Register. In that action, the EPA designated as Attainment/Unclassifiable most areas of the country, including all but 49 counties in Texas. The EPA further announced on December 21, 2017, its intended designations for all other areas in the State where the agency received complete information, except the San Antonio area, and that were not previously designated in November 2017 as Attainment/Unclassifiable. Under court order, the EPA will finalize designations for all areas except the San Antonio area by April 30, 2018. The court has ordered the EPA to finalize its designation for the San Antonio area by July 17, 2018.

After receiving your letter dated February 28, 2018, containing recommendations and other relevant technical information regarding the designation of the San Antonio area, the EPA intends to designate the San Antonio area counties of Atascosa, Bandera, Comal, Guadalupe, Kendall, Medina, and Wilson

as Attainment/Unclassifiable, and intends to modify Texas's recommendation of Attainment<sup>1</sup> for Bexar County. The EPA intends to designate all or portions of Bexar County as, at best, Unclassifiable.<sup>2</sup> A Technical Support Document for the San Antonio area, which provides information pertinent to this intended modification, is posted on the EPA's Ozone Designations web site at <https://www.epa.gov/ozone-designations>.

The EPA stands ready to discuss with Texas any additional information that it would like the EPA to consider to support Texas's recommendation that all of Bexar County should be classified Attainment. We request that you submit any additional information to us by May 11, 2018, by sending it to EPA's public docket for these designations, EPA-HQ-OAR-2017-0548, located at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), and by sending a copy to EPA Region 6, pursuant to the instructions detailed in the forthcoming *Federal Register* action. The EPA will also make its proposed designation decisions and supporting documentation available to the general public for review and comment as part of the *Federal Register* action. We will be announcing a 30-day public comment period shortly in the *Federal Register*. After considering any additional information, we may receive, and responding to significant comments, the EPA plans to promulgate final ozone designations by July 17, 2018.

The EPA is committed to working with the states and tribes to reduce ozone air pollution. We look forward to a continued dialogue with you and your staff as we work together to implement the 2015 ozone standards.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at (214) 665-2211, or your staff may contact Ms. Carrie Paige at 214-665-6521.

Sincerely,



Anne L. Idsal  
Regional Administrator

cc: Richard A. Hyde, P.E., Executive Director, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

<sup>1</sup> See 42 U.S.C. § 7407(d)(1)(A)(ii).

<sup>2</sup> See 42 U.S.C. § 7407(d)(1)(A)(i), (iii).