



**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
20301 MAIL SERVICE CENTER
RALEIGH, NC 27699-0301**

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

September 9, 2004

The Honorable Michael Leavitt
Administrator
US Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Leavitt:

I am writing concerning your agency's response to North Carolina's PM 2.5 non-attainment boundary recommendations. As you know, North Carolina has been a leader among states in improving air quality through aggressive programs to cut emissions from both coal-fired power plants and mobile sources. No state in America is more committed to solving the problems posed by particulate emissions and other harmful pollutants. But we are committed to doing so wisely, in a manner that does not unnecessarily harm our state's favorable business climate.

In its letter of June 29, 2004, EPA has provided flawed analysis to support far-reaching PM 2.5 nonattainment designations surrounding two isolated, non-attaining monitors in Hickory and Lexington, North Carolina. According to North Carolina's analysis, which is included in the attached letter from Secretary of Environment Bill Ross, these broad designations will not help solve the non-attainment problem at these two monitors. In fact, they are unlikely to have an appreciable effect on North Carolina's efforts to improve air quality.

These excessive non-attainment designations will, however, have a significant dampening effect on economic development efforts in the Triad and further west in the Hickory/Morganton/Lenoir area. These two areas of our state have been hit particularly hard by manufacturing job losses associated with unfair federal trade policies. Both areas are turning a corner now, but they can ill afford non-attainment designations that can undermine their ability to bring jobs to their communities – particularly when there is no beneficial effect.

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With this in mind, I urge you to narrow your non-attainment designation to Davidson County and the MPO portion of Catawba County surrounding the Hickory monitor. Thank you for your attention to this request. If there is anything that my office can do to assist you in your decisionmaking process in the coming months, I trust that you will let me know.

With kindest regards, I remain

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Easley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael F. Easley

MFE: rht

cc: North Carolina Congressional Delegation
James I. Palmer, Regional Administrator, US EPA