UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

APR 30 2012

THE ADMINISTRATOR

The Honorable Rick Perry
Governor of Texas
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

Dear Governor Perry:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today is taking the next step to address ozone air quality by issuing final area designations for the 2008 National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone. This action, required under the Clean Air Act, lets communities know if their outdoor air is meeting the national standards for ground-level ozone and which areas are violating, or contributing to violations of, the national standards.

The EPA strengthened the ozone standards on March 12, 2008, to increase protection of public health and the environment. Breathing air containing high levels of ozone, a key ingredient in smog, can reduce lung function, trigger respiratory symptoms, and worsen asthma or other respiratory conditions. Ozone exposure also can contribute to premature death, especially in people with heart and lung disease. The new standards, which also protect against damage to sensitive vegetation and forested ecosystems, are a key part of the EPA's commitment to a clean, healthy environment. As we have done for more than 40 years, the EPA will work with you to improve air quality and continue to protect the health of our citizens.

As part of the designations process, the EPA worked closely with states, tribes and local governments to identify areas in the nation that meet the standards and those that need to take steps to reduce ozone pollution. After reviewing the most recent certified ozone air quality data and evaluating factors to assess contribution to nearby levels of ozone, I have determined that some areas in Texas violate the 2008 ozone standards or contribute to violations of the standards in a nearby area. As a result, the EPA is designating portions of Texas "nonattainment." The remaining areas in the state, do not violate the standards or contribute to a violation of the standards in a nearby area and will be designated "unclassifiable/attainment." I appreciate the information that Texas shared with the EPA throughout this process to assess ozone air quality.

Under the Clean Air Act, ozone nonattainment areas are also classified at the time of designation according to severity of their ozone air quality problem. The EPA finalized a rule today that establishes the air quality thresholds for the different classification categories for the 2008 ozone standards and areas have been classified according to that rule.

The enclosed table identifies the designation and classification for areas within Texas Areas designated as nonattainment are subject to planning and emission reduction requirements as specified in the Clean Air Act. Requirements vary according to an area's classification. The EPA will be proposing an ozone implementation rule soon to assist states with nonattainment areas in the development of state implementation plans for attaining the ozone standards.

History shows that cleaner air, better health and economic growth go hand-in-hand. Areas designated "nonattainment" will need to take actions to improve ozone air quality expeditiously, as required by the Clean Air Act. For areas designated "unclassifiable/attainment," the challenge is to maintain clean air. Working closely with the states and tribes, the EPA is implementing the 2008 ozone standards using a common sense approach that protects air quality, maximizes flexibility and minimizes burden on state, tribal and local governments.

I recognize that the EPA shares the responsibility with the states and tribes for managing ozone air pollution. I also recognize that air pollution crossing state boundaries can contribute to downwind violations of the standards. Current and upcoming federal standards and safeguards, including pollution reduction rules for power plants, industrial facilities, vehicles and fuels, will ensure steady progress to reduce smog-forming pollution and will protect public health in communities across America.

The EPA will be assisting state, tribal and local air agencies by identifying currently available emission reduction measures as well as relevant information concerning their efficiency and cost-effectiveness. State, local and tribal agencies will be able to use this information in developing emission reduction strategies, plans and programs to attain and maintain cleaner air.

I look forward to continuing to work with you and your staff as we strive to advance our shared goal of clean air. Additional technical information on the ozone designations can be found at www.epa.gov/ozonedesignations. If you have questions, please contact me, or your staff may call Sarah Hospodor-Pallone, Deputy Associate Administrator for Intergovernmental Relations, at 202-564-7178.

Sincerely,

Lisa P. Jackson

Enclosure

Enclosure

2008 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards*
Initial Designations and Classifications for Areas in Texas

Area Name	County Name	Designation	Classification
Dallas-Fort Worth, TX	Collin County Dallas County Denton County Ellis County Johnson County Kaufman County Parker County Rockwall County Tarrant County Wise County	Nonattainment	Moderate
Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, TX	Brazoria County Chambers County Fort Bend County Galveston County Harris County Liberty County Montgomery County Waller County	Nonattainment	Marginal
Rest of State - Unclassifiable/Attainment			

* The primary and secondary ozone National Ambient Ozone Air Quality Standards are identical. Designations apply for both standards.