



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

REGION 6  
1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200  
DALLAS TX 75202-2733

December 22, 2017

The Honorable Greg Abbott  
Governor of State of Texas  
P.O. Box 12428  
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Governor Abbott:

Thank you for your multiple letters addressing air quality designation recommendations for the revised 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone throughout Texas. 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 area recommendations 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.<sup>1</sup>

As required by the Clean Air Act, the EPA will designate an area as Nonattainment if there are certified, quality-assured air quality monitoring data showing a violation of the 2015 ozone standards or if the EPA makes a determination that the area is contributing to a violation of the

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<sup>1</sup> In addition, the EPA designated three counties in the state of Washington as Unclassifiable, consistent with the State of Washington's recommendation. Further, consistent with EPA's "Policy for Establishing Separate Air Quality Designations for Areas of Indian Country" (December 20, 2011), the EPA designated two areas of Indian country as separate Attainment/Unclassifiable areas.

standards in a nearby area. Areas designated Attainment/Unclassifiable are not measuring or contributing to a violation of the standards.

After considering Texas’s multiple ozone designation recommendations, which were based on 2014-2016 air quality data, as well as other relevant technical information, the EPA intends to designate the areas listed in the table below as Nonattainment, and to designate all other areas in the State where the agency has received complete information, except as indicated by the State in letters to the EPA, and that were not previously designated in November 2017 as Attainment/Unclassifiable. The Technical Support Document for Texas, which provides a detailed analysis to support our proposed designation decisions is posted on the EPA’s Ozone Designations web site at <https://www.epa.gov/ozone-designations>.

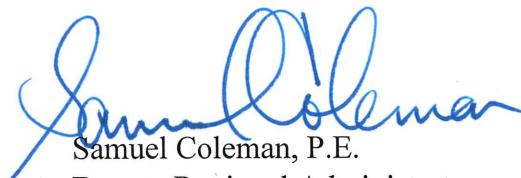
Area	EPA’s Intended Nonattainment Counties
Dallas/Fort Worth, TX	Collin County Dallas County Denton County Ellis County Johnson County Kaufman County Parker County Rockwall County Tarrant County Wise County
Houston-Galveston-Brazoria, TX	Brazoria County Chambers County Fort Bend County Galveston County Harris County Liberty County Montgomery County Waller County

In order for the EPA to consider more current (i.e., 2015-2017) air quality data in the final designation decisions for Texas, certified, quality-assured 2015-2017 air quality monitoring data for the area must be submitted to the EPA by February 28, 2018.

If Texas has additional information that it would like the EPA to consider, please submit it to us by February 28, 2018. Please submit additional information 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 in Spring of 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. Should you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at 214-665-3110 or have a member of your staff contact Carrie Paige at 214-665-6521 or [paige.carrie@epa.gov](mailto:paige.carrie@epa.gov).

Sincerely,



Samuel Coleman, P.E.  
Deputy Regional Administrator

cc: Richard A. Hyde, P.E., Executive Director, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality  
Steve Hagle, P.E., Deputy Director, Office of Air,  
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality