

June 13, 2024

Via: Electronic Mail, USPS and [EPA Central Data Exchange](#)

Lynne A. Hamjian, Director
Air & Radiation Division
United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1
5 Post Office Square, Suite 100
Mail Code: 5-MI
Boston, MA 02109-3912

Re: Re-Classification of Connecticut Nonattainment Areas under the 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for Ozone

Dear Ms. Hamjian:

Pursuant to Clean Air Act (CAA) [§181\(b\)\(3\)](#), the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (Department) requests a voluntary reclassification of the Connecticut portion of the New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, Southwest Connecticut (NY-NJ-CT) ozone nonattainment area from moderate to serious with a new attainment date of August 3, 2027. The monitored air quality data from the nonattainment area indicates that there has been insufficient progress made towards meeting the 2015 70 ppb 8-Hour Ozone NAAQS, and Connecticut does not anticipate meeting the standards by the mandated deadline of August 3, 2024.

Unfortunately, the State is struggling with an intractable ozone non-attainment challenge, despite having met or exceeded all requirements under the CAA, including Reasonable Further Progress (RFP), Reasonably Available Control Technology, nonattainment new source review, inspection and maintenance of motor vehicles, and various ongoing attainment measures further detailed in recent and prior implementation plan submittals. Connecticut continues to pursue additional local strategies to reduce emissions however, this also underscores the need for additional federal emission control measures, and the need for further widespread reductions from sources outside of Connecticut's regulatory authority and solely within the purview of EPA's jurisdiction.

The Department intends to formally submit a [demonstration](#) for your consideration that certain ozone data affected by wildfire smoke in 2023 should be excluded from regulatory determinations in accordance with CAA [§319\(b\)](#) and the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) [Exceptional Events Rule](#). If approved, this demonstration shows the Greater Connecticut

Lynn A. Hamjian

Page 2

June 13, 2024

moderate nonattainment area has attained the 2015 ozone standard. However, if EPA either fails to approve this demonstration in a timely manner or disapproves it and could not otherwise approve a subsequent request from the Department for a one-year extension under CAA §181(a)(5), then EPA should also include the Greater Connecticut nonattainment area in this voluntary reclassification request.

Connecticut makes these requests with the expectation that the new attainment time frames will allow EPA additional time to develop and implement national strategies to reduce interstate ozone transport as well as additional time for Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey to develop and implement further local control strategies. During this timeframe, Connecticut will also look forward to the finalization of workable EPA guidance on contingency measures that can be included in future approvable attainment demonstrations.

The Department will be submitting, under separate cover, a revised attainment plan to satisfy moderate nonattainment area requirements under the CAA except for reasonably available control measures and contingency measures for failure to attain as these measures are no longer required based on this request for voluntary reclassification.

I appreciate your leadership on this issue as well as the assistance of your staff, especially Bob McConnell. If you have any questions, please contact Paul Farrell of my staff at (860) 424-3389 or by email at paul.farrell@ct.gov.

Sincerely,



Tracy R. Babbidge
Chief
Bureau of Air Management

cc: Lynne Hamjian / Director, EPA Region 1, Air and Radiation Division
Eric Wortman, Manager, EPA Region 1, Air Quality Branch
Emma Cimino, Deputy Commissioner
Paul Farrell, CT DEEP
Pete Babich, CT DEEP
Kiernan Wholean, CT DEEP

Lynn A. Hamjian
Page 2
June 13, 2024