



File Code: 2500

Date: January 15, 2008

Ms. Maya Rao
Chief, Air Division
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 10385
Jackson, MS 39289-0385

Dear Ms. Rao:

On December 7, 2007, the State of Mississippi submitted a draft implementation plan describing your proposal to improve air quality regional haze impacts at mandatory Class I areas across our region. I am aware that Federal Land Managers of Class I areas adjacent to Mississippi are providing comments on the draft plan. My primary purpose in writing is to concur with the comments provided to you by Miera Crawford, Forest Supervisor of National Forests in Alabama, and to express my commitment to wildland fire smoke management, especially with regard to our prescribed fire program.

We have appreciated the opportunity to work closely with the State through the initial evaluation, development, and, now, subsequent review of the Regional Haze implementation plan. We recognize that while there are no Class I areas in Mississippi, emissions reductions at sources within and adjacent to our state will improve air quality and this is positive for our forest resources as well as the citizens of Mississippi. We also want to reiterate the National Forests in Mississippi's commitment to smoke management for the protection of human health and safety, including visibility.

This letter acknowledges that the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service has received and conducted a substantive review of your proposed Regional Haze Rule implementation plan. Please note, however, that only the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) can make a final determination about the document's completeness, and therefore, only the EPA has the ability to approve the document. The Forest Service's participation in the State of Mississippi's administrative process does not waive any legal defenses or sovereignty rights it may have under the laws of the United States, including the Clean Air Act and its implementing regulations.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to work closely with the State of Mississippi. The Forest Service compliments you on your hard work and dedication to significant improvement in our nation's air quality values and visibility.

Sincerely,

/s/ R E Vann III
R E VANN III
Acting Forest Supervisor

cc: Michelle Notarianni and James Hou EPA Region 4, Miera B Crawford, Cindy M Huber





United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Region 8, Southern Region
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File Code: 2580

Date: January 11, 2008

Ms. Maya Rao
Chief, Air Division
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
P O Box 10385
Jackson, MS 39289-0385

Dear Ms. Rao:

On December 7, 2007, the State of Mississippi submitted a draft implementation plan describing your proposal to improve air quality regional haze impacts at mandatory Class I areas across your region, including several Class I areas managed by the USDA Forest Service in Alabama and Arkansas. We appreciate the opportunity to work closely with the State through the initial evaluation, development, and, now, subsequent review of this plan. Cooperative efforts such as these ensure that, together, we will continue to make progress toward the Clean Air Act's goal of natural visibility conditions at our Class I wilderness areas and parks.

This letter acknowledges that the USDA Forest Service has received and conducted a substantive review of your proposed Regional Haze Rule implementation plan. Please note; however, that only the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) can make a final determination about the document's completeness; and therefore, only the EPA has the ability to approve the document. The Forest Service's participation in the State of Mississippi's administrative process does not waive any legal defenses or sovereignty rights it may have under the laws of the United States, including the Clean Air Act and its implementing regulations.

As outlined in a letter to your State in October 2006, the USDA Forest Service review focused on eight basic content areas. The content areas reflect priorities for the Federal Land Manager agencies, and we have attached comments to this letter associated with these priorities. We look forward to your response required by 40 CFR 51.308(i)(3). For further information, please contact Cindy Huber at (540) 265-5156 or Scott Copeland at (307) 332-9737.



Ms. Maya Rao

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Again, we appreciate the opportunity to work closely with the State of Mississippi. The USDA Forest Service compliments you on your hard work and dedication to significant improvement in our nation's air quality values and visibility.

Sincerely,

/s/ Miera Crawford Nagy
MIERA CRAWFORD NAGY
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure

cc: Michelle Notarianni
James Hou
Antoine L Dixon
R E Vann
Cindy M Huber

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Enclosure

Forest Service Technical Comments on MS DEQ's Pre-Hearing Draft Regional Haze State Implementation Plan (SIP)

Overall Comments

As stated in our letter, we feel that your agency has addressed most of the priority content areas with which the Federal Land Managers (FLMs) are concerned in the draft Regional Haze Regulations State Implementation Plan (SIP), but we feel that inclusion of some additional information will strengthen the document.

Mississippi does not have a Class I area within its boundaries and therefore the State Implementation Plan addresses emissions reductions needed for visibility improvement at Class I areas in adjacent states which may be affected by Mississippi sources. Even though there are no Class I areas within Mississippi, we feel that certain information about the Class I areas that could be affected by Mississippi sources should be included in the SIP. These are discussed in more detail under "Specific Comments".

As part of its long-term strategy, we expect that the State will rely in great part on the new source review (NSR) and prevention of significant deterioration (PSD) programs to assure that new sources do not unduly impair the expected progress toward natural conditions. The December 2007 draft speaks to emissions reductions of ongoing programs but does not include a discussion of the interaction between the existing new source review program and progress on the regional haze plan. Given the uncertainty in the new source growth estimates used to develop the 2018 emissions inventory, and ultimately the 2018 visibility projections, we feel it would be appropriate for the state to discuss the relationship between the Regional Haze Plan and requirements of the NSR and PSD programs within the SIP. Specifically, how does the State anticipate addressing new sources of air pollution in the PSD process in regards to its reasonable progress goals and long term strategy; and, how will it analyze the affect of new emissions from these new sources on progress toward the interim visibility goals established under this SIP, as well as the ultimate goal of natural background visibility by 2064?

Finally, we recognize that the Regional Planning Organizations have provided significant resources to the states throughout the Regional Haze planning process, and that it will be detrimental to the state agencies if these resources are no longer available for subsequent planning and periodic SIP reviews. We will strongly encourage the EPA to maintain support for the Regional Planning Organizations and the integrated technical analyses that will be necessary as we begin tracking reasonable progress for the Class I areas under the Regional Haze State Implementation Plans.

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Specific Comments

Section 1: Introduction

Page 4, Section 1.4 – Please explain why Upper Buffalo Wilderness in northwestern Arkansas and Hercules Glades Wilderness in southern Missouri were not included as neighboring Class I areas when they are about the same distance from the Mississippi border as Caney Creek Wilderness.

Page 7, Table 1.5-1 – Some of the acreages are incorrect in Table 1.5-1. For example, Sipsy is 24,922 acres. Pat Brewer has recent updates to Class I acreages.

Section 2: Baseline, Current and Natural Background Conditions

Page 8, Section 2.0 - Include the baseline and current conditions established by VISTAS for the Class I areas Mississippi might affect. Likewise, the Uniform Rate of Progress graphs for these areas should be included.

Section 4: Emissions Inventory Development

Page 11, first paragraph - Modify the language regarding fire emissions to reflect the increases that were included in the 2009 and 2018 inventories. This is mentioned under 4.1.7 on page 12.

Page 12, Table 4.1 – It would be helpful to show values for EGU and non-EGU point sources instead of lumping them into a single category because they are discussed as EGU and non-EGUs in the body of the SIP. It just makes things clearer.

Section 7: Long Term Strategy

Page 31, last paragraph - Add *states* to the end of the first sentence. It appears to have been omitted.

Page 34, Section 7.2.2.1, third paragraph, last sentence - Change to “..., comprising more than half of remaining SO₂ emissions in *most states*.” The current language is *all states*, but according to the referenced figures, EGUs will comprise less than half the remaining emissions in VA, GA and MS.

Page 36, Section 7.2.2.2, first sentence on page 36 - Explain what a “one hour plan” is. Is this a SIP for the one-hour ozone NAAQS?

Page 43, Section 7.3.2, second paragraph on page 43 - Three sources used the new IMPROVE algorithm to demonstrate BART exemption, and it appears that all others

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used the “old” algorithm. According to the September 27, 2006 revision of EPA responses to questions from the Regional Planning Organizations, a state is to select either the new or the old IMPROVE algorithm and apply it consistently among stakeholders. It appears that the new algorithm was used when exemption was not possible using the old algorithm. This seems contrary to EPA guidance.

Page 43, Section 7.3.3 – The discussions on BART determinations for the Chevron Refinery and Mississippi Phosphate could benefit from inclusion of additional information from Appendix L in the body of the SIP; specifically summaries addressing each of the five factors used in a BART determination evaluation. This is especially true for the Chevron Refinery which will still have an almost 1 deciview impact on Breton even after emissions reductions currently being permitted are in place.

Page 47, Section 7.4, last sentence in second paragraph on page 47 - Please make it clear that the statement refers only to the **southern** boundary....not all boundaries.

Page 51, Section 7.5.5, second paragraph on page 51 – The text states that the Area of Influence plots for Sipsey and Caney Creek to do not indicate any Mississippi sources. The state boundaries are not visible on the maps in the SIP, so we cannot confirm this statement. We recommend adding the appropriate spreadsheets for Sipsey and Caney Creek showing that there are no contributions above the 0.5% threshold from sources in Mississippi. It would also be beneficial to include the same spreadsheets for Upper Buffalo and Hercules Glades, which again would show there are no contributions above the 0.5% from Mississippi sources. Inclusion of these spreadsheets would support narrowing the remaining discussion to Mississippi sources affecting Breton.

Page 54, Section 7.6 – A Reasonable Progress Analysis should be included in the body of the SIP and should specifically include discussion of the four statutory factors: costs of compliance, time necessary for compliance, energy and non-air quality environmental impacts of compliance, and remaining useful life of any potentially affected sources. This is a requirement of the Regional Haze Rule.

Page 55, Section 7.6 – The final Reasonable Progress decision for DuPont should be included in the body of the SIP.

Page 55, Section 7.7, second paragraph - The first and second sentences point out that elemental carbon from fire is a relatively minor contributor to visibility impairment at Sipsey, Caney Creek and Breton Class I areas. We agree and suggest including a statement regarding current smoke management practices used in Mississippi in order to fully address fire emissions per Section 51.308(d)(3)(v). We recommend adding the following sentences (in italics) to the end of the second paragraph. *Under current smoke management practices, the Mississippi Forestry Commission, in conjunction with Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, issues burning permits based on daily weather forecasts. A permit is required for any fire set for a recognized agricultural or forestry purpose.*

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Section 8: Reasonable Progress Goals

Page 56, Section 8.0 - The Reasonable Progress Goals set by the adjacent states for their Class I areas should be articulated in the SIP. We suggest that all four Class I areas are included. Also, MS DEQ should include evidence that the adjacent states consulted on the reasonable progress goals that they established.

Section 11: Comprehensive Periodic Implementation Plan Revisions

While large sulfur dioxide emissions reductions are anticipated under CAIR, EGU emissions are expected to remain a significant contributor to regional haze in 2018 even after implementation of this Federal Rule. Given that additional EGU reductions will still be necessary after 2018, and that there is a fair amount of uncertainty surrounding the modeling analyses conducted for future year projections as well as what is actually going to occur under CAIR, the tracking and review periods under the Regional Haze Regulations become increasingly important from the FLMs perspective. We are pleased to see Mississippi DEQ's commitment to completing the reasonable progress reports every five years, as well as comprehensive SIP revisions in subsequent planning periods, in accordance with the Regional Haze Regulations.

We are also pleased to see that Mississippi DEQ has included measures for ongoing consultation with the FLMs on page 58 and included annual discussions of the implementation process and the most recent IMPROVE monitoring data. We recommend adding the following sentence to clearly define "ongoing consultation" for future planning periods. "*Consultation between Mississippi DEQ and the FLMs will include early involvement of FLMs in the periodic review process and FLMs will receive copies of revised regional haze SIPs for comment prior to finalization.*" We feel that clearly establishing the process for FLM consultation in the SIP document may eliminate any confusion as to what "ongoing consultation" requires in future years.