



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

MAR 08 2010

OFFICE OF  
AIR AND RADIATION

Mr. Martin Bauer  
President  
Western States Air Resources Council (WESTAR)  
1218 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Seattle, Washington 98101

Dear Mr. Bauer:

Thank you for your letter of September 11, 2009, providing recommendations of the Western States Air Resources Council (WESTAR) related to the implementation of rules governing the treatment of data influenced by exceptional events—40 CFR Parts 50 and 51, typically referred to as the “Exceptional Events Rule.”

In your letter, you discuss how important the Exceptional Events Rule is to western states in light of the air quality challenges brought on by the frequent occurrence of chronic wildfires and dust storms in your area. Additionally, you have provided suggested recommendations for improvements in the implementation of this important rule, recognizing the budget pressures that we are all experiencing at this time for air quality management resources.

I appreciate the time and effort WESTAR and your member states put into these recommendations, the discussions we have had with WESTAR representatives previously, and the work of your WESTAR Exceptional Events Workgroup.

We are exploring how implementation of the exceptional events rule can be improved to provide clarity and efficiency within the Agency and for all of our stakeholders. This includes consideration of chronic natural events in the exceptional events context, and other events for which developing technical demonstrations proves to be difficult. I have asked my staff to identify areas where guidance or other rule considerations would be appropriate to achieve this goal and to work over the next six months to develop solutions that will improve rule implementation. During this process, we want to continue our dialog with WESTAR on implementation issues, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Regional staff will continue to work with you to develop technical demonstrations to support consideration of exceptional events.

As you mention in your letter, the effectiveness of this rule is important for the state and local agencies, and the general public, and we must all do our best to make sure that we spend our resources wisely to protect public health.

