The Honorable Bruce V. Rauner
Governor
207 State Capitol Building
Springfield, Illinois 62706

Dear Governor Rauner:

Thank you for your recommendation dated September 30, 2016, on air quality designations for the 2015 National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone throughout Illinois. I appreciate the information Illinois shared with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as we move forward to improve ozone air quality. This letter is to notify you of the EPA's preliminary response to Illinois' 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 standards and those that need to take steps to reduce ozone pollution.

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 a first round of designations, on November 16, 2017, consistent with states' recommendations, the EPA designated as Attainment/Unclassifiable most of the country. In addition, the EPA designated three counties in the state of Washington as Unclassifiable, consistent with the state'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.

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

After considering Illinois' September 30, 2016, ozone designation recommendations, which were based on 2013-2015 air quality data, as well as other relevant technical information (i.e. 2014-2016 air quality data), the EPA intends to designate the areas listed in Enclosure 1 as Nonattainment or unclassifiable and to designate all other areas in the State not previously designated in November 2017 as Attainment/Unclassifiable. The enclosed Technical Support Document provides a detailed analysis to support our preliminary decisions for the areas of the State not previously designated. In order for the EPA to consider more current (i.e., 2015-2017) air quality data in the final designation decisions for any area, Illinois must submit certified, quality-assured 2015-2017 air quality monitoring data for the area to the EPA by February 28, 2018.

The EPA will continue to work with state officials regarding the appropriate boundaries for the Nonattainment areas in Illinois. If Illinois has additional information that you would like the EPA to consider, please submit it to us by February 15, 2018. Please submit additional information by sending to the EPA's public docket for these designations, EPA-HQ-OAR-2017-0548, located at [HYPERLINK "http://www.regulations.gov"], and sending a copy to EPA Region 5. The EPA will also make its preliminary designation decisions and supporting documentation available to the general public for review and comment. We will be announcing a 30-day public comment period shortly in the *Federal Register*. After considering additional information, we receive, 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 312-886-1499 or have a member of your staff contact Ed Nam at 312-3532192.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Kaplan
Acting Regional Administrator

Enclosure

Cc Alec Messina, Director, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

Julie Armitage, Director, Bureau of Air, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency