



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary
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Interior Department Signs Agreement with Utah to Improve Air Quality

WASHINGTON—Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Craig Manson announced today that the Interior Department and the state of Utah have signed a Memorandum of Agreement that addresses haze and visibility issues around national parks in Utah and the Colorado Plateau.

“Air quality is a regional issue and is best solved when regions work together with state and federal land managers to reduce emissions,” Manson said. “This is an important step in our efforts to assure clean air and scenic views in areas the Department of the Interior manages and the public enjoys.”

The MOA completes Utah's portion of a regional plan for protecting the visibility at national parks on the Colorado Plateau. It assures that national parks in Utah and on the Colorado Plateau will have cost-effective, pollution-reduction plans that are coupled with a means to ensure all parks and wilderness areas are afforded some benefit. The sites that will benefit from this agreement include Arches, Bryce Canyon, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef and Zion national parks.

The agreement clarifies the circumstances under which industrial sources of sulfur dioxide may become subject to Best Available Retrofit Technology requirements now that Utah's Regional Haze State Implementation Plan and a five-state regional emissions cap is in place. Utah is the first of the five states (Arizona, New Mexico, Wyoming and Oregon) that adopted the emissions cap to pursue an MOA under the Western Regional Air Partnership Market Trading Forum policies for addressing specific industrial sources.

The MOA is based on policies the Western Regional Air Partnership developed over the last eight years. The partnership is made up of 13 states, an equal number of tribes, and representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It was formed in 1997 to address

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regional air quality issues in the West, and its first effort has been to provide technical and policy support to implement the recommendations of the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission.

For more information about the states and tribes that make up the Western Regional Air Partnership, go to the Internet at: <http://www.wrapair.org/facts/index.html>.

- DOI -



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

JAN 26 2005

N36 (2350)

Dr. Dianne R. Nielson
Executive Director
Utah Department of
Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 144820-4810
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

Dear Dr. Nielson:

It is my pleasure to have signed this Memorandum of Agreement to protect scenic vistas in Utah's national parks and on the Colorado Plateau. Utah is the first of the five states that has adopted the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission's approach to address haze. Utah is also the first to finalize an agreement to provide geographic enhancements to the market-based sulfur dioxide emissions reduction strategy. We agree that this Memorandum of Agreement will accomplish both the protection and the improvement of visibility as well as providing certainty in planning for industries in the state.

Thank you for being the leader in this innovative regional program to protect air quality in Utah and other western states.

Sincerely,

Craig Manson
Assistant Secretary
For Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Enclosure

cc: Jan Miller
Utah Division of Air Quality
150 N 1950 W
P.O. Box 144820
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4820



State of Utah

Department of
Environmental Quality

Dianne R. Nielson, Ph.D.
Executive Director

William J. Sinclair
Deputy Director

OLENE S. WALKER
Governor

GAYLE F. McKEACHNIE
Lieutenant Governor

November 12, 2004

Craig Manson
Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Manson:

The Western Regional Air Partnership (the WRAP) developed a program that could be used by western states and tribes to protect the visibility in national parks while also providing certainty in planning for the large industrial enterprises that are the sources of some emissions that impair visibility. Implementation of this program requires a Memorandum of Agreement between federal land managers and individual states. The State of Utah is enclosing for your signature two copies of the Memorandum of Agreement that will apply to the five federally-protected (Class I) areas in Utah: Arches, Bryce, Canyonlands, Capitol Reef, and Zion National Parks.

The WRAP is made up of 13 states, an equal number of tribes, and representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of the Interior and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It was formed in 1997 to address regional air quality issues in the West, and its first effort has been to provide technical and policy support to implement the recommendations of the Grand Canyon Visibility Transport Commission. The Commission recommended that emissions of sulfur dioxide, the pollutant that has the greatest effect on visibility in western parks, be reduced through a declining regional emissions cap backed up with a market trading program that would be triggered only if the regional cap were exceeded. The details of the regional cap and backstop market trading program were developed through a consensus process to address concerns of all interested parties.

The declining regional emissions cap is included in the state implementation plans submitted to EPA by five states--Arizona, New Mexico, Wyoming, Oregon and Utah--on December 31, 2003, under the provisions of Section 169B of the Clean Air Act. During the negotiations on the details of the program, affected industries were concerned that they might make reductions in sulfur dioxide to meet the regional emissions cap and then later be told by a federal land manager that their emissions were contributing to impairment under Section 169A of the Clean Air Act. They asked for a mechanism to give them more certainty that they could address both issues in one emission reduction effort.

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National Park Service staff took the lead in drafting a Memorandum of Agreement that sets forth the criteria that the federal land managers will use in determining, under Section 169A, whether emissions from a specific industrial facility are contributing to visibility impairment in a Class I area. The draft was reviewed and approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, by states and tribes, and by industrial and environmental representatives. Utah included a copy of the draft Memorandum of Agreement in the technical documents supporting its plan submitted to EPA on December 31, 2003.

Utah staff appreciate the efforts of National Park Service staff led by Chris Shaver to bring this matter to your attention. We regard signing the Memorandum of Agreement as an important component of the State Implementation Plan to address haze in Utah's national parks. Therefore, please sign both copies of the agreement and return one to me at the above address.

If you have questions, you can reach me at (801) 536-4404.

Best regards,



Dianne R. Nielson, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Encl.