United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 15, 2011

The Honorable Lisa P. Jackson
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

We are writing to you regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) efforts to revise the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) on particulate matter (PM), including dust largely comprised of blowing dirt and naturally occurring organic material common in rural areas.

The April 2011 *Policy Assessment for the Review of the Particulate Matter National Ambient Air Quality Standards* includes a recommendation for EPA to revise the current course PM NAAQS downward to a level of 65-85 $\mu g/m^3$—twice as stringent as the current level. However, the EPA document acknowledges the uncertainty of the science to support lowering of this standard. This proposal has caused significant concern and uncertainty in farm country.

Adding more concern and uncertainty, an April 14 letter from Assistant EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy notes that these air quality standards are "not focused on any specific category of sources or any particular activity (including activities related to agriculture or rural roads)." Based on this correspondence, one could only conclude that EPA has no ability or plan to exempt naturally occurring farm dust.

However, you recently characterized the idea of more stringent regulation of farm dust as a "myth" and dismissed any negative impact on farmers, ranchers, or rural businesses that might occur. Given these apparent contradictions, we recently introduced, along with several colleagues, the attached legislation. The "Farm Dust Regulation Prevention Act" differentiates the treatment of "nuisance dust" common in rural areas from urban particulate matter for implementation of air quality standards.

Given your previous statements, which appear to be completely consistent with this legislation, we ask you to publicly support it. Please submit a letter of support for this legislation within the next three weeks to provide much-needed certainty to farmers, ranchers, and other rural stakeholders across the country. We are confident that doing so will be welcomed and applauded by many Americans in farm country. Your support will provide much needed assurance during these times of economic and regulatory uncertainty.

Sincerely,

Mike Johanns
United States Senator

Chuck Grassley
United States Senator